Dalhousie University Libraries

Library Council – Annual Report 2012-2013

Submitted August 21, 2013

David H. Michels (Chair)

Introduction

It is with pleasure I submit this first annual report of Dalhousie University Libraries - Library Council 2012-2013. This report covers my term as Chair May 2012-June 2013. Having served on the Terms of Reference Committee, it was personally gratifying to see that work come to fruition in the form of a functional and, I believe, effective Council. I had the privilege during my term of serving with two very capable secretaries Ann Barrett and Lindsay McNiff to whom I extend my gratitude and thanks. I welcome Gwyn Pace to the role of secretary and fully expect she will continue the tradition.

Overview and Statistics

Library Council met a total of twelve times during the period covered by this report. Council did not meet during July and August 2012 as per the Terms of Reference. The Chair cancelled the May 2013 meeting due to conference conflicts and an anticipated low attendance. There was one special meeting called on January 21, 2013 to discuss the Associate University Librarian positions.

The size of Council was variable over this reporting period with a retirement, new appointments, leaves, and term positions. The membership stipulated by the ToR included as voting members all those holding appointments as academic librarians in the Dalhousie Libraries System, Libraries HR Advisor, GIS Director, Archives Specialist, and Systems Developer. Non-voting members of Council include the University Librarian, and all members of the Dalhousie Libraries' Senior Management Team (SMT). The total attending membership of Council during this period was 37 members. Attendance at Council remained sufficiently high averaging 29 attendees per meeting with an attendance high of 35 members in the January regular meeting, and a low of 26 members at both the June 2012 and June 2013 meetings. Quorum for Council is 2/3 of the voting members or 18 voting members. Council maintained quorum at all meetings during this period.

Attending Council Members 2012-2013

Jennifer Adams	Sarah Jane Dooley	Oriel MacLennan	Helen Powell
Linda Aiken	Sandy Dwyer	Gwendolyn MacNairn	Phyllis Ross
Ann Barrett	Patrick Ellis	Joyline Makani	Dominic Silvio
Creighton Barrett	Allison Fulford	Shelly MacKibbon	Janice Slauenwhite
James Boxall	Melissa Helwig	Lindsay McNiff	Karen Smith
Geoff Brown	Mark Lewis	David Michels	Sarah Stevenson
Linda Bedwell	Jason MacDonald	Micheal Moosburger	Margaret Vail
Donna Bourne-Tyson	Heather MacFayden	Gwyn Pace	
Ian Colford	Elaine MacInnis	Michelle Paon	
Marc Comeau	Marlo MacKay	Robin Parker	

Attendance
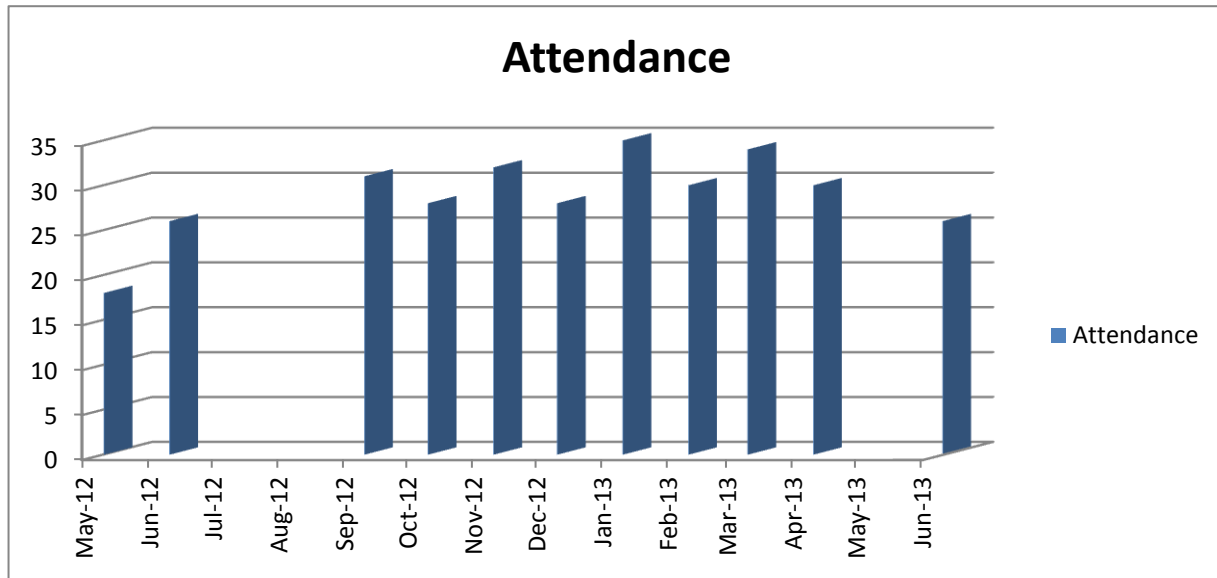
Council approved the terms of reference for seven standing committees: Assessment and User Experience Committee, Communications Committee, Digital Scholarship Initiative, Information Literacy Committee, Libraries Internship/Practicum Coordinating Committee (LIPCC), Library Research Advisory Committee, Scholarly Resources Management Group (SRMG), and Web Advisory Committee. The terms of reference for each was approved by Council and posted on the Library Council webpage. There were two working groups established, the Camtasia Alternative Working Group (CAWG) and the Dalhousie Libraries Student Advisory Group. The final report of the CAWG was adopted by Council and has been posted on the Council webpage.

Council has been an effective communication venue. It has allowed members to keep Council aware of ongoing work of the committees and solicit questions and feedback. I noted eight formal presentations by Council members and numerous other shorter information notes. Council also provided opportunities for members to report on special leave activities, as was the case with Sarah Jane Dooley's presentation on "Trends in Academic Library Design". Encouraging this kind of research sharing is vital in the transformation of the libraries.

This venue allowed opportunities for our Information School students to share their projects and reading course research as well as develop their professional presentation skills. Interns Catherine McGoveran, Nancy McPhee, and Laura Thorne spoke about the IR faculty profiles project, Catherine McGovern presented "Generating information: Using GIS to visualize and derive meaning from government data" and Laura Thorne and Sarah Nicholson presented "The Use of Web 2.0 Tools in the Dalhousie Libraries." Council also invited a number of external speakers including:

- Alain Boutet, Executive Director of International Relations on Dalhousie's International Strategy,
- Gillian Byrne, Manager of CAUL-CBUA provided an update on the work of CAUL,
- Louise Spiteri, Director of SIM and JoAnn Watson, MLIS Coordinator on Student Internship and Practica, and,

- Pam Williams, Manager International Centre on the programs of the International Centre.

Feedback I have received about Library Council has suggested that it has been preoccupied with information exchange. Although this has been a significant role of Council, the proposal for the creation of AUL positions allowed Council to engage a significant governance issue. Through our regular and special meetings in January members engaged in a constructive debate and demonstrated that Council does have the potential to provide valuable input on critical issues.

<u>Issues Arising</u>

I have identified a number of issues that have arisen during the past year of Council that I bring forward for Council's consideration.

1. Video Conferencing

The ability to meet via electronic means needs to be an essential component in Council's strategy to include and engage all Council's members. Now a libraries system spread across four campuses, Council needs to have a reliable and effective means of communicating. Our experiments with Skype have met with limited success. Obviously, lacking a permanent location to meet creates technological challenges. However, our ability to address this issue, I believe, is essential to our own role as technological innovators at Dalhousie.

2. Creating Safe Space

A significant challenge for Council has been creating a safe space to encourage conversation and engagement with library issues. We have made some progress but I do not feel all members are comfortable sharing in this environment. This became apparent during the discussion of the AUL positions in January 2013. For the January 8th meeting we put in place protocols to ensure equal opportunity for all members to share their views prior to opening the floor for discussion. In response to feedback, we provided the opportunity to have comments sent to Donna/SMT through the Chair of Council, and anonymously if desired. Only a few individuals made use of this option but it was available. Continued meaningful dialogue will necessitate building a more open workplace culture.

3. Web voting

The much-publicized lawsuit launched against Dal Askey by Edwin Mellen brought to the fore Council's inability to vote online on time sensitive issues. Currently the only means for Council to vote on an issue is face-to-face in a regular or special meeting. In February when CARL-ARL issued a statement of support for Askey and McMaster University the University Librarian asked Council to endorse a Dalhousie Libraries statement of support. Although I believe we had strong consensus in our email conversation, Council was unable to meet for a formal vote within the requested time frame. My recommendation to the University

Librarian was to receive the endorsement of SMT, and that Council would later ratify the statement. Although face-to-face meetings are always desirable, the ability to vote online for extraordinary issues like this may benefit Council.

4. Ex Officio Members

It was the intent of the Ad Hoc Library Council Terms of Reference Committee to ensure that non-SMT members felt that had adequate voice to discuss Libraries issues. For this reason we recommended that SMT members, though part of Council, would sit as non-voting members. This did result in a large number of Council members being unable to vote due to the size of SMT. I do believe that this restriction did open up opportunities for non-SMT members to make their voices heard during the first year of Council. However, as Council reviews the first year of Council it may be advisable to consider whether the restriction is still necessary.

5. Quorum

I commend the members for their diligence in attendance. As yet we have never needed to cancel Council due to lack of quorum although one meeting (June 11, 2013) was delayed in commencing while we waited for quorum. Our standard of 2/3 of voting members (c. 18) is comparably high and I would recommend that Council consider lowering quorum to 50% + 1 or approximately 14 voting members.

6. Committees and the AULs

The new roles of the AULs and the organizational structure they are building will have implications for the role of Council and the current committee structure. It will be necessary to review the committees' mandates to ensure that they are appropriate to the new governance model and that they remain clearly accountable to Council.

Conclusion

I would like to thank Council for the opportunity to serve as the inaugural Chair and for their respect for both my role and the role of Council. It is my hope that members continue to embrace Council, run for office, and engage in real dialogue. Council has demonstrated that it has the potential to play a key role in the Libraries System's governance. I encourage the members to fully exploit this opportunity.

Respectfully Submitted,

David H. Michels