

**University of Ottawa Library Submission**  
**Expert Panel on the Status and Future of Canada's Libraries and Archives**  
**Ottawa, October 4-5, 2013**

1. *What is your mandate and who are your members?*

**Mandate:**

Our mandate is to support the research, learning and teaching activities of the University of Ottawa. Our role is to be the heart of the campus in order to be an integral partner in the above-mentioned activities. We provide resources in many formats, covering all of the research areas supported by the university as a doctoral-intensive institution. We are Canada's premier bilingual university, and we provide services in both languages and information resources in both languages, to the greatest degree feasible. The Library is comprised of about 160 staff, including 46 librarians and 115 support staff. There are three main libraries: Morisset (Arts and Sciences); Brian Dickson (Law) and Roger Guindon (Health Sciences) with librarians embedded in Management and Social Sciences as well as several specialized library units such as Media Resources; Geography, Statistics, and Government Information; Music; and Archives and Special Collections.

**University Community:**

Our members are the university community, i.e. students, faculty, administrative staff, visiting scholars, distance education students, researchers, and others affiliated with the institution. As of 2012-13, there are about 43,000 students, about 4,250 professors and other academic staff, and 2,670 support staff.

**Larger Community:**

We are open to the public, serve our alumni and have a special mandate to support Franco-Ontarians. The Sm@rtLibrary initiative provides direct borrowing privileges to users of the Ottawa Public Library and other partners.

**Strategic Directions:**

The university has taken significant steps to demonstrate accountability, as for example in the [Balanced Score Card](#) approach to measure progress in attaining our goals. Our activities will align with these institutional objectives and indicators. The University's Strategic Plan, [Destination 2020](#), captures the key strategic objectives to guide us in the coming years. The four strategic goals that underline the Strategic Plan are: A rich, inspiring student experience; Research excellence; Francophonie and bilingualism; Developing leaders through internationalization. The Library Strategic plan "recognizes the growing complexity of the cycle of research and scholarly exchange, the accelerating pace of technological change, the value of collaboration and the continued importance of physical learning spaces." (Library Strategic Plan, Destination 2020, February 2012). In this context, we are placing greater emphasis on promoting and leading the scholarly communications process as it affects the creation, dissemination and preservation of knowledge objects and learning resources; on embedding librarians with faculty to developing new partnerships in the research enterprise; on curating, managing and preserving digital research data and archival sources ; and of exploiting new technologies in innovative and creative methods to leverage our expertise and demonstrate the value that we bring to the 21<sup>st</sup> century research institution.

**Collection:**

Our collection is a dynamic portfolio of resources in many formats and languages. "The collection is at the heart of the University's mission to foster scholarship, innovation and knowledge creation. It is both a physical and a virtual collection. There is a wide range of material acquired, such as journals, research databases, print books and e-books, microforms, maps, evidence-based professional tools, government publications, and audiovisual items." (University of Library Collections, <http://www.biblio.uottawa.ca/html/Page?node=us-collections&lang=en>) The Library has made major investments in digital resources of all sorts - e-journals, e-books, research databases,

image banks and data sets – in order to deliver information to our community wherever and whenever they need it. Approximately 70% of our Collections budget is now spent on digital content.

2. *From your collective perspective, what challenges or issues are most prominent for your organization today?*

Research focus:

The role of the academic library is changing radically, in terms of expectations, outcomes, technological options, and these will impact the value that the institution perceives. The university is aiming to achieve a balance between teaching/learning and is also focussed on research. The university has moved from 16<sup>th</sup> in research intensity to 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> and is aiming to be in the top five. This implies that we need to be even more focussed on how we support research activities in different media environments, virtual environments, learning spaces, to meet a wide range of styles and needs. Research is often team based, multidisciplinary, and involves collaboration inside and outside of the university. We aim to be essential partners in the research enterprise, which includes involvement in grant applications, project scoping and methodology, data gathering and analysis, and preservation of research data. We have established research team with expertise in dissemination of scholarly output, Systematic Reviews and knowledge translation and are building upon this successful model to reach out to other faculty and develop conversations around research needs and a team-based philosophy.

Copyright:

Responding proactively to the major changes in the copyright landscape is important to us, i.e. the new Canadian copyright legislation, recent jurisprudence on five copyright cases, the challenges of the relationship with Access Copyright. We intend to reassess our options regarding the AC Model License, in order to represent the best interests of our community without contracting any agreements that we feel are not legally necessary. Our community uses copyrighted information, as authors, rights holders and users, in a multiplicity of daily activities involving research, teaching, and learning, hence the importance of respecting the law while ensuring that we mitigate our risk and promote appropriate policies and procedures. In a related vein, promoting a deeper understanding of the scholarly communications process and ecosystem is important to us – this will ensure that our faculty partners understand their options and can make informed decisions regarding the disposition of their research outputs. Promotion of and encouraging Open Access is another important component of the scholarly communications dialogue across the university community.

Partnership Opportunities:

Leveraging our consortial partnerships (provincial, national, research discipline-focused) in order to obtain the greatest possible economies of scale in relation to library services and collections is important to us. We focus on initiatives and opportunities to build upon economies of scale in how we provide not only licensed scholarly content but infrastructure services, such as resource sharing, ‘back end’ systems and cloud-based workflows to provide the necessary management of our resources. Building upon the collective knowledge and expertise of our consortial partners as we work towards innovative solutions that draw upon our collective strengths is a strategic goal for us. We seek to expand and strengthen partnerships with hospitals and research institutes in the Ottawa region, to promote greater mutual benefit for research opportunities and teaching activities. We have institutional affiliations (involving teaching and clinical research) with the Ottawa Hospital, Children’s Hospital of Eastern Ontario, Royal Ottawa Hospital, Montfort Hospital, and the University of Ottawa Heart Institute.

Digital Humanities:

The digital humanities are an area of growth where we expect to focus attention. We now have a Digital Humanities Librarian who can take a leadership role in developing strategies and priorities to position us to nurture partnerships with faculty. A partnership is developing with the Office of Research and the Faculties of Arts and Social Sciences to address infrastructure development, recruitment and retention of faculty in the digital humanities. There are key issues around access, curation, management, and preservation of data sets, visualization objects, and other outputs from the work of digital humanists.

#### Staffing:

Inadequate human resources, particularly librarian positions, have a significant on-going impact on our ability to meet our goals. We are in need of more highly skilled staff and less of the lower skilled staff whose work is being diminished by the effective use of new technologies, streamlining, consortial opportunities, vendor partnerships, and a shift from traditional resource acquisition to new media formats.

#### User-focus:

We need to deploy technology wisely and strategically to deliver maximum value in supporting the academic enterprise. User-driven technologies and tools are having a profound impact on the teaching mission of the university, and on the diversity of spaces and environments in which learning occurs today. Therefore we need to remain sensitive to user preferences and expectations vis-à-vis their goals and aspirations. This means aligning our thinking with evolving trends in usability, integration, and value-added services that we deliver via new technologies and tools in a highly networked world. Mobile technology in particular is a phenomenon that is profoundly reshaping the information-seeking behaviour of users [rephrasing here]; this will be a key driver in influencing our services and teaching goals. It is a disruptive force, in the best sense of the word.

#### Information Literacy:

Our information literacy programs needs to be sensitive to the new philosophy around learning outcomes in an era of greater accountability for the use of public funds. This is exemplified in the Institutional Quality Assurance framework brought forward by the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance. Graduate degree-level and undergraduate degree-level expectations are defined in a manner that is “more streamlined, more effective, more transparent, and more publicly accountable.” We will address the need to align information literacy in the digital era with the learning outcomes philosophy that focuses on measurable outcomes that link with program objectives for the success of the student. We are working with our Faculty of Education as they plan for the move to a two-year teacher-training program across Ontario as mandated by the Provincial Government. Information literacy should be embedded into the curriculum with the goal of primary and secondary teachers integrating it into their teaching at all grade levels so that students arriving at university already have the information skills to be successful.

#### Accessibility:

The [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act](#) is an important social and political reality that we need to address, in order to meet barrier-free accessibility requirements for 2015 and beyond. This means that the library and the university need to work closely together towards implementation. The Library is represented on the university-wide accessibility team that is addressing these issues.

- 3. What do you anticipate as future challenges (by 2020), and how do you see you membership contributing to address them?*

#### Defining the value of the Library:

In the era of Google and the digital knowledge revolution, university administrations are questioning the value of libraries as never before. We also live in an era of intense financial pressures. The convergence of these two forces means that libraries need to demonstrate their strategic value to the organization in measurable, outcomes-based ways that reinforce the essential function of the library, i.e. that its purpose and added value cannot be replicated by any online tool or environment. Defining success indicators for library services in the new world order of scholarship, technology, and education will be an ongoing challenge by 2020

#### Long-term viability:

The viability of the post-secondary system in Ontario, with twenty-one universities serving a very large and diverse population of learners for workplaces in the digital world, is very much a question mark. The financial sustainability of universities, the focus on learning outcomes, the need for alignment with a rapidly changing economy, the traditional organizational structure of universities, and redundancy of programs are a few of the pressure points that are being experienced today.

#### Information Technology:

The proliferation of information technology options (local and remote) will provide more opportunities and possible pitfalls as we make strategic decisions in a quickly changing educational landscape. The rapid obsolescence of systems, the volatility of the marketplace, the complexity of decision-making, and the need for sustainable funding are all issues that we need to confront. The lack of interoperability among systems is a significant challenge, as this creates obstacles for obtaining efficiencies and streamlining of business processes. Assessing and acquiring new systems from the information industry is a major investment in staff time and expertise, and this includes the issues around implementation and integration with existing services and activities.

More importantly, developments in IT mean that we are facing what may be a 'radical' revolution which could allow collaboration on a scale as yet unseen. Unified Resource Management Systems, linked open data, and cloud cataloguing have the potential to change our landscape and give the term resource-sharing a whole new meaning. Initiatives like the Integrated Digital Scholarship Eco-System (A partnership of Canadian Research Knowledge Network (CRKN) and Canadian Association of Research Libraries (CARL) with the goal of mapping all digital scholarship initiatives in Canada in order to identify gaps, reduce duplication and promote the leveraging existing initiatives) and The Ontario Council of University Libraries (OCUL) Collaborative Initiatives Task Force which is charged with gathering and analysing detailed information on the operations of its member libraries with the idea of introducing large scale collaboration have the potential to create a more cohesive approach to our 'backroom' functions allowing us to focus more of our resources on the researcher and student.

#### Teaching:

The ongoing revolution in teaching technologies and information use and manipulation will have a major impact on our services and activities by 2020, i.e. how teaching is delivered, the range of tools available, the integration of library services and resources into the variety of teaching environments (virtual and physical). Blended learning will move from a concept to reality as we dedicate staff and other resources to this emerging form of learning and teaching in the new era.

#### Research data:

Supporting the growing diversity of researcher activities, and collaboration in preserving/curating the enormous data sets and outputs that will be produced by 2020, in terms of access, use, and preservation, will be an ongoing challenge. The creation of a Digital Humanities librarian position, and existing Research Liaison librarians in Health Sciences, Science and Engineering, and Social Sciences, will be facing this growing issue.

#### Skill sets:

Ensuring that we have staff with the right skill sets and flexibility to meet our objectives as we head into an era of even greater change, uncertainty, and opportunity for higher education, will be a challenge.

- 4. What would your organization be doing if funding were increased? And what are you not doing because of cutbacks or reduced funding?*

Our first priority would be to increase the size of our team as we are significantly short-staffed to meet our strategic goals, especially in a university that has seen a meteoric growth in the past ten years (the student population has doubled in this period). Moreover, the university has ambitious aims to reach the ranks of the top five Canadian universities in research intensity. Chronic under-funding in relation to staffing means that we will need to make difficult decisions regarding our staff complement, to redeploy these resources to areas that are more strategic and future-focussed.

5. *How does your organization relate to Library and Archives Canada (LAC)? Or, in your view, how should LAC relate to major archival and librarian organizations?*

We are deeply concerned at the dismantling or rather evisceration of LAC's leadership role in the Canadian library and heritage community. The cuts are having an enormous impact on LAC's ability to fulfill its role at the national level, and the risk of losing our cultural and historical heritage is very real. There is broad consensus on this issue among library organizations, archival organizations, and community organizations across the country, as can be witnessed by numerous statements and briefings over the past year, and a mountain of discussions and reactions in cyberspace. The implications for a university library, dedicated to managing, preserving, and making information resources accessible to students and professors, are very negative.

Similarly, we are also deeply concerned with a profound lack of respect for the Canadian library and heritage communities with regard to consultation and collaboration- this has been a form of window-dressing, without any substantive process to constructively engage with our communities. This needs to change if the relationship is to improve, and we hope and expect that the next leader at LAC will be qualified to address the challenges and will keep this firmly in mind in developing strategies for rebuilding networks of trust and collegiality.

In terms of specific services, here is a listing of the major ones that are of importance to us:

- LAC is a major partner to the UO Library in terms of making available unique Canadian resources to support research and teaching; consultation/research assistance to students and faculty; providing access to our students' ETDs (electronic theses and dissertations) via Theses Canada; leadership on the Canadian union catalogue (AMICUS);
- LAC's comprehensive acquisition of Canadian published material and archival acquisitions, in accordance with its mandate, would be of great value to our community
- An effective and efficient Interlibrary Loans service that we can rely upon when needed.
- The importance of a leadership role for LAC in terms of best practices and standards in managing, preserving, and delivering information resources to our community. This relates to the need for sharing expertise and working collaboratively with library and archival organizations
- The importance of providing information resources in digital form to all Canadians, in the context of a well-thought plan that involves consultation and collaboration with the library and archival communities in Canada. Only a small amount of LAC's collection has been digitized. Formats are changing, accessibility is an issue, and establishing priorities is important.
- The importance of a truly collaborative approach in facing the challenges of a national institution charged with acquiring, preserving and making available the recorded knowledge of Canadian society, in the digital age. Closely related to this, an advocacy role within government is very important in order to provide leadership by example. This can include advocacy on any of the above-raised issues.
- The reinstatement of the National Archival Development Program (NADP) that assists in the preservation and accessibility of Canada's archival heritage, would have a very beneficial impact on our researchers and students who need archival materials for their research purposes.

Canada doesn't lack leadership in libraries and archives - we have many committed, innovative and visionary leaders in our libraries and archives. What we are lacking is leadership at the national level. Such leadership could create an encompassing vision allowing for a more cohesive approach during these times of radical change and provide a focal point for national and international collaborations.

Tony Horava,  
Associate University Librarian, Collections

Leslie Weir  
University Librarian

September 2013