Academic Library Liaison Models: Review and Renew!

- Cecile Farnum - Ryerson University Library & Archives
- Debbie Meert-Williston - Western Libraries
- Cara Bradley - University of Regina Libraries

The Liaison Model

- Refers to the assignment of librarians to liaise and work with specific departments or programs in a multi-faceted role
- This work can include the provision of library instruction, research appointments, collection development, research support, and general engagement, outreach and communication
- The Association of Research Libraries (ARL) survey in 2015 of liaison programs- 59 survey respondents (88%) reported use of a liaison program in their institution

Alternative Service Models

- <u>Functional Model -</u> team responsibility for functional work, e.g. Research & Scholarly Communication, Collections Services, Teaching & Curriculum Development, etc.
- <u>Hybrid Model</u> - liaison librarians provide a broad level of expertise, and connect to more specialized skills sets as required.
- <u>Tiered Approach</u> - different expectations of the level of service provided based on the librarian skill set, and the required needs of the department (level one skills, level two skills, etc.)

Ryerson University Library and Archives

- A single library with 26 full-time, tenured librarians, the majority of which are in functional roles, while also performing liaison work
- Divided into 4 teams, including librarians and staff
- No established guidelines, expectations or competencies for the liaison role
- Strategic Planning process in 2015 identified the liaison model as a key issue for librarians requiring examination
- Librarian secondment to review of the Library's current model, and make recommendations

The Ryerson Context

- Ryerson's (r)evolution - incredible expansion of undergraduate and graduate programs
  - More programs add more liaison responsibilities
- Growing emphasis on interdisciplinarity
  - Where do these programs sit in the liaison model?
- Zone learning & experiential learning
  - Users not captured in our liaison model
- Intensification of the the university's research agenda
  - Greater interest in journal rankings, OA, article metrics & journal evaluation

Review Process

- Reviewed the literature
- Networking with other librarians involved in liaison model reviews
- Engagement with key stakeholders
- Proposal to move to a new delivery model for liaison services
- Presentations to librarians and library staff
- Assessment of support for piloting new structure

Engagement with Library Users

- Faculty and grad student survey to assess their awareness of liaison services, and the level of engagement they had with their liaison librarian
- While most were aware of who their liaison was, most were not aware of the range of their responsibilities or their expertise
- Wanted more formal integration into the program, as well as more communication of roles and responsibilities

Engagement with Library Staff

- Survey to determine how the liaison model impacted on their daily work, what was working well, what was not working well
- Staff expressed frustration at decisions 'bottlenecking' around the liaison librarian
- Many staff in our newer service points with a limited liaison librarian presence wanted more connectivity and connection

What Did I Hear from Librarians?

- Liaison is valued for the opportunity to build relationships
- Need less ad hocery, more formal structure and more mentoring and support
- Concerns about inadequacy in all areas of liaison service
- Tug of war between liaison and functional responsibilities
- Preference for a better working hybrid model rather than a functional team model

The Faculty Team Model

- Liaison services delivered via a 6-team structure reflecting Ryerson's faculties
  - Faculty of Arts
  - Faculty of Communication & Design
  - Faculty of Community Services
  - Faculty of Engineering & Architectural Science
  - Faculty of Science
  - Ted Rogers School of Management
- Interdisciplinary programs/zones evaluated for placement in a team
- Each faculty team will be comprised of librarians, library technician(s) and other library staff

The Faculty Team Model

- Liaison assignment to specific program area or department to continue
- Some functional specialist roles to continue
- Each faculty team will (ideally) have Librarian leads in the core areas of Teaching, Research, Collections and Technology, as well as a Team lead
- Liaisons no longer required to develop strong competencies in all areas
- Team sharing of work
- Leads provide academic leadership and coordination of activities relating to their core role
- Participation in relevant committees associated with their core area of liaison responsibility
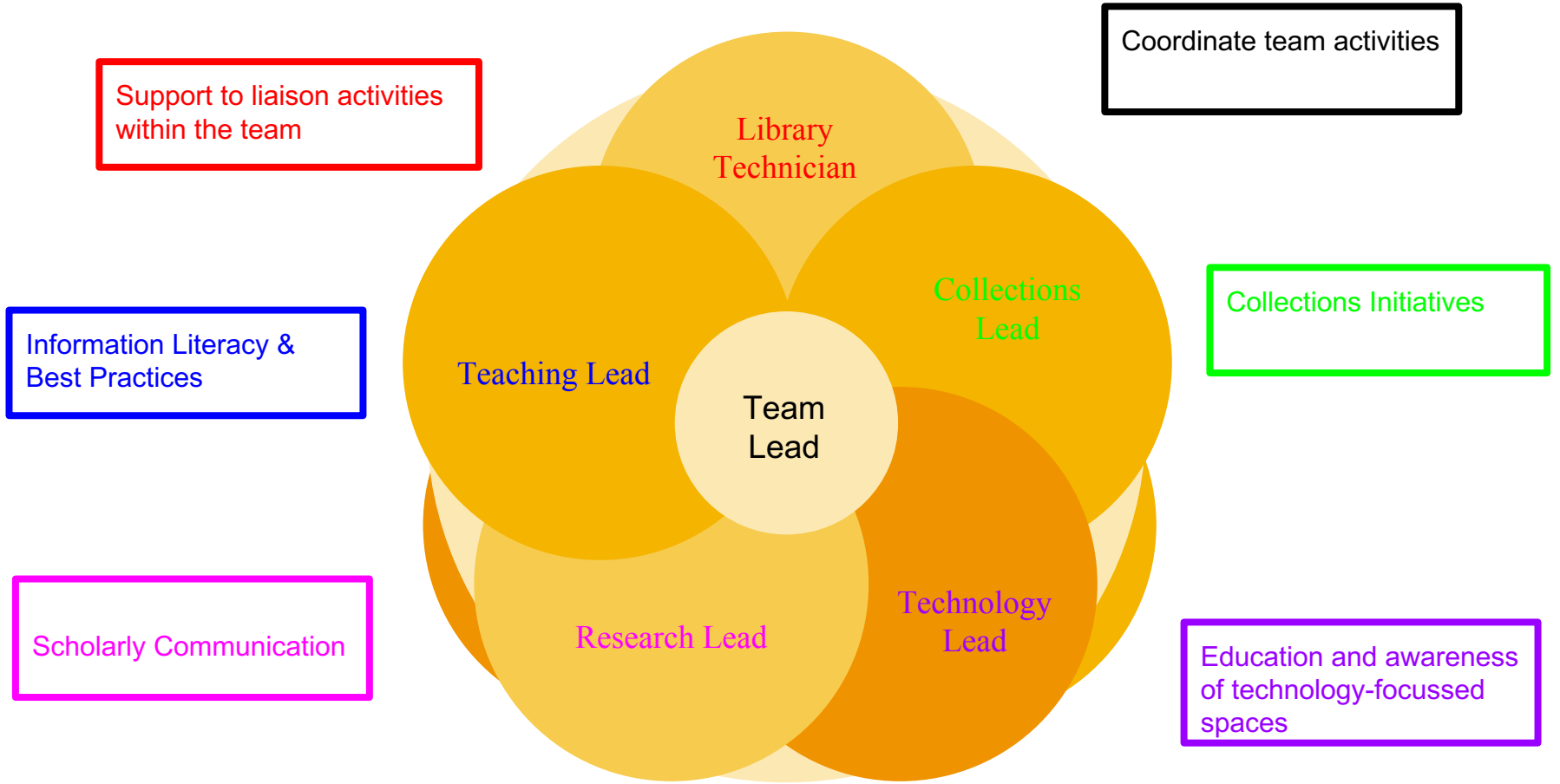
What Was the Feedback?

- Anonymous librarian survey to determine support for piloting this approach
- 19 of 27 respondents indicated yes, with 8 maybes/not sure
- Support from the Library's Management Group to pilot with one team + assessment
- Staff??

Next steps (including assessment)

- Finalize and share report
- More consultation with staff on potential impact on their roles
- Transition, pilot + assess
- Talk to me next year??

University of Regina Library

Final Report of the Liaison Librarian Working Group

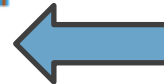*The Liaison Librarian Program: Trends and Opportunities*

Cara Bradley

Mary Chipanshi

Kate Cushon

William Sgrazzutti

April 2017

CARL/COPPUL Libraries

Literature Review

Themes:
- We're not alone
- Subject vs. functional specialists
- Support for research
- Teams
- Re-envisioning our work
- We can't do it all

Survey of liaison librarians

When asked . . . about changes they'd like to see in next 5 years:
- I would like to see liaison librarian services to continue to be customized to some degree for specific user groups - one size does not fit all. I would like to see greater flexibility as to array of responsibilities assigned to liaison librarians to build on an individual's strengths. This may be facilitated through a team approach to library liaison.
- I would like to see more functional specialties on the librarian team
- Better communication among liaison librarians and better sense of working as a team. More time spent on more complex and needed services, like RDM, scholarly publishing, rather than repetitive introductory library sessions.
- Change the name. Make librarians more visible to our main user group - the students

Survey of User Services staff

When asked . . . about benefits of returning to LL on desk:

- Librarians and User Services gaining a better understanding of what the other unit does (assuming we staff the desk together).
- Create a relationship between Help Desk and Librarians - Share knowledge and skills vice-versa
- More connection to the students (for Librarians) Potentially more hands on training for the staff that are undertrained due to less and less reference questions and not enough time for shadowing of others (librarians and assistants) with more reference experience. More knowledgeable staff and service available for the students!

Survey of other library staff

When asked . . . to identify core elements of liaison role:
- Building relationships with faculty to support teaching and research -- to build networks and bridges with faculties and departments -- building relationships with students to support knowledge discovery, dissemination and lifelong learning -- to be actively promoting, developing and researching library services and collections

- Determining the research/information/other library needs of the students and faculty (and potentially staff) in their areas of assignment and working towards the best way to meet these needs. This necessitates engaging with faculty and students. Working with faculty as research supports. Teaching and reference.

Survey of faculty members

When asked . . . for suggestions for new services:

- More promotion of what their services actually are, and perhaps group sessions for students.

- I think that our business librarian could have some involvement as we design the curriculum for our two core classes, Introduction to Business 100 and Management Communication 205.

- Not sure... I am sure they do good work, but not clear what they are doing for us.. Most of use just need Internet journals... Do what ever you can to keep the journals.. Most important thing of all for research and scholarships... Actually Librarians are not as crucial as in the past for research now.. Times are changing and library should keep up.

Survey of students

When asked . . . most important thing liaisons can do for students:
- I have not had any experience with liaisons but if I could suggest an option is to get them out into classrooms/ around the university a bit more throughout the semester. I do not remember when a liaison visited one of my class.
- Have the best knowledge about the corresponding area and guiding the students in the best possible way to access the material
- Help raise awareness about what services the library has to offer.
- I do not know who a liaison librarian is.
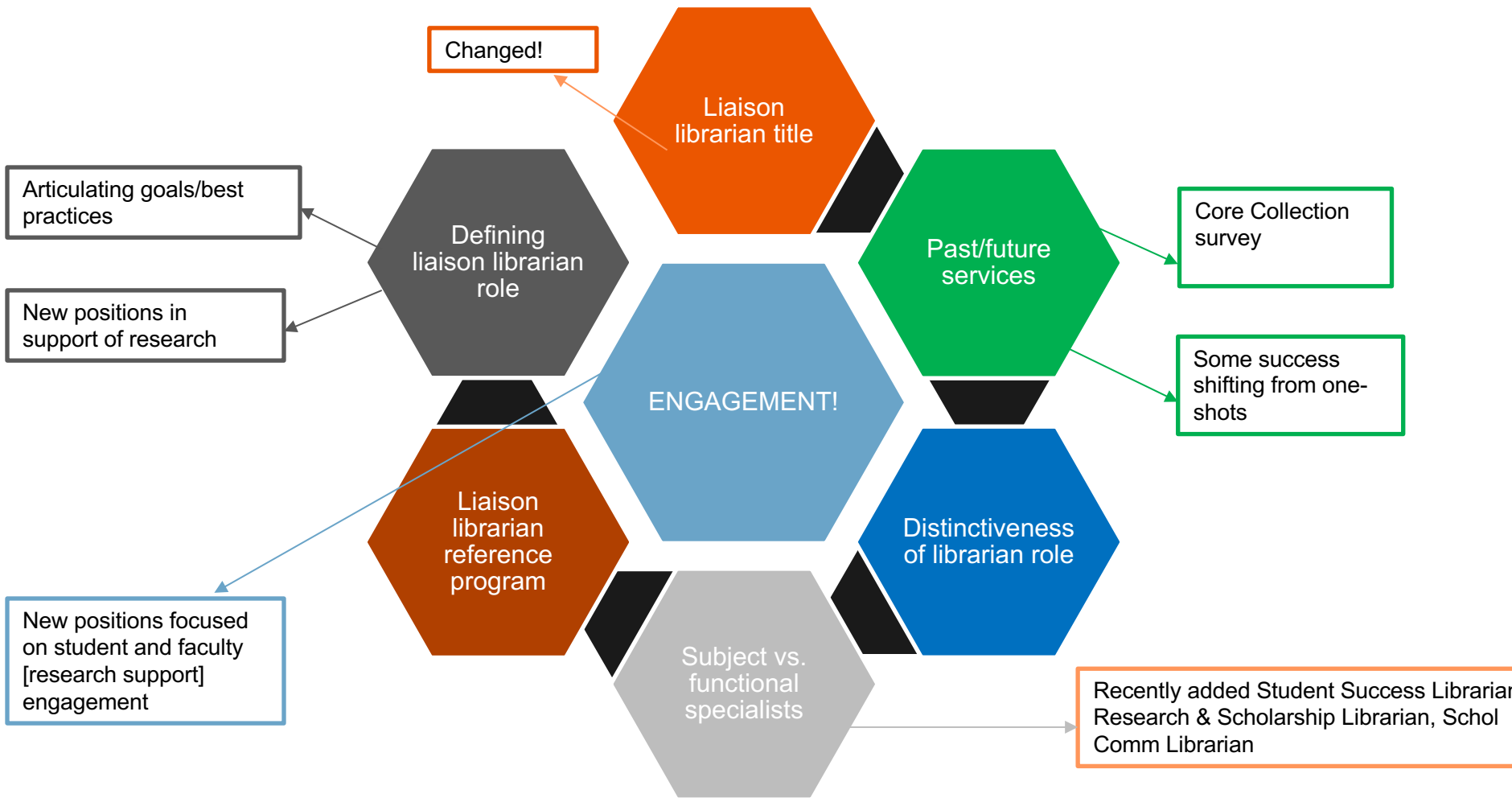
Image credits

- University of Regina summer: Creative Commons licensed photo from Flickr: https://www.flickr.com/photos/auvet/3614705335/
- University of Regina winter: Creative Commons licensed photo from Flickr: https://www.flickr.com/photos/saskboy/8476775764/
- U of R Library external: Creative Commons licensed photo from Wikimedia: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:John_Archer_Library,_University_of_Regina.jpg
- U of R Library internal: Photo by Trevor Hopkins - U of R Photography
- Thumbs up/down: Creative Commons licensed photo from: https://pixabay.com/en/opposites-thumb-positive-negative-489521
- Whiteboard methodology: Public domain photo from http://www.919sow.afrc.af.mil/News/Photos/igphoto/2001020414/
- Everybody's doing it: Creative Commons license from: https://www.flickr.com/photos/mrjkbh/104467801
- Marathon: Creative Commons license from: https://www.flickr.com/photos/taconicrr/15735469502/
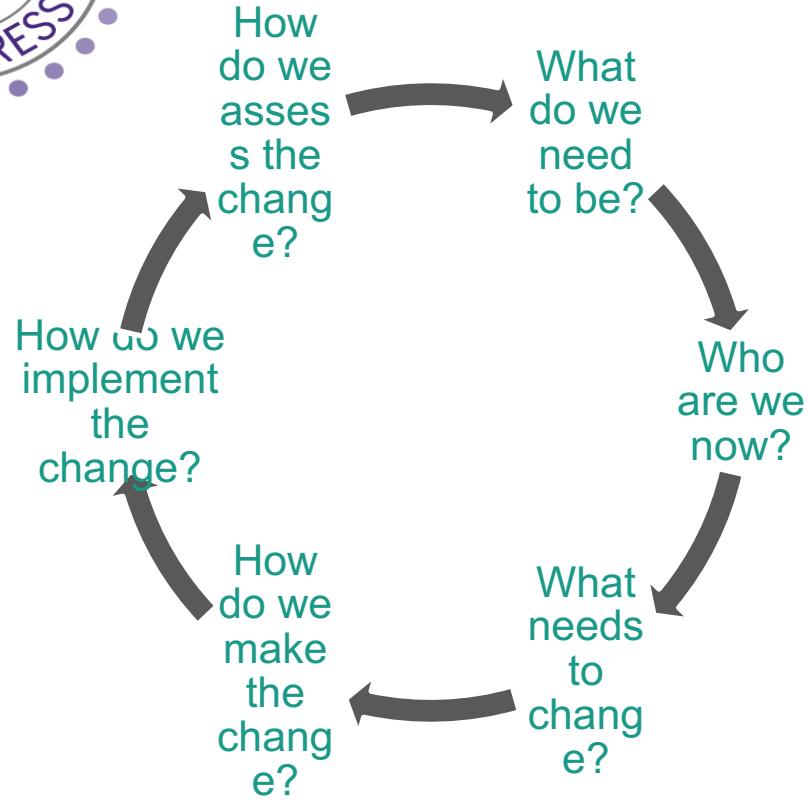
Liaison in a new Organizational Framework and Service Model

Debbie Meert-Williston
Head, Research & Instructional Services
Taylor Library, Western Libraries
January 31, 2018

Planning the Process

How do we assess the change?

What do we need to be?

Who are we now?

What needs to change?

How do we make the change?

How do we implement the change?

Strategic Planning Initiative

- Mission, Vision and Values
- Strategies of Excellence
- Building and mobilizing capacity
- Creating an aligned and sustainable library

ENGAGE. EMPOWER. EXCEL.

Western Libraries

2015 - 2020
STRATEGIC PLAN
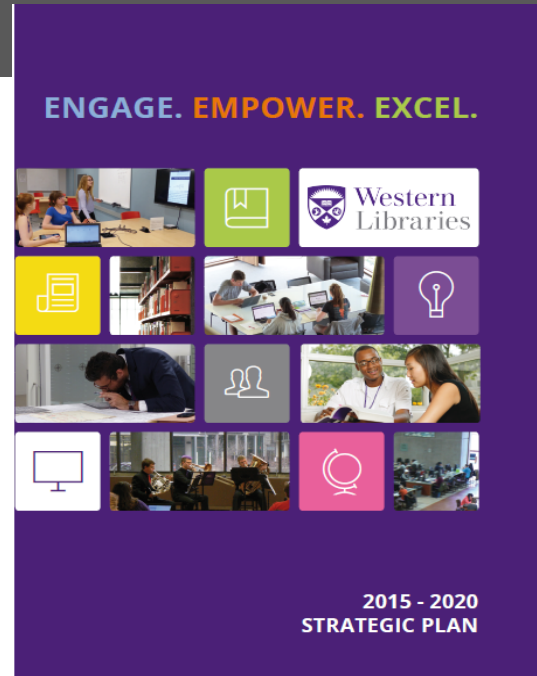
WESTERN LIBRARIES STRATEGY MAP: 2015 – 2020

Thus, achieving our VISION.

OUR MISSION
As the academic commons of the University, Western Libraries provides the library and archival expertise and infrastructure - information resources, technology, people, and spaces - required to cultivate and mobilize knowledge, and accelerate excellence in teaching, research, and scholarship.

OUR SHARED VISION
We engage, inspire and empower students, scholars and researchers to achieve their full potential as global citizens and leaders.

And, anticipate and meet the needs of the PEOPLE we serve,

ENDURING IMPACT!
Western Libraries will achieve the following strategic stakeholder outcomes:

STUDENTS	TEACHERS	RESEARCHERS
Successful Students. Prepared Citizens.	*Educational Excellence.*	*Recognized Research.*
• Students enhance their ability to effectively and creatively use, analyze, assess and communicate information and data • Students achieve Western's identified learning outcomes and develop lifelong learning skills • Students enjoy an enriched learning and campus experience • Students are engaged in the research enterprise	• Teachers integrate the highest quality information, services and resources into curriculum • Teachers produce outstanding curriculum, courses and assignments that incorporate 21st century literacies learning outcomes • Teachers' pedagogy and e-learning strategies enhance the student learning experience	• Research productivity and efficiency is enhanced • Researchers achieve their goal of producing high quality outcomes with global impact • Researchers actively collaborate with Western Libraries to advance their projects

So we can operate EFFECTIVELY and with EXCELLENCE,

ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE!
Strategies of Excellence for achieving the strategic stakeholder outcomes

We advance 21st century literacies development for students, scholars and researchers	We manage and provide access to world-class print and digital collections and resources	We cultivate purposeful partnerships on campus and beyond	We provide user-centred spaces and technologies	We actively engage with our campus communities	We deliver service excellence to library users and the University	We champion open access and the transformation of scholarly communication	We partner to develop extraordinary researchers and scholars and to expand research excellence
• Teach critical literacies and embed learning outcomes into the curriculum • Embed library expertise, collections and resources into learning experiences • Develop and integrate e-learning strategies and modules • Enable and expand undergraduate research	• Spearhead creation and enactment of a bold digital strategy • Develop and enrich scholarly, archival, and special collections • Digitize and steward unique resources and collections • Strengthen information access, discovery, curation, and dissemination processes • Continually evolve collection development practices	• Join forces with campus partners to enhance student success and research outcomes • Proactively engage with faculty in curriculum and course development • Collaborate with external partners to advance our shared missions • Drive community engagement with the greater London area	• Repurpose and revitalize spaces to meet user needs • Create inviting, inspiring and collaborative learning and research spaces • Provide access to new and emerging technologies	• Promote campus community development • Facilitate connections, conversations and forums across the disciplines • Develop social media engagement • Expand outreach to library users	• Develop user-centred service models and standards • Enable the best possible user experience • Provide great customer service • Support effective management of university records	• Provide education and advocacy for scholarly communication issues such as author rights, copyright, and open access • Enable new models of scholarly communication • Provide technologies for barrier-free research publication and dissemination • Foster academic integrity	Over the research cycle, enrich: • Research question development and review and critical appraisal of existing knowledge • Grant application development including data management plans • Data capture, curation, analysis and management • Dissemination of research outputs • Research productivity and impact metrics

And, build a STRONG & PREPARED LIBRARY,

PASSIONATE & PREPARED TEAM!
Strategies for building and mobilizing Western Libraries capacity

We work in a learning culture that encourages agility, curiosity and innovation	We have the skills and competencies needed for a fast changing world and we work in relevant roles, focused on the right priorities	We have a strong sense of shared responsibility and purpose, based on trust and are empowered to achieve success	We work in flexible facilities and spaces that cultivate productivity and well-being	We are equipped with the right technologies and tools to perform our work

We use our RESOURCES wisely,

ALIGNED AND SUSTAINABLE LIBRARY!
Strategies for utilizing and allocating our resources

We proactively assess our environment and user expectations and take action to meet emerging needs	We are transparent and align resources and decisions to our vision, strategies and annual priorities	We prepare for the future through continuous learning and professional development	We measure and use performance metrics to improve our effectiveness, efficiency and impact	We promote and provide evidence of Western Libraries' value to library users and stake-holders	We are fiscally responsible and seek opportunities to work more effectively and realize efficiencies

Guided by our VALUES,

OUR GUIDING VALUES

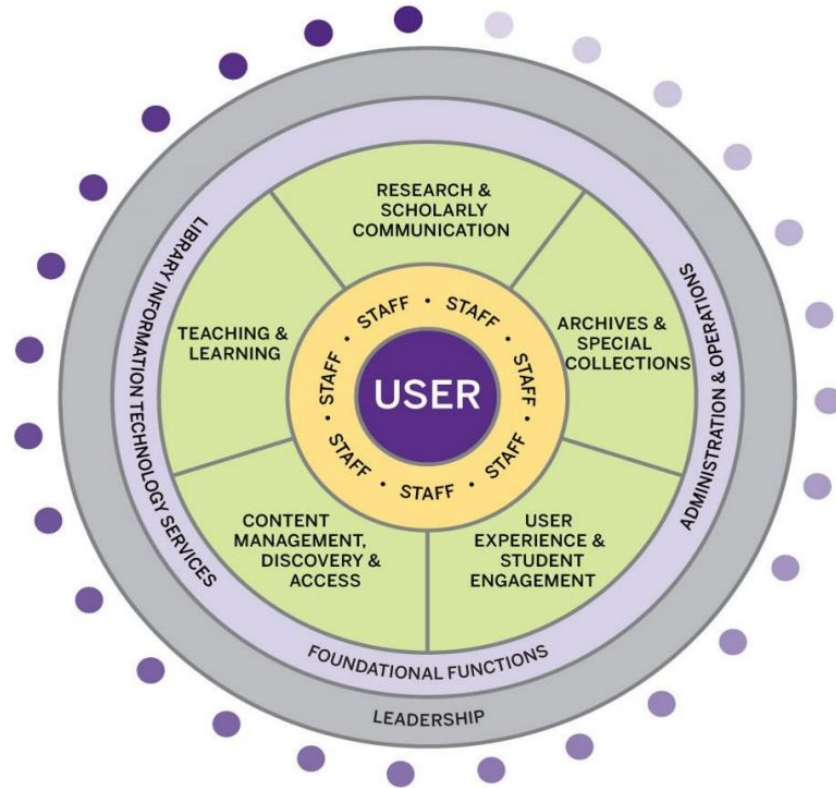| Teamwork	Respect	Accountability	Communication	Creativity	Service	Collaboration	Innovation

Hybrid Service Model = **Functional** + **Liaison**

Across physical and digital library locations

ORI Conceptual Organizational Model for Western Libraries

Workforce Analysis Planning Initiative

Core User Functions:

User Experience and Student Engagement	Content Management, Discovery and Access	Research & Scholarly Communication	Teaching and Learning

Foundational Functions:

Assessment and Improvement, Financial Management, Information Technology Management, Human Resources Management, Training & Development, Communications, Facilities Management, Advancement, Senior Leadership.

New Concept of Liaison

"the act of building connections and **strategic relationships** with identified communities or disciplines, identifying strategic opportunities for collaboration and integration, and **coordinating efforts** across the user functions."

New Concept of Liaison

Two- Tiered Approach

Tier 2: Strategic, formal responsibility lies with disciplinary coordinators, and library directors.

Tier 1: We all build and maintain relationships with users and partners.
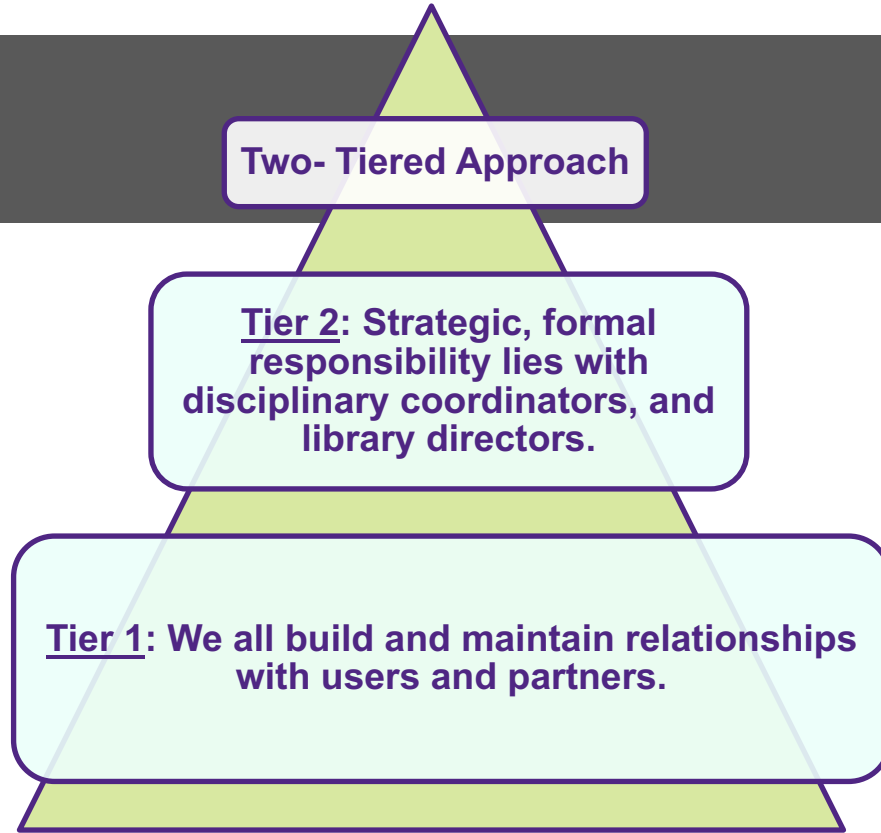
Hybrid Service Model

	SSAH		STEMM+	
	Arts & Humanities	**Social Sciences**	**STEM Disciplines**	**Health & Medicine**
Teaching & Learning	👥	👥	👥	👥
Research & Scholarly Communication	👥👥👥👥		👥👥👥👥	
Content Management Discovery & Access	👥	👥	👥	👥
User Experience & Community Engagement	👥👥👥👥 Front Line Services*		👥👥👥👥 Front Line Services*	
	Front Line Services – Virtual Reference			
	Virtual Library, User Experience, Outreach & Community Partnerships			
Liaison	Community Coordinators			
	Disciplinary Coordinator Plus: Faculty Library Directors		Disciplinary Coordinator	

* individuals would have the background or be trained to work across STEMM+ and SSAH service locations.

Questions?

Cecile Farnum, Ryerson

Cara Bradley, Regina

Deb Meert-Williston, Western