Brock University Library

Brock Library Organizational Redesign: Background & Overview

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Background

In 2018, the Brock Library initiated a process to review and reassess organizational design. The need for this process was first identified in the 2015 external review, which recommended: "[t]hat, following the hiring of the new University Librarian, a process to reassess the organizational structure be launched." The process has culminated in a new Library Organizational Framework that addresses structure (as well as internal processes). The Framework proposes the following structural changes:

- The creation of a new Research Lifecycle department which will coordinate data, GIS, digital scholarship, and scholarly communication services, and will oversee the operations of the Map, Data, GIS Library
- The creation of a new Teaching & Library Department to focus on the Library's role in supporting pedagogy and advancing information literacy and digital fluencies within the University curriculum;
- The dissolution of the existing Liaison Services Department;
- The reformulation of the existing library liaison model into new Faculty Team structures.
- The existing Access Services department mandate to be expanded to include user engagement and co-curricular programming, and as a result be renamed the User Services & Engagement department.

Rationale for the Redesign

Libraries have been profoundly affected by technological changes as they have transitioned to a predominantly digital information environment. While changes in academic libraries have been experienced incrementally in recent years, the effects of this evolution appear dramatic when viewed across several decades, with a shift from print to electronic collections impacting all aspects of the library: from acquisitions to access and discovery, from scholarly communications to information literacy. As our programs, services, and resources have transformed, many of the organizational structures have persisted. This alone is good reason to review our structures and processes to ensure they continue to serve us in the current context.

While the need for organizational restructuring was identified in the 2015 external review of the Library, a key impetus was the development of the Library's 2019-2025 Strategic Plan. Organizations are most effective when they achieve alignment between strategy, structure and culture. At their best, new strategic plans should serve as an opportunity to consider what organizational structures are required to achieve new goals, so as not to "pour new wine into old bottles". The Library's strategic plan is closely aligned with the University's strategic

plan, so these proposed structures also help us achieve institutional goals (for specifics, see below on benefits to student success, teaching and research). The chart below demonstrates at a high level how the proposed structures align with the Library's and the University's strategic plans.

University Strategic Plan	Library Strategic Plan	Proposed Library Structure
Offer a Transformational and Accessible Academic and University Experience	Student Success	• Teaching & Learning Dept • User Services & Engagement • Faculty Teams
Build Research Capacity across the University	Research Lifecycle	• Research Lifecycle • Faculty Teams
Enhance the Life and Vitality of our Local Region and Beyond	Engaging our Communities	• User Services & Engagement

Another factor was the need to consider the new functions and areas of expertise that had gradually accrued over time, but because they were new, were sometimes grafted onto existing structures, departments, etc. in an ad hoc manner.

The following framework for organizational design is based upon a long, thorough and iterative process of reflection and consultation (see Consultation Process below). As we have developed the framework, the questions of why we need to change and what we need to address as an organization have come into greater focus.

- A need for structure around the Library's role in supporting the research mission

  While the Library has assumed a greater role in supporting the research mission of the University, the Library has not had adequate structures that align with this part of our strategic plan. Support for research has been dispersed in pockets across the organization making it difficult to plan, market, and coordinate these supports and services. A Research Lifecycle department will improve the Library's ability to contribute to the University's goals of research intensification.

- A need for a Library structure focused on the support of the curriculum

  Similarly, the Library lacks a structure focused on the Library's role in instruction and support for the curriculum. In our current structure instruction is taken up by individual liaison librarians largely in response to individual requests by instructors. The rationale for a Teaching & Learning Department is that it will be better positioned to pursue a more systematic and strategic integration of library instruction within the curriculum.

- Rationale for a faculty team approach

  In the current liaison model librarians serve programs primarily through individual relationships where each academic program is assigned a single librarian for the purposes of liaison with the Library. These liaison relationships allow for highly

personalized support; however, one of the consequences of this approach is that it can be challenging for individual librarians to bring to bear all of the various areas of specialized expertise available in the Library. As an example, one liaison librarian may have expertise in research data management or open educational resources, while another may not. A faculty team approach is intended to draw upon services and expertise from across the Library.

A faculty team model is also intended to provide greater continuity when there are librarians on leaves or there are other staffing changes. Sabbatical leaves etc. are increasingly common amongst librarians. This results in a continual turnover of liaison assignments. The result can be a lack of consistency in the liaison relationship, and the risk of a program being placed on the "backburner" when a program's regular liaison librarian is away on leave. A team-based model helps mitigate this problem by assigning teams of librarians to programs.

Finally, a team approach makes it easier to set collective goals, provide a more consistent level of communication and outreach across programs.

- The need for a more coordinated approach to user outreach and engagement in the James A. Gibson Library

The ground floor of the James A. Gibson Library (Matheson Learning Commons) represents one of the most visible aspects of the Library; thousands of members of the campus community pass through the Library each day. Existing services on this floor (e.g., Ask Us Desk) are provided by the Access Services department; however, the Library does not currently have a specific department or structure that can fully leverage the potential for engagement with the Brock community presented by this central space. The Library would benefit from a more coordinated approach to other co-curricular programming in the Library, including events, exhibits, workshops, outreach activities, user experience, and a focus on the first-year experience.

Description of the Organizational Changes

In new Organizational Framework the Library will continue to have six departments; however, two existing departments – Map Data GIS Library/Digital Scholarship Lab, and Liaison Services – will be dissolved, and two new departments - Research Lifecycle, and Teaching & Learning - will be created in their place. In addition, the plan proposes to change the name of the Access Services department to User Services & Engagement. This change is, however, not seen as a structural change so much as a change in name that reflects an expansion of the department's role. The following three departments (Collections Services; Archives & Special Collections; and Library Systems & Technologies) would not be affected (though a slight alteration of the Systems department is proposed). The following chart provides a quick summary of these changes.

Before Restructuring	After Restructuring
Map Data GIS Library/Digital Scholarship Lab	Research Lifecycle Department
Liaison Services	Teaching & Learning Department

Access Services	User Services & Engagement
Collections Services	Collections Services
Archives & Special Collections	Archives & Special Collections
Library Systems & Technologies	Library Systems & Technologies Services

Research Lifecycle Department

This new department will take a holistic approach to the support of research at Brock and will encompass research processes as well as scholarly communication. This department will draw together many of the Library's existing research-related supports and services such as: data use/reuse, research data management, data visualization, geographic information systems (GIS), text mining, digital exhibit platforms, systematic reviews, metadata, etc. The scholarly communication programming will include: Brock's digital repository, support for open access, open publication platforms (e.g., Open Journal Systems), ORCID IDs, research metrics, etc. These are not necessarily new services, but this department will bring them together under one umbrella and provide a more robust and coherent structure for them. The department will provide oversight over the Map, Data, GIS Library, as well as Digital Scholarship, and the Scholarly Communications programming.

How is this proposed structure different from the existing Map, Data, GIS Library/Digital Scholarship structure?

- This department will oversee GIS, Data, Digital Scholarship, and Scholarly Communication as services, and will oversee the operations of the existing Map, Data & GIS Library as a space/service point. Oversight of Brock's digital repository was previously in Library Systems & Technologies. Oversight of repository service will be moved to Research Lifecycle.
- The Digital Scholarship Lab has temporarily been parked with the Map, Data, GIS Library. The Digital Scholarship Lab as a space will be operated by Brock LINC under the VPR's portfolio as of summer 2022. The Map, Data, GIS Library will continue to operate as a Library space/service point. The library will continue to offer Digital Scholarship services under the umbrella of the Research Lifecycle Department.
- Support for systematic reviews will move from Liaison Services to Research Lifecycle.

Teaching & Learning Department

This department will focus on the Library's role in instruction and support of teaching and learning activities across the Faculties. This department will provide oversight for the Library's continuing role in instruction in areas such as information literacy, research skills, and digital literacies. The vision of this new unit is to bring a renewed focus to the strategic and integration of the Library's teaching role into the curriculum, particularly at the program level. The department will also: develop online learning objects, support the adoption and creation of Open Educational Resources (OER), and provide support for digital pedagogy as it relates to information resources, tools, and methods. Key partners will include: the Faculties, the Centre for Pedagogical Innovation and the Office of the Vice-Provost & AVP Academic.

How is this similar/different from the current instructional services provided by the Liaison Services department?

- This department will continue the Libraries' role in developing and delivering library related instruction within the curriculum; however, the department will be seeking to shift the conversation to the program level. Currently library instruction is primarily provided by individual request of an instructor. The goal is to work closely at the program level to ensure a sustainable and integrated approach to information literacy and research skills.
- A Library department with explicit focus on teaching and learning will provide much needed organizational structure that will better foster collaboration with CPI and other in areas such as Open Educational Resources (OER) and digital pedagogy.

Faculty Teams

A key question in the development of the new Organizational Framework has been how the Library structures its engagement with departments, programs, and Faculties. The current liaison model sees individual librarians assigned liaison responsibility with specific academic programs. Most (but not all) of these liaison librarians are members of the Liaison Services department. The new Framework maintains liaison relationships but proposes a team-based model. The Framework proposes three teams that are assigned at the Faculty level each with 3 librarians. The members of these teams will be drawn from across the Teaching & Learning, Research Lifecycle, and Collections Services departments. (As these teams evolve, they may also be supplemented by representation from other departments as necessary.) Each of the three teams will be assigned two Faculties. The proposed teams are:

- Humanities & Social Sciences
- Applied Health & Math and Science
- Goodman School of Business & Faculty of Education

These grouping are designed to be balanced in terms of student and faculty FTE; they are also balanced in terms of the level of library activity historically generated by these Faculties (using Library transaction data). The groupings are not intended to imply a one-size-fits-all model within each cluster. It is understood that there is disciplinary/transdisciplinary variation within each cluster, and within Faculties, and services will continue to be sensitive to these differences.

One of the strengths of a faculty team model is that, rather than being dependent on one individual, it is designed to draw upon expertise from across different library departments. A team approach will help bring to bear different supports, services, and types of expertise to academic programs. A team-based model is also intended to provide greater continuity when there are librarians on leaves or there are other staffing changes. A team-based model helps mitigate this problem by assigning a team of 3-4 librarians to each Faculty. Finally, a team approach makes it easier to set collective goals, provide a more consistent level of communication and outreach across programs.

Consultation Process

Internal Consultation Process

This Organizational Framework is the result of a highly engaged and iterative process within the Library that begin in November 2018. The process has involved the entire organization whether through membership on teams or working groups, or through workshops and interviews.

In the initial phase of this process was known as Project Blueprint. The purpose of the Blueprint was to build a high-level change vision using an open and collaborative process. The process was undertaken with the assistance of a consultant (Rebecca Jones from Dysart Jones & Associates) and was led by a team of nine staff from across the Library. The goal was to investigate structures, processes, service models and recommend the broad outlines of an organizational design, but to stop short of defining structures, roles and reporting lines. The team conducted over 90 appreciative inquiry (AI) interviews with staff, sifted through literature on organizational design, and conducted interviews with other libraries that have undergone restructuring. The process resulted in a final report including a conceptual sketch of a future organization ("the Blueprint"), organizational principles, and a set of recommendations.

Following the Blueprint, the Library Administration developed a draft Organizational Framework that derived directly from Blueprint vision and concepts. This Framework document was presented to Library staff in the fall of 2019. Working groups were then convened beginning in early 2020 to discuss elements of the draft structure and present a report to all staff offering greater detail on organizational components of the Framework and provide recommendations for revisions of the Framework. 25 staff from across the Library participated in 10 working groups.

Library Administration then incorporated feedback from these working group reports into a revised Organizational Framework v2 document.

Stakeholder Consultations

18 consultations were conducted with stakeholders, including Faculties, partnering units, and four Senate Committees, between February and April 2020. The consultation process culminated in a consultation at Senate in May 2020.

Summary of Themes from Consultations

Many who participated in the consultations commented favourably on the strong and clear alignment with the University and Library Strategic Plans. Support was also expressed for the proposed approach to the faculty team model that is robust and can help address the need for continuity (through the team model) and succession planning (through cross-training). Others were very encouraged to see the focus on integration of the Library's instructional role at the program level, and there was a general appreciation of the way that the plan further highlights the Library's evolving role in supporting research, and data in particular.

Some clarification was necessary on the distinction between organizational structure and service model. In many areas, changes to the organizational structure do not affect the way in which our users access the Library's services. For instance, the creation of the Research Lifecycle Department will not affect the Map, Data, GIS Library which will continue to exist. Nor will the newly named User Services & Engagement Dept affect the service point overseen by this department (the Ask Us Desk in the James A. Gibson Library).

Responses to other questions are provided below with responses:

Q: Would the Research Lifecycle department support qualitative and arts-based research methods in addition to quantitative/STEM-based methods?

> A: Yes, the department will provide support across faculties, programs, and departments. Many of the areas of activity, such as support for scholarly communication, and open access, are applicable to all areas of research. And while the department will support quantitative research data, it will also support textual, visual, and qualitative approaches to research (e.g., text mining, digital exhibits, geographic information systems).

Q: What strategies will the Library use in pursuing the integration of library instructions at the program level?

> A: Participation in quality assurance processes and program reviews will be key strategies for the Library. The new Teaching & Learning Department will also want to continue building relationships with UPDs and GPDs. Some instructors who participated in consultations also asked whether they will still be able to request library instruction sessions from individual librarians, notwithstanding the goal of program level integration. The answer to this is that, yes, we will continue to work with individual instructors.

Q: There were several questions about the composition of the three Faculty Teams: 1) why are the Faculties paired as they are in the Teams?; 2) are these pairings balanced?; and, 3) how will the model deal with disciplinary differences within the proposed teams (e.g. between Business and Education)?

> A: The teams are designed to be balanced in terms of student and faculty FTE; they are also balanced in terms of the level of library activity historically generated by these Faculties (using Library transaction data). Regarding the disciplinary variation: librarians are already adept at providing support across a variety of programs. This is a necessity given that there are over 70 undergraduate programs and 50 graduate programs at the University, supported by 17 librarians. It is already the norm for librarians to liaise across multiple programs. The liaison relationships will continue to be responsive to the unique needs of individual students and faculty.

Q: Will programs lose specialized knowledge in moving from dedicated individual liaison librarians to Liaison Teams?

A: The Liaison Teams will provide a mechanism for more individuals within the library to develop specialized knowledge (around areas like research methods, and specific tools and resources). The new structures and team-based models allow for better distribution of knowledge across the Library. Ultimately, programs will continue to be able to draw on library expertise for research, collections, and teaching, and will benefit from more regular, coordinated communication from the Library.

Q: Previously the term 'disciplinary teams' has been used to describe the Faculty Teams. However, some programs do not identify as disciplines, and the term seems to be in tension with the identification of transdisciplinarity as a strategic priority? Is the model in any way mismatched with the concept of transdisciplinarity at the University?

A: In planning, the Library has used the term 'disciplinary teams' as shorthand for the model by which the Library will liaise with programs. As a result of this feedback, we have changed the name of these teams to 'Faculty Teams' since this better captures the intent. There is nothing inherently *disciplinary* about the model.

Q: The framework appears to be silent on the topic of indigenization and decolonization.

Does this theme need to be taken up into the restructuring plan in order for the Library to make progress in this area?

A: Indigenization and decolonization figure prominently in the Library Strategic Plan, and work in this area has begun. There is a great deal to unpack as the process is complex and has wide-ranging implications across many areas of the library organization. While these themes are prominent in the Library strategic plan, they do not feature in the restructuring plan because the Library is not proposing a specific new *structure* in which such initiatives would be located. To be meaningful, indigenization and decolonization will need to be taken up within and across many areas of library activity (including library collections, archival practice, design of library space, support for student and researchers, etc.).

Q: During the consultations some participants asked questions about specific library resources. Will the restructuring have implications for library collections (e.g., print vs. electronic, data sets, reference sources)?

A: The restructuring is neutral as it relates to what we collect. For specific questions related to collections, please contact libhelp@brocku.ca or your liaison librarian.

Questions

If you have questions about this document and the organizational redesign, please feel free to contact the Brock University Library:

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