University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville, Arkansas
Staff Meeting
Tuesday, February 14, 2012

**Strategic Initiatives and Goals**
Juana Young led a meeting with library staff to discuss the latest draft of the Strategic Initiatives and Goals. She explained that the directors worked on the committee’s document with feedback from library-wide meetings with faculty and staff, then fine tuned the documents to make items clear and resubmitted that document library-wide. At that point, personnel were asked to volunteer for specific goals, and the directors tried to put people where they volunteered or where their job duties overlapped and made an obvious match. Any person who wishes to make changes to their assignment, or who wishes to volunteer for another assignment, should contact their library director. Everyone has the opportunity to serve where they feel they can make the best contribution. Any remaining unassigned goals will be assigned by the directors with input from the department heads in the next week or two. We may add individuals later to specific goals, but we want to make as much progress as possible in assigning these goals. We need to hear all voices; right now there are not many staff assigned to goals or who volunteered. We need to add more staff to goal assignments.

No change to the goals document was recommended.

**Organizational Structure**
Juana thanked everyone who worked on the Organizational Structure Committee. The overall recommendation from Group 2 (peapod model) was to kept the current hierarchal structure. These models all describe functions rather than departments; it will take some additional time to convert the functions into a working organizational chart. Any individual may fit in several of the boxes as they are not represents, due to the number of functions they perform as a part of their job duties. We need to firm up the structural plan to get on with the business of the strategic goals. We don’t know how the structure will sort itself out, but we must take the first step.

Both groups recommended that communication be improved organization wide, which will depend upon personal responsibility and personal thought and consideration.

There are three documents representing three versions of the functional chart. The first is the amalgamation by the Admin Group from the two versions presented by the Organizational Structure Committee and is the draft that was given to the Library Council. Based on feedback from the Library Council, the Admin Group revised Draft 1 into Drafts 2 and 3.

Some suggestions for terminology or descriptions: change “research services” to “premium research services” and “fundamental research services.” There are three components to the functional chart: foundational help, which includes core classes, focused research, which includes intensive subject and graduate student work, and a top level that includes researchers who are pursuing grants, data sets, maintaining public access to their data. Subject specialists currently cover all of those levels. The current programs that the University is developing focus on research—it would be good to provide terminology or language to show that we support this focus, even if it is a fuzzy term because people do research support as well as other functions.

We need to describe in a different way the needs of the University. We need to consider these functions as a continuum rather than as an either/or. These various elements are not broken out into
piece for the public face; the patrons see only one face to help them. Collection development decisions are informed by the work the selectors do with patrons and vice versa. It is hard to separate collection development functions from its interdependency with library instruction. And collection development is also informed by Interlibrary Loan.

It is a current trend across the country to have subject selectors work with researchers on grant applications.

The boxes around the functional elements represent common areas of communication and are grouped to facilitate discussion within and between groups.

Group 3 combines academic and research services because these elements are closely related and as a result of discussions during the Library Council meeting. The combination represents a big area, and it is hard to imagine a single director managing that many functions. It represents our public face—those functions that include interaction with patrons. We really need to be consistent with the message we put out and the services we provide. The users should have seamless service, both at the main library and in the branches.

Even if the functions are split out in an organizational chart to report to different directors, the individuals would still do the same work together. Having two functional areas will speed up the decision making.

Everyone who has responsibility for a particular function is expected to report to the group indicated in the middle bubble on a regular basis. This group will be responsibility for negotiating or designing solutions to problems or projects. Its purpose is to keep each functional area informed. The middle group is designed so that everyone can talk to each other and does not limit impromptu communication that should occur as needed.

Do any of these models look like they may facilitate better communication between the organization and why? We need to avoid silos of communication in the chain of command. We can do this by setting aside time for communication to occur. The dean gives everyone license to talk to one another at any time about any library issue. An individual can go directly to the affected person to discuss the problem, and then report to the supervisor rather than report to the supervisor alone and wait for the communication to trickle to the affected person. This can result in conflict, which is unnecessary. Don’t sit back and NOT point out problems as they occur. Push the decision-making down to a more efficient level; staff regularly take care of day-to-day operations.

Also, staff should remind managers of questions or concerns that were not dealt with on the first round. People get busy with competing priorities and forget. Deal with issues and keep managers informed of progress.

We should strive for an organizational culture that is communicative and responsive. Most functions impact others; effective communication is crucial. We all share systems, policies, and practices; we need to keep things moving and avoid log jams.

One advantage to Draft 2 is that smaller groups can communicate more easily and then interact also with the larger group.
We recognize that cultural shift will occur, but it will take time and work. Ask a question when in doubt. Being able to recognize needs in advance is essential.

Human Resources will present development classes to give everyone tools to communicate and negotiate effectively. Everyone should participate. It is incumbent upon the staff to make the change. Stick your head out and take a chance. Internalize how much impact each of us has, both positive and negative. Make the public and patrons feel welcome and wanted. Help patrons wherever you find they need help. You are the face of the Libraries when you are working, especially when you are wearing your name tag. The public does not know the difference in departments and don’t care. They want help.

Some duties currently performed by faculty will devolve to the staff as faculty assume different duties. We need to retool and refocus our functions to support the academic changes occurring in the university. Work smarter not harder. Figure out what is nonessential to the university mission and can be cut.

There is a suggestion to use the term “research support” rather than “research services.”

The staff voted for draft 1 (0), draft 2 (25), and draft 3 (5).