

Library Council – Annual Report 2014-2015

Dalhousie University Libraries

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Submitted August 17, 2015

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Introduction

This third Annual Report of the Dalhousie Libraries Council covers my term as the chair June 30, 2014-June 30, 2015. I'm honored to have had this opportunity to serve the Council and can proudly say that together as members of the Council we have had a productive year. I also had the privilege of working with two extremely capable secretaries in Sarah Stevenson and Carol Richardson who made my term enjoyable and to whom I extend my heartfelt gratitude and thanks.

Overview and Statistics

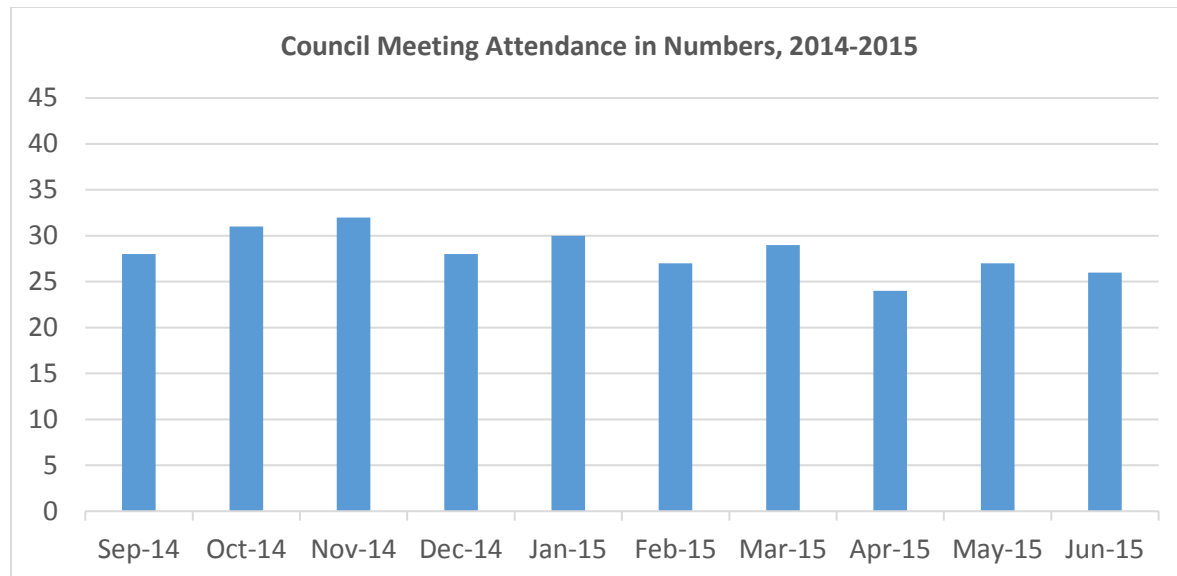
Library Council met a total of eleven times during the period covered by this report. As stipulated in the Terms of Reference (ToR), Council did not meet during July and August 2014. There was a special meeting called on June 23, 2015 to update Council members about the budget situation of the libraries. This meeting was chaired by the University Librarian since my term as chair has come to an end and nobody has volunteered to chair the Council for the 2015-2016 academic year.

Over this reporting period the Council experienced size variability due to retirements, new appointments, leaves and appointment of additional voting members on the recommendation of the University Librarian. The membership stipulated by the Terms of Reference (ToR) included as voting members all those holding appointments as academic librarians in the Dalhousie Libraries System, the GIS Director, the Intellectual Property Officer, Systems Developers, all members of SMT, and the newly appointed members except the University Librarian and the AUL members of SMT, who are non-voting ex-officio Council members. The total attending membership of Council during this period was 43 members. Similar to previous years, attendance at Council this term was above average with about 28 attendees per meeting regardless of the increase in size of the membership. Only in November's regular meeting did Council experience the highest attendance of 32 members, and a low of 24 members at the April 2015 meeting. Quorum for Council is 50% + 1 of the voting members or 20 voting members. Council maintained quorum at all meetings during this period.

Attending Council Members, 2014-2015

Jennifer Adams	Ian Colford	Jason MacDonald	Michelle Paon
Linda Aiken	Marc Comeau	Heather MacFadyen	Robin Parker
Ann Barrett	Sarah Jane Dooley	Oriel MacLennan	Phil O'Hara
Creighton Barrett	Sandra Dwyer	Gwendolyn MacNairn	Carol Richardson
Linda Bedwell	Patrick Ellis	Erin MacPherson	Phyllis Ross
Donna Bourne-Tyson	Gail Fraser	Joyline Makani	Dominic Silvio
James Boxall	Allison Fulford	Anne Matthewman	Janice Slauenwhite
Geoffrey Brown	Melissa Helwig	Shelley McKibbon	Karen Smith
Michele Charlton	Mark Lewis	Lindsay McNiff	Sarah Stevenson
Karen Chandler	Elaine MacInnis	David Michels	Alice Stover
Sai Choi Chua	Marlo MacKay	Michael Moosberger	Margaret Vail

NB: Julie Marcoux joined Council in June.



Council approved the terms of reference for Dalhousie Libraries Service Point Committee (DLSPC or Service Point Committee) and Web Advisory Committee (revised). These ToR have been posted on the Library Council webpage. The Council had a discussion about the election of Library Senate representative, previously administered by the Library Systems Appointments Committee (LSAC). Clause 2.6 of the Library Council ToR was accepted as encompassing the Senate Guidelines. LSAC member Sarah Stevenson prepared a revised procedure in consultation with the University Secretariat for electing the libraries' Senator. This was accepted by Council at the June 9, 2015 meeting and will be going to the governance committee of the University Secretariat for approval in the fall of 2015. The Council also amended clause 2.7 of the ToR to include monthly updates by the Library Senate representative to Library Council in addition to the annual report.

As an avenue for effective communication and information sharing for the Libraries, the Council continues to allow members to update each other on committee activities, library-specific activities, individual projects or research endeavors as well as activities happening on campus/faculties/departments. Discussions this year included LibAnalytics implementation, new positions, resource wish guidelines, election of Libraries' Senator, Primo implementation, privacy/access, Tri-Council open access policy, archives reproduction policy & fee structure (approval of the policy will be the responsibility of SMT and not Council), SciVal/Scholars@Dal/DalSpace & Dataverse, and budget updates. Similar to previous years, the Council again provided opportunities for members to present results of their research, committee reports, and items of significance to the libraries community. For example, Linda Bedwell gave a presentation on her research during her sabbatical leave that focused on three main topics: Library as Place; Investigation of Library Assessment Structures at Peer Institutions, with Recommendations; and Personalized Assistance and Confidence-Building: The Libraries' Role in Student Retention. Also, Elaine MacInnis gave a presentation on her library furniture field trip to Michigan (Steelcase and Grand Valley Learning Centre conference). More importantly, the monthly Community Updates continue to function well in providing short snapshots of what everyone is doing. New to this year is the introduction of the opportunity for members to share their conference highlights as well as a designate timeslot for SMT Reports in the agenda.

In addition to the presentations and information sharing mentioned above, the Council also hosted two other guests this year. Dr. Fiona Black, Associate Vice-President Academic, presented during the January

meeting about fostering student success with specific emphasis on Dalhousie University's strategic priority 1.1: Retention as outcome. In the May Council meeting John Yolkowski, project manager for the Elisabeth Mann Borges Digitization Project, presented on the Borgese collection.

Although the Council is still considered as an effective avenue for information sharing and admired by other libraries countrywide (which by itself is an impressive achievement for all of us), the feedback received this year and noted in previous annual reports clearly indicate the contrary sentiments within the Council. Despite the recommendations from previous annual reports, the Council is still only an information sharing platform.

Issues Arising/Observations

During the past year of Council I have identified a number of issues that have arisen and I would like to bring them forward for Council's consideration.

1. The Role of Library Council

This seems to be an issue that has not yet been resolved. Discussions in the June meeting clearly indicate that members are still confused about the function of Library Council. A few members felt that the current version of Council is not what it was originally set up to do; while others felt that the Council seems to be a platform for SMT to push through their agenda items without critical and insightful discussions. I recommend that the incoming chair dedicates sometime for the review of the function of Council. If possible a half day retreat should be convened to iron out the confusions and set Council right.

2. Duties and Responsibilities of Council

There has been a concern about the duties and responsibilities of Council, specifically, clauses 2.1.4. "The creation of new positions or appointments;" and 2.2. "The Council shall periodically review and participate in the implementation of the mission, goals, objectives, and priorities of the Dalhousie Libraries." Judging from comments of few members during meetings in which issues associated with these clauses were raised, it seemed these two clauses were not respected. Some new positions did not receive the necessary required time for deliberation and were thus rushed while others (support staff) just got a mention during updates. Also, some members felt they were not fully involved in the drafting of the new strategic priorities of the library apart from the updates and brief discussions during Council meetings. The formation of an independent group to look into this process could be considered as a violation of clause 2.2. I recommend that the ToR for Council be consulted when matters of these nature arise.

3. Committees of Council

There seems to be an explosion in numbers of council committees and some members felt some of these committees are not useful anymore. Maybe it is time for reconsideration of some of these committees.

4. SMT Reports

Even though the introduction of designated timeslot for members of SMT to report developments in their respective portfolios was a step in the right direction for Council, however, judging from a discussion during the March meeting it appears there needs to be clarification on what to be included in the reports. The suggestion was to have the reports separated into two sections: that is, the AUL could report on their

system-wide responsibilities under AUL/Library Heads Reports and the Assistant Heads could report on their respective library matters under Community Updates. This is a suggestion that was not implemented and I would like to recommend that it be considered by Council.

5. Attendance of Council meetings

Although quorum was attained in all of Council meetings this year, however, the average attendance of 28 members per meeting is not impressive and more has to be done to encourage attendance. I recommend solicitation of feedback from members as to why some chose not to attend meetings.

Conclusion

I would like to thank Council for the opportunity to serve as Chair for 2014/2015 academic year. I know Council is still in its infancy and struggling to define itself, however, it is my hope that members continue to embrace it and run for office. Finally, since we do not have a chair yet, I would like to welcome Donna Bourne-Tyson to the role of interim Chair and Sandra Dwyer to the role of Secretary for the 2015/2016 year.