

Senate Library Committee

Annual report of the Senate Library Committee: 2008-09

Committee Members

B. Benn
A. Conacher
J. Dixon
F. Donald
A. Farzam-Kia
J. Gravel
A. Jainchill
E. Lee
J. Medd
K. Norman (Chair)
P. Wiens (University Librarian)

Secretary:
M. C. Vandenburg

Other participants in meetings

M. Whitehead (Associate University Librarian)
B. Teatero (Associate University Librarian)
R. Roberts (observer, CUPE 1302 representing Library Technicians)

Introduction

In accordance with its terms of reference, the Senate Library Committee has met regularly with the University Librarian and other members of the Library staff to receive reports and provide advice on various aspects of the Library's policies and operations. Specific areas of focus for the committee in 2008-09 included (i) scholarly communications with regard to initiatives about open access, (ii) liaison between the Senate Library Committee and the Advisory Councils for individual libraries on campus, and (iii) the Library's support of graduate studies and research. In addition, the Senate Library Committee discussed the Library's annual budget, as required by the committee's terms of reference.

(i) Scholarly Communications

The Senate Library Committee struck an Advisory Subcommittee on Scholarly Communications (ASSC) at the beginning of the 2007-08 year; this group continued to meet in 2008-09. It is composed of representatives from the Library senior management, the School of Graduate Studies, the Office of Research Services, Information Technology Services, Archives, and Senate Library Committee, as well as other faculty members. The initial mandate of the ASSC focused on the following:

- Communicating with the academic community on scholarly communications issues and related services.
- Providing feedback and making recommendations on user requirements and policy issues for specific services [e.g., including but not limited to QSpace].
- Developing recommendations regarding scholarly communications and publishing.

An archive of notes from the ASSC meetings – three in 2007-08 and three in 2008-09 – can be found at the Library's website at <http://library.queensu.ca/services/scholcomm>. From these notes, it can be seen that Queen's Librarians are forging ahead with scholarly communications and open access initiatives; ASSC's role was to be informed and make suggestions. Any other member of the Queen's community can also make suggestions through the Queen's Library website pages. The majority of the ASSC discussions were around identifying what is already happening in certain scholarly fields and what needs to happen across Queen's in order to advance new forms of scholarly communication and open access. Discussions focused principally on publishing of the results of scholarly inquiry but also included elements of open access to educational resources.

At the most recent ASSC meeting, it was noted that the subcommittee had continued beyond its originally projected mandate. It was therefore discussed whether the ASSC should continue to exist and if so, in what form. There was widespread consensus that the group should continue to meet because of the importance of a continuing focus on scholarly communications matters and research integrity while the process of communications is rapidly being transformed by changing publishing practices, open access and changing technology. It will continue to function as a subcommittee of the Senate Library Committee so as not to lose its momentum, although there should be ongoing consideration of where such a body is best placed within the university's committee structure. The ASSC's strength is its synergy of members from the Library, Information Technology Services, Research Services and multiple faculties of the university.

Related to matters of Scholarly Communications, the Library will host events related to the 2nd annual [Open Access Day](#)¹, now expanded to [Open Access Week](#)² in October 2009. In preparation, the Library's Scholarly Communications Working Group drafted a statement, amended and endorsed by the ASSC, further supported by the Senate Library Committee:

Queen's University Library is committed to the principles of Open Access (OA) to all research results and educational resources. The Library includes OA resources in its collection and believes in the importance of promoting modes of scholarly communication that enable people to share knowledge as broadly as possible.

The ASSC will continue to meet in 2009-10.

(ii) Liaison between the Senate Library Committee and the Advisory Councils for individual libraries on campus

The Library Advisory Councils were informed of the Senate Library Committee's areas of focus for 2009-09 and invited to communicate any issues they wished to raise with the Senate Library Committee. Although no matters were raised, the presence of Associate University Librarians at

¹ <http://openaccessday.org/>

² <http://www.openaccessweek.org/>

each of the advisory councils as well as at SLC meetings provides some assurance of communication. In addition, the minutes of all of these committees are available online.

(iii) the Library's support of graduate studies and research

Dr. A. Leger of the Centre for Teaching and Learning attended the March 2009 meeting of the Senate Library Committee to speak to the *REPORT ON THE ASSESSMENT OF GRADUATE STUDENT ACADEMIC SUPPORT NEEDS*, a project of the Queen's Learning Commons begun in the 2008 winter term, culminating in a report prepared for the Vice-Principal (Academic) dated March 12, 2009. This project was steered by representatives from the Library, the Centre for Teaching & Learning, the Writing Centre, Career Services, the School of Graduate Studies, and the Society for Graduate & Professional Students, and involved a survey of graduate students. Findings of particular relevance to the Library were the identification of specific gaps in the Library's collection relevant to their research, comments from some respondents about dedicated work/study space outside their home departments, and identified needs for support for information literacy: *e.g.*, tools for keeping current, searching new information, organizing and storing research resources, and managing citations. The Library had already been offering some information sessions on these topics. However, it has now expanded them and increased their visibility to graduate students through links in the academic support section [Expanding Horizons](http://www.queensu.ca/sgs/academicsupport.html)³ of the School of Graduate Studies webpages.

Library Budget

The Library's 2009 Budget Report was presented to the Senate Library Committee at its January 2009 meeting and further discussed at its March 2009 meeting. Like academic units across the University, the Library was asked to develop a budget that targeted a 15% reduction over three years in its operating (*i.e.*, excluding acquisitions) expenditures. For the Library, this represents a cut of over \$1.2M. Since almost 90% of the Library's non-acquisitions operating budget consists of salaries, the majority of the expenditure reduction must be achieved through a reduction in the number of staff positions: it is estimated that 18 positions will need to be closed over the next three years. This is in addition to 17 positions that have been closed over the last 3 years. Together, these position closures amount to a 23% reduction in library staff from 2006 to 2012. It is hoped that these reductions can occur without the need for layoffs: *i.e.*, largely through closing soft-funded term positions, retirements and other voluntary departures.

The reduction in staff, however, will require major restructuring of the delivery of core services. Over past years of budget reductions, the Library has restructured and consolidated library services and facilities, moving from a system consisting of 19 locations to a system that now consists of 5 major facilities. Further restructuring of the library's infrastructure services including Technical Services, InterLibrary Loan and Document Delivery and systems are now being considered. In addition the Library is considering major restructuring of some public services.

The Library's Acquisitions budget is separate from the Operating Budget and has been stable at approximately \$9.7M in recent years (2007-08, 2008-09). The Library staff and the Senate Library Committee members are pleased that the Acquisitions budget has not been reduced in actual dollar amount for the 2009-10 year. However, it is very important to note that simply maintaining the budget amount in Canadian dollars represents a substantial reduction in purchasing power because the majority of Library acquisitions are purchased in U.S. dollars. At the time of the 2007-08 budget, the Canadian dollar was approximately at par with the U.S. dollar. The Canadian dollar has declined substantially since then, causing a corresponding reduction in the Library's ability to maintain

³ <http://www.queensu.ca/sgs/academicsupport.html>

subscriptions to serials and acquisitions of monographs. It is equally important to note that the Library is able to maintain an impressively wide array of acquisitions in large part due to consortial purchase arrangements. The Canadian Research Knowledge Network (CRKN) is a national purchasing agency which leverages the value of each purchasing dollar by a factor of 6 to 1. Although other members of the CRKN are doubtless facing financial challenges much as Queen's is, all members see the value in maintaining the contribution to the consortium in order to achieve the greatest possible array of new knowledge to be continuously available to all.

Conclusion

Members of the Library staff, the Senate Library Committee, and the Advisory Subcommittee on Scholarly Communications have two key messages for Senate and the wider university community arising from their 2008-09 activities.

The financial situation of the university is such that "We cannot continue business as usual." The Library's fundamental mission, however, remains constant: the acquisition and provision of access to the information resources and knowledge that are at the heart of the academic enterprise. *Sapientia et doctrina stabilitas*. "Wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times." But the methods and means by which the Library acquires, provides access and delivers information resources and services are constantly changing. Over the next 3 years and beyond, the Library will continue to reinvent itself as it seeks to achieve the most efficient, effective infrastructure possible for collection development, for access to knowledge, and for the support of teaching, learning and research, an infrastructure that will be sustainable and adjustable through future budget constraints.

Key message #1: As the Library staff members rise to the challenge of doing things differently to do more with less, they will need the support of Queen's faculty, staff and students.

Key message #2: All members of the Queen's community are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the concepts of [Open Access](#)⁴ (OA), to explore the Library's [links](#)⁵ for understanding the implications of OA for academic research and publishing, to support the Library-sponsored Open Access events in October 2009 and "*[to promote] modes of scholarly communication that enable people to share knowledge as broadly as possible.*"

⁴ <http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/brief.htm>

⁵ <http://library.queensu.ca/services/scholcomm#open>