Introduction

As described in the Organizational Structure Committee Charge dated April 2011, “the amount of scholarly information being delivered in new ways grows daily. Librarians across North America are re-defining services, the delivery of information to scholars, and the roles of employees in that delivery process….” This committee is to examine the Libraries’ current organizational structure and workflows and develop new organizational models that will reduce redundancies and enhance organizational agility. As the charge mentions, “the strict lines of delineation marked out for the different kinds of work being done no longer make sense and are not working as effectively as in the past.” The Libraries must work harder to align our services with the mission and goals of the university, including providing easy access to research materials for scholars, putting the needs of students first, improving student retention and graduation rates, and enhancing diversity. The committee divided into two subgroups to develop the requested models. Their reports are presented below.

Model Descriptions:

Subgroup 1: Molecular Model

Introduction

The Libraries pursue multiple competing priorities in a time of rapid fiscal and technological change. Time lags created by the structure can inhibit responses. The organization needs to be efficiently and effectively proactive. Full, frequent communication and the agility to form teams to implement programs and tasks are needed to meet evolving needs of users. In particular, this model is intended to address the part of the charge: Starting with the end-users and their needs, and working backwards through the “supply chain” of how those needs are anticipated and met through the work of everyone in the organization, the Committee should examine the workflow for parallel but disparate activities, for overlap, for inconsistencies, for new alignment paths.

The Libraries have been a quiet and steady pillar of campus; in future, the Libraries should be even more visibly and notably successful in support of the students, faculty, the staff and the public.

Explanation of the Model

The molecular model collects the large elements (branches, departments and the like) according to function. The model is relatively flat; broad task areas are represented by circles and the related functions are gathered together. If it were three dimensional, the model would look more like a molecule or a DNA strand.
Within the functional groups, the elements are not in a top-to-bottom hierarchy, but more coequal within the group, as illustrated in the second graphic. Each team within a functional group has a team or operational leader. If a head or chair of a functional group is needed, the position could be rotated among the team leaders. Some functional groups overlap, some people consult with or work with people in other groups, and the leaders of elements or groups contribute to the Operational Planning/Communication Clearinghouse and the Outreach/Assessment areas.

The groupings consolidate ‘like’ elements, so that people with similar skills and missions can cooperate and produce synergistic relationships between goals and services. The intention is to push tasks and how and when to do the work as close to the responsibility for the work as possible, giving employees more scope within their sphere and freeing team or unit leaders for greater involvement in other efforts.
In the University’s report “Destination Graduation: a path to enhancing student success,” an indicator for student persistence is the number and depth of interpersonal connections an individual student makes on campus (Destination_Graduation_IGRTF_Report.pdf). Steven Bell’s article “Keeping Them Enrolled: How Academic Libraries Contribute to Student Retention” also supports this assertion (Bell, 2008). Connecting with users implies energetic involvement of the Libraries with the campus in more personal and innovative ways and was the impetus for placing “Outreach/Partnerships and Assessment” at the center of this model. The growing trend toward placing librarians in departments and colleges at least part of the time, mentioned by John Budd (2009) among others, is one of several ways to connect, and changing responsibilities for some work is one way to create time for the librarians to be active in that role.

This would involve task analyses, then providing each person with appropriate stated expectations for their performance and delegating authority within functional groups to individuals according to their assignments, training and understanding of the tasks at hand. It would allow the related functional teams to become close-knit because of the understanding of common tasks, but keep them communicating and part of an ‘adhocracy’ (Maloney, Antelman, Arlitsch, & Butler, 2010) with other groups or group members, working together more spontaneously on projects and proposals. This model requires leaders to be strong facilitators; this may require training and development within the organization. However, according to Jon E. Cawthorne:

“By encouraging the involvement of subordinates in decision making, senior or top leaders practice shared leadership; such leadership is defined as the dynamic, interactive influence process involving more than just the downward influence on subordinates. Shared leadership is broadly distributed among a group of individuals instead of centralized in a single individual (e.g., the library director.) …This frontline empowerment also has the potential to enhance communication, coordination, and
accountability through the middle of the organization; such empowerment often makes the difference in how well the desired change is achieved” (Cawthorne, 2010).

Promoting a participative culture emphasizes unity and cooperation and encourages employee contributions to decision-making. With the necessary training, putting responsibility for the smaller decisions ‘on the scene’ would increase responsive service.

The model allows for more flexibility, easier cooperation and quicker response to initiatives and emerging opportunities. Grouping by related functions puts ‘like with like’. Staff who understand a particular function in one circumstance will find it easier to ‘get’ and help with similar work in other circumstances; when work pace slows in one area, it may be faster in another, and people can move to the work as needed. Problems in common between libraries or parts of the libraries may be shared, and solutions developed in common.

We need to establish career paths for staff and middle managers, and develop and reinforce cross-training within and among the groupings. Many library faculty members and staff are within sight, and some are in reach, of potential retirement, and we may or may not be in a position to hire or easily develop more.

Parts of the Model

**Outreach/Partnerships/Assessment:** Reference, Supervisors, others providing assessment, training and instruction, networking, and outreach

**Rationale:** An Outreach/Assessment group (or additional focus on assessment) to evaluate our work in a timely, accurate manner, identifying strengths and weaknesses. They would help plan assessment of student learning and they would support strategic planning, plan and increase outreach, and help vet future projects. They would seek and promote partnerships with relevant individuals or departments, such as the ELC, the QWC, the Honors College and other campus groups. They would scan the higher education horizon to find projects, initiatives and partners for the Libraries on the local, regional, and national levels to bring to the other functional groups.

Measuring what we are doing to support student and faculty success, working with partners to strengthen our services and improve our collections, and marketing ourselves and our work better should all help increase and demonstrate the impact and return on investment the Libraries provide. We need to illustrate our concrete value in ways that resonate with the administration, the legislature, and the public.

Members of this group would be recruited from the other groups and would rotate in and out as needs change. This group would include functional team members and leaders, and include persons with specific training in assessment or provided training and time to help assess services, work flows, and instruction quantitatively as well as qualitatively.

**Operational Planning and Communication Clearinghouse**

**Rationale:** The Operational Planning and Communication Clearinghouse, made up of most team and operational leaders, is intended to improve communication between functional areas and help with strategic planning, including vetting proposals to forwarded to the upper administration group. Having most team or unit leaders meet on a regular basis should make operations more cohesive and transparent.
Support the Libraries: Upper Administration, budgeting office, functional leaders, supervisors, Public
Relations, Development, HR, et.al.
Rationale: This functional team is the supporting frame of the Libraries; it coordinates public
relations, fund-raising/development, and the budget office. HR influences and responds to the
other elements. The Outreach group could be a partner for diversity recruitment, and the
Operational Planning group could assist with succession planning.

Make Resources and Services Visible: Cataloging, Serials/Binding, Web Services, Electronic Resources
Management, Digitization, Systems, Gov. Docs, Reference, Special Collections
Rationale: To strengthen scholarly communication and create access to more library treasures,
digitization is needed on a larger and broader scale. Collection of works and data sets for an
institution repository will be ongoing. Coordination will be needed to showcase our unique
collections, in cooperation with the Help the Public group and the Outreach/ Partnerships/
Assessment group.

Resources Management: Acquisitions, Collection Development, Selectors, ILL, Reference, Special
Collections, et. al.
Rationale: Aligning functions of current Collection Development, Acquisitions and ILL
streamlines the ability of the library to initiate more creative, fiscally responsible options for
meeting the research needs of the campus. ILL is increasing; book acquisitions and processing are
level, and staff could cross-train in order to work where they were needed. Selectors, other
reference personnel and Special Collections would be involved; the Outreach/Assessment group
could be involved in campus communication.

Help the Public: Reference, Circ/Stacks, Periodicals, Special Collections, Branches and Departments.
(PAM, Fine Arts, Biochemistry/Chemistry, Physics)
Rationale: Consolidating these elements into a larger functional group would increase
communication among individuals whose work is similar. Grouping the departments and
branches that directly “Help the Public” would help promote a constant message and consistent,
superlative service. This would strengthen connections to campus clients. Increased
communication between departments should support that intention. Increased training in those
aspects and services available in the Libraries would improve our impression on students.

Conclusion
The Libraries must effectively demonstrate our influence in visible and positive ways. Full and
frequent communication both within and outside the Libraries is essential to meet the evolving needs of
users. Internally, enthusiastic leadership and commitment by participative teams should increase
communication, morale and productivity. Using the Operational Planning/Communication Clearinghouse
as intended should improve communication and cooperation among the functional groups, as well as
providing support for proposals and programs. Functional elements working together within their groups
should reduce redundancy and increase cohesiveness. For external interactions, outreach, new
partnerships and branding could improve the Libraries’ visibility on campus and lead to better support.
Assessment to discover what we do right and what we can do better will reduce redundancy and save
time. Grant funding for support of internal programs and projects and support of the campus institutional
repository are only a few possible good outcomes of adoption.
Subgroup 2 Model
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The above model divides the work of the Libraries into four broad areas represented by circles. The fact that the circles overlap indicates that the functions within the circles work together and require either services or other cooperation from the component parts in order to achieve library goals. For example, the Description function serves the Libraries at the most fundamental level and across all departments. Without it, there is no library. The same can be said for the Delivery function, in that it serves all members of the community and relies on the work of those in the description and discovery areas in order to do its own work. The Discovery function makes it possible for library users to locate resources which can then be supplied by the Delivery work group. The Library Administration function oversees the other three work groups.

While the Libraries certainly do employ functional experts in several areas, Subgroup 2 recognizes that the changing academic landscape requires the development of expertise in emerging areas. The group recommends that, as part of the structural change process, the Libraries consider where such expertise is needed and include expert development when considering future faculty and staff assignments.

Description:
The proposed Description department includes the following groups: binding, cataloging, digitization, government documents, preservation, serials, systems, web services, and most elements of acquisitions. These groups are largely responsible for making library materials
findable, so their relationship to each other is natural and allows for complementary workflows to be grouped together. This increases efficiency and allows managers and supervisors to easily share related expertise.

The preservation of library materials not only extends their usable life, but also protects the library’s financial investment. The subgroup recommends the creation of a more formal preservation unit, which would incorporate binding functions. This work group would be a centralized unit administering to the preservation needs of the Libraries as a whole, including specialized work with Special Collections items, as well as implementing disaster preparedness for collection emergencies (leaks, wet books, etc.), in cooperation with the Libraries facility management group.

Library users expect library and archival materials to be available on the Internet. Although the Libraries have made strides in digitizing materials and placing them on our website, there is room for improvement. Following the recommendation of the library’s digitization plan, expertise should be further developed in this functional area. The group proposes formal establishment of a digitization unit to prioritize and manage digital projects. This working group would identify items for digitization projects, scan at the recommended standards, and apply metadata before publication in the virtual environment, thus providing worldwide access to our collections. Having digitization and institutional repository activities overseen by the leader of the Description services area will allow for both library and archival materials to be exploited in an efficient manner.

**Discovery:**
The discovery function encompasses the traditional elements of reference, rebranded as Research Services, as well as the library branches, the Performing Arts and Media Department, and Special Collections and Archives. Activities should include the kinds of things that will showcase the unique contributions the Libraries make to the campus environment. It will be necessary for people working on these kinds of projects to work in close cooperation with public relations staff. It is here that it will be possible to emphasize the delivery of individualized assistance as well as research skill building as a critical component of academic success. By doing these things the Libraries can have a positive effect on retention and graduation rates. (Bell, 2008)

The Research Services department will divide its services along research and point of service needs. Generalists, graduate assistants, and hourly staff will staff the service desk. Generalists will provide basic library instruction and information literacy services. Subject liaisons will provide specialized one-on-one service. User education plays an important role in student retention. Therefore the committee recommends the creation of a User Education group within the Research Services Department. User Education will be tasked with instructional design and implementation in general with subject specialists continuing to be responsible for classes related to their specific majors. Types of functions within User Education would include, development and training in LibGuides standards, library classroom assessment tools, and service assessment.
Because Special Collections and Archives functions as a branch library, the subgroup recommends it be placed within the Discovery work group, in the interest of keeping “like” functions together as much as is practically possible.

**Delivery:**
The Delivery department includes campus and desktop delivery functions, checkout services, machine assistance, resource sharing, reserves, stacks, storage. The department will be divided into two main units, Checkout Services and Materials Delivery.

The Checkout Services department derives its functionality from circulating materials. The Materials Checkout unit will be responsible for all the everyday materials that circulate and will provide support for the microform machines and scanners. Reserves and Stacks management will function within Checkout Services.

The Materials Delivery Department will include interlibrary loan, user driven purchasing, desktop delivery, and physical retrieval and delivery. Of course, these functions will require close cooperation with staff in other areas such as acquisitions and cataloging. It may be desirable to assign an acquisitions staff person to the materials delivery work group in order to facilitate patron driven purchasing projects.

The subgroup recommends the Periodicals service desk be closed. Because the staff currently working there are already assigned to Access Services, it will be possible to use their talents in the physical and desktop delivery group or in other areas that are identified in the near future.

**Library Administration and Development**
Library Administrative functions should remain largely unchanged. The various units within this work group are administration, development, facilities management, human resources, and public relations. Because of the overarching nature of community outreach programs, that function should be managed and duties assigned by the Library Administration work group.

**Conclusion:**
According to Jacques (1990), managerial hierarchy is the only way to structure unified working systems with large numbers of employees. Subgroup 2 devised a model that does not create many new work groups but does recognize the need for adjustments to the current structure that will more readily support the goals of the University and Libraries. The result of this subgroup’s work is not a radically different structure but, rather, one that makes a few changes that improve workflows and relationships among similar activities. It is the work that is being performed that changes quickly, rather than the structure. It is a hierarchical structure which we believe is the best model for large organizations.

Each of the models presented in this report provides options for rearranging the work of the libraries. Both address current initiatives regarding student retention, diversity and the need to increase national and international visibility.
References


