

Site visit, Dr. John Archer Library, University of Regina

*Lori Robare, Professor, Assistant Head, Metadata and Digital Library Services,
University of Oregon Libraries*

*Nancy Slight-Gibney, Associate Professor, Director, Resource Management,
University of Oregon Libraries*

Introduction

Charge

We were invited by Carol Hixson, University Librarian, to conduct unit reviews of the Collection Development Unit and the Technical Services Department in the Dr. John Archer Library, University of Regina. When the Collection Development Unit was established in 2004 a unit review was recommended for 2007: “The CDU’s working processes and its effectiveness will be reviewed at the end of the 2006/07-budget year, and periodically thereafter.”ⁱ Since the CDU and the Technical Services Department must work closely together it is reasonable to review both areas at the same time. In addition, the 2005 review of the entire library by a group of outside consultantsⁱⁱ did not provide much analysis of technical services and this investigation serves to supplement that previous effort.

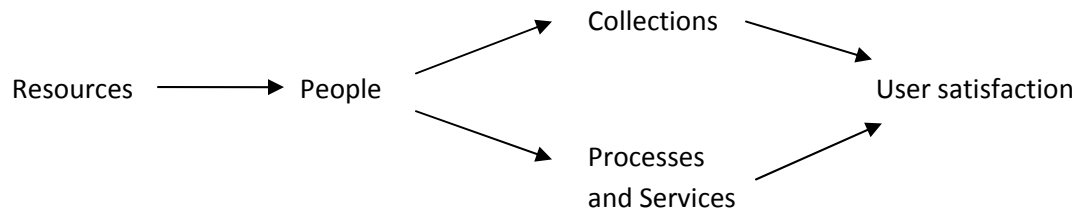
Methods

Over a period of four days, August 13 through August 16, 2007, we held a series of meetings with individuals, small groups, and a few larger group sessions, for a total of over 40 formal sessions. This included a meeting with representatives from Financial Services. Notes were taken at each meeting. In addition we examined background documents such as 2006 Libqual+ survey results, reports from the 2005 self study and review, and other documents provided by Carol Hixson, University Librarian. On August 17 we held two meetings to discuss our preliminary impressions with stakeholder groups. This report expands upon that discussion.

Analytical framework

Our first level of analysis is a basic SWOT examination of strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats. This provides the starting point for looking at the organization but does not provide a complete conceptual framework for making strategic decisions.

The strategy map outlined below is modified from one developed by Joseph R. Matthewsⁱⁱⁱ as a means of adapting the management tool “The Balanced Scorecard” to the library setting.



For the purposes of this review we were not asked to examine the adequacy of financial resources for the library and we did not do so. We made the assumption that the resources are adequate. However we did consider carefully how people within the library manage the resources and our analysis will cover this in some depth.

Resources are applied in two areas, collections and personnel. Human effort shapes the collections as well as the processes and services provided. In term of collections, the primary question is to determine if the resources are applied optimally to provide access to information content in support of the teaching and research at the University of Regina. Are they the “right” collections?

In terms of processes and services we will limit our analysis to the areas within the scope of our charge: collection development and academic liaison, and technical services. Again the question is to determine if the resources are applied optimally to produce the greatest value for the library users.

Collection Development, Selection, and Liaison Responsibilities

SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats)

Strengths include experienced librarians in liaison roles that enable a close working relationship with the academic departments. There are a few exceptions to this that resulted from the reassignment of liaison responsibilities in the recent past, but for the most part the subject expertise and knowledge base of the librarians is sufficient. Another positive sign is the developing new vision for liaison responsibilities^{iv}. The implementation of this outreach-focused model of service will strengthen the subject librarian's understanding of teaching and research needs and lead to better informed selection and collection management decisions.

The centralization of the course review documentation preparation makes this process manageable. Quantitative data can be derived from the Voyager database in a systematic and uniform way. The subject liaison librarians will need to continue to play an important role in providing a qualitative analysis of the adequacy of library resources in support of new courses. This activity should be systematized in a way so that the costs to produce the reviews do not exceed the benefits. An opportunity in this area would be to re-purpose the review analysis. The course-specific information about relevant resources could be shared with students via the course management system.

In our one-on-one and group interview sessions repeated mention was made of the positive quality of the communication between subject liaison librarians and members of the Collection Development Unit. This is noted as a strength. In contrast to this, a major weakness noted was the lack of group or collective communication, with no Collection Development meetings for the last two years. This had led to an uneven understanding of current practices and responsibilities.

Another significant weakness is the lack of information about discretionary fund balances. The elimination of individual discipline-based fund lines has had some positive effects: re-emphasizing the library's authority over the funds, eliminating haggling over how to pay for interdisciplinary resources, and facilitating the purchase of multi-disciplinary packages. However the negative effect is to hamper the subject liaison librarian's ability to prioritize purchasing, especially for monograph materials. The fact that there are informal allocations in place that the Collection Development Unit uses to balance expenditures among disciplines demonstrates the need. The maintenance of this data separate from the Voyager system creates unnecessary work and makes the information inaccessible to the subject librarians. This diminishes the role of the subject librarian and contributes to a lack of clarity about selection responsibility.

The lack of involvement of subject liaison librarians in decision-making about the purchase of electronic resources also diminishes their role as the critical link between the library and the end users on campus. We are operating in an era of increasing demands for accountability for the expenditure of scarce

financial resources. The library must be attuned to the actual research and teaching needs of the faculty and students to purchase the “right” collections. Having use data for electronic resources can tell you how much each resource is used and with that it is possible to calculate cost-per-use for currently licensed products and give you an idea during trial periods of how much potential demand there is for a new resource. But that is only half of the picture. Understanding the academic disciplines and consulting regularly with faculty will help the library understand the *value* of each resource to the campus. It is this understanding that ultimately will lead to the best decisions and it is the subject liaison librarians that must develop this deep and critical link with the teaching and research on the campus.

The Collection Development Unit has the opportunity to play a strong role in supporting the outreach activities of subject liaison librarians by providing information and facilitating discussions regarding new products and services. The Collection Development Unit is positioned well to engage in more assessment activities, including collection analysis and measuring use of print and electronic resources.

There is the opportunity for individual subject liaison librarians to play a role in the development of locally developed digital collections through the identification of unique materials that would be of particular value to campus researchers.

The major threat to subject liaison librarians, selection, and collection development is the threat of irrelevancy. Future patrons may not use the library or its collections, print or electronic, at all. To remain central to campus research, teaching, and learning, the library must actively engage with all academic departments on campus, demonstrating the value of what the library can provide and providing what the users need. The library must be an active partner in achieving the University’s mission, collaborating to create value.

Strategy Map for Collection Development

Financial resources

The financial management of the information resources budget is a critical area of concern. The first step is to use the Voyager system to record budget decisions and track expenditures. The Voyager accounting module can be kept in sync with the campus Banner system with a regular and systematic reconciliation process. This will be addressed in the Technical Services section of this report.

Allocations of discretionary funds should be made within the Voyager system by re-establishing fund codes for monograph expenditures. The spreadsheet listing target amounts for specific disciplines that is currently maintained in the Collection Development Unit can form the basis of these allocations. Fund codes should be as broadly defined as possible but should not overlap subject liaison responsibility. For example, a single fund code for engineering should be adequate since there is a single subject liaison for engineering. If the engineering liaison has difficulty balancing purchasing decisions among the different sub-disciplines, finer allocations can be made, but generally this is not recommended. Allocations and

fund balances should be made accessible to the subject liaison librarians through regular Voyager reports or through training to allow access to the information directly from the system. This will place the financial information in the hands of those who will be held accountable for making selection decisions.

It is advantageous at this point in time to have larger allocations for subscription and database renewals. The provision of access to journal literature is currently undergoing a significant transition, as print journals are cancelled and electronic access is increasingly provided through packages of titles, often offered for purchase through one or more consortia. The decision-making for this is simplified by not having to track funds in small allocations. However, as noted above, the decision-making would be enhanced with greater input from subject liaison librarians who have the most direct knowledge of your campus needs.

There is a lack of transparency in the budgeting process that could be improved with better communication. The Head of the Collection Development Unit appropriately has the authority to establish the collections budget. However the basis for the allocations and the key components, such as projected inflation rates, should be openly discussed among senior management so that there is a common understanding. Multi-year financial planning models should be developed.

As the fiscal year progresses the status of the budget should be actively monitored and reallocations made if needed. Modeling out several years of expenditure on a month-by-month basis should help. (This information should be available on Banner if not in Voyager.) However it is notably difficult to accurately predict expenditures during this transition period of print to electronic. Models based on previous year's experiences increasingly lose their accuracy. We have some concern that the current year's budget may be on track to over expend, but do not have sufficient information to determine this with certainty. **Aggressive monitoring is needed – and should be implemented immediately – to ensure that year-end balances are within acceptable limits.**

People: knowledge, skills, and abilities

The subject liaison librarians for the most part have the expertise needed to do selection and collection management. There are some gaps resulting from assignment of subject responsibilities to individuals with no background in a particular discipline. This is not uncommon in academic libraries and typically coaching is provided to new subject liaisons (or current liaisons assigned to an area new to them). Practically speaking it may take up to three years to develop solid subject expertise and the needed interpersonal relationships to perform the liaison function at a high level. Subject liaison selectors should be given the authority to submit monograph purchase requests directly to Technical Services or flag the requests directly in a vendor's database, streamlining the process. Support should be provided to assist the subject liaison librarians in developing the needed knowledge and expertise.

The ability to collaborate effectively appears to be generally lacking. Frequent and ongoing collaboration among members of different work units within the library characterize an organization

focused on overall organizational success. There does not appear to be a general acceptance of the notion that group decisions are better than individual ones. Evidence of this is in the lack of broad discussion for database selection decisions.

The ability to pull data from the Voyager system needs to be broadly distributed. Financial data is just one piece of this. At present, only two people know how to extract reports from Voyager. Training will need to be provided to individuals in Technical Services and to subject liaison librarians. The purchase and implementation of report-writer software for the Voyager system would facilitate the increased use of data for decision-making.

Staffing for the Collection Development Unit is skewed. If selection responsibility is vested with the subject liaison librarians who have the authority and information they need to manage discretionary spending, it should be possible to perform the central management functions of collection development with one or perhaps two librarians, depending on the amount of assessment activity. Support from a staff-level position is needed, perhaps not full-time but definitely permanently assigned for collection development support.

Collections

The adequacy of print and electronic collections is an area of concern as noted in the 2006 Libqual+ results.^v Collections can be assessed through comparison with peer institutions and by analysis of print circulation figures and electronic use data. This data can be used to fine tune selection decisions along with qualitative information from the subject liaison librarians. There is existing knowledge and skills within the Collection Development Unit to expand and build upon the data analysis already occurring. The current effort to identify and reduce duplication of print and electronic journal content is an appropriate first step.

The inability, despite a strong desire, to develop a comprehensive collection of Canadiana material was noted as a particular problem. This may or may not be a deficiency of the vendor selected, which will be discussed in more detail in the Technical Services section. The interest in Canadiana provides an opportunity for the library to contribute significantly to the research enterprise. Collection development effort would be well placed in identifying local and regional material. A centralized effort in this area that supports the work of individual subject selectors would be highly beneficial. In addition, items held within your own Archives and Special Collections could be identified and brought to the attention of a wider audience, supporting research not only on your own campus but also the work of Canadiana scholars across the globe.

Efficient processes and effective services

The fundamental issue for collection development is the clear vesting of selection responsibility and authority with the subject liaison librarians. This is where the expertise exists to provide the most effective service to the campus. However, as was mentioned repeatedly, much of the journal and database collection falls into interdisciplinary areas or package purchases. It makes sense to centralize

the decision-making for this, but there should be ample opportunity for consultation and input into the decisions by the subject liaison librarians.

Fund tracking, as noted above, should be done by establishing monograph fund codes in the Voyager database rather than manual spreadsheets which are time consuming to maintain and ultimately inaccurate. As for ensuring interdisciplinary areas are covered, collection responsibility and a fund allocation for a "general" or "interdisciplinary" category designated for this purpose should solve that problem.

Some selectors are willing and interested in making use of vendor databases to record selection decisions. Tagging the record in the database for later update and release by acquisitions staff would streamline the current workflow.

It appears that the effort expended in processing donations far exceeds the value of most of these materials. Many libraries have stopped accepting all donations as space issues force the narrowing of selection criteria. This may be too drastic of a step for the Archer Library, however given the concerns over space it should be considered. The acceptance of donations could be limited to only recently published materials and those focused in specific areas designated for collection growth. With clear guidelines most of the work with donations can be streamlined and performed by support staff, reducing the workload for the librarians and the overall labor costs of processing the donations. Title-by-title listing of all donated material should be eliminated except under very unusual circumstances, such as a gift of rare books. In most circumstances the listing is unnecessary and staff time could be re-directed to more productive uses.

Weeding can be performed by support staff with clear guidelines based on circulation information derived from the Voyager system. At the very least a preliminary list of titles to be weeded can be produced by staff with final approval performed by subject liaison librarians.

Re-purposing the new course proposal reviews and unit review documents would increase the cost/benefit ratio of the effort expended to produce the reports. We hesitate to discourage any consultation with the library by academic units, but it appears that the work put into unit and course reviews has not resulted in any additional funds coming to the library. It is not clear what use is currently being made of this documentation. To expand the value, the collection analysis reports could be used to enhance the online course sites, create pathfinders, and contribute to broader comprehensive collection assessment.

User satisfaction

It was pointed out to us several times that the current model for collection development was successful because all faculty requests had been purchased. While this is one measure of success, it certainly cannot be the only one. The Libqual+ user satisfaction survey, last administered by UR in 2006, indicates some dissatisfaction with the library collections as demonstrated by scores for the "information control". In many cases faculty and graduate students report the perceived level of service below the

minimum acceptable. This is true for many academic libraries, however the level of dissatisfaction at UR is greater than the norm. Comparison of the UR data with all libraries participating in the 2006 survey administration and with the ARL library cohort (large libraries) reveals mean scores for UR significantly below the norm for either group for the dimensions of “information control” and “affect of service”.^{vi} Addressing inadequacies of access to information content should be considered strategically important to the library and the university.

Summary

Commendations

- The vision for increased outreach and the focus on academic liaison is strategically important for the Archer Library. Implementation will require some professional development support.
- The capacity to increase assessment activities exists within CDU. Some knowledge and skill-building will be necessary to develop a full-fledged assessment program.

Recommendations

- It is imperative to improve the financial management of the collections budget. Start with multi-year modeling of major expense categories. Establish discretionary allocations and fund codes for monograph expenditures using the Voyager system. Regularly monitor expenditures, comparing actual expenditures to predicted expenditures to identify anomalies.
- Vest authority for selection with subject liaison librarians who work in close collaboration with academic units.
- Streamline workflows for monograph orders and for processing donations.
- Reallocate staff in the Collection Development Unit to provide a more appropriate balance of librarians and support staff.
- Increase collaborative decision-making. A first step would be to institute regular meetings of all subject liaison librarians.

Technical Services

SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats)

Technical Services has experienced staff who are very knowledgeable about the department's operations. There is a good training program in place, for Cataloguing in particular where staff receive ongoing training during weekly meetings. It is clear that the department is working on striking a balance between staff specialization, which encourages development of expertise, and broader cross-training, which distributes knowledge and helps prevent basic operations from being delayed by staff absences or vacancies.

Comfort level with technology is high. Technical Services staff move easily among multiple applications and are proficient in the use of the Voyager integrated library system. In contrast, a weakness is that the department employs a number of manual processes which could be automated or streamlined. Statistics are kept manually. Spreadsheets are maintained to track the status of serial titles. Each call number label is formatted manually before printing. There is an opportunity to make greater use of the capabilities of the Voyager system and the skills of Technical Services staff to streamline and automate processes.

A strength of Technical Services is a focus on quality, on getting it right. This strength can also be a weakness when it translates into significant investment of time upfront. The "high touch" approach slows processes and can be a barrier to efficiency. For example, Acquisitions staff spend a great deal of time at the pre-order stage ensuring that titles ordered are listed as "in stock" by the vendor – work that could be done and followed up on, by the vendor. In Cataloguing, much time is spent checking for and correcting descriptive errors that do not affect patrons' ability to access and use materials. Each new call number is checked against the shelflist. In each of these examples, a high percentage of the items passing through the workflow could go through without this level of attention. Many academic libraries have stopped routine shelflisting in copy cataloguing. Some correct errors only if duplicate call numbers result, some add a character such as "X" to categories of material to prevent future duplication, and some have found that duplicate call numbers are acceptable (patrons are still able to locate the item).

There is a high level of redundancy and duplication of effort in Technical Services processes. Pieces and records are often handled by numerous people before reaching the person who will complete the process. Bibliographic records are edited in Acquisitions at the point of order, and then might undergo editing by multiple people in Cataloguing as well. Minimizing the number of handoffs is an important step in maximizing efficiency.

On a related theme, there is a high degree of customization and use of local processes. For example, the serials specialist changes each system-assigned ID number for serial titles in Voyager with a manually assigned number that conforms to the style of the previous system, requiring an entirely separate record-keeping system for tracking the numbers. In Cataloguing, all Library of Congress call numbers

are re-formatted by inserting a space between the alphabetic and numeric portions of the class number and deleting decimals before Cutter numbers. It is difficult to see how the benefits of these processes outweigh the staff time required to perform them.

Coverage of electronic resources is good overall; most electronic resources are represented in the catalogue and the unit makes effective use of records provided by a vendor and loaded on a routine basis. However there are weaknesses in this area as well. Responsibility for managing electronic resources is highly concentrated, with the department head responsible for most functions. There appear to be gaps in the coverage of electronic resources in the catalogue and no systematic means to determine what these are. It would be worthwhile to explore the capabilities of an ERM (Electronic Resource Management) system in addressing this concern. An ERM system could also have significant advantages for increasing transparency of the selection process for databases; such systems facilitate the sharing of information about the entire process beginning with database trials.

Cataloguing of data files appears to be uneven; a desire for fuller description and additional access points was expressed by Research Services. Discussions regarding the costs and benefits of various levels of cataloguing should include representatives of Technical Services and Research Services. The library should develop a common understanding of service needs and what level of cataloguing can cost effectively provide the service that is required.

Financial management is a weakness as noted above in the collection development section of this report. The effort needs to be collaborative and work needs to be done in both the Collection Development Unit and Technical Services. A major piece of this for Technical Services is to keep the financial information in the Voyager system accurate by regularly reconciling transactions and balances with the Banner system. This should occur no less than monthly. Transaction reports generated from Voyager and from Banner should be compared and discrepancies noted. A monthly report can be provided by Financial Services that will identify the amount of tax credits. This amount can then be credited back in Voyager, either in a lump sum to a separate allocation, or preferably to the budget categories that were charged the tax to begin with.

An opportunity for improved financial management is the support of the Financial Services staff for developing a payment link between Voyager and Banner. This will, at least initially, be a one-way link to feed invoice transaction information directly to Banner without the need to prepare manual payment vouchers or to re-key the data. This will save staff effort both in the Library and in Financial Services and speed up the processing of invoices. It is likely this sort of link has been developed at other institutions. A query to the Voyager User Group would be the first step to take.

Technical Services has the opportunity to use its strong foundation of training and expertise to improve overall performance in providing accurate, timely access to library materials. The department can broaden the range of activities of paraprofessional staff and streamline processes to move routine materials through more quickly and increase access to materials that are more complex (for example, non-print materials, exhibition catalogues) or not well represented (for example, the extensive

collections in University Archives). Such re-engineering of workflow has been common practice in academic library technical service operations for at least a decade, for acquisitions^{vii} and for cataloguing.^{viii}

There is an opportunity to consider new approaches to cataloguing some categories of material. Minimal level or collection-level records may provide sufficient access for some types of material. Locally produced materials such as student projects that now require original cataloguing might be submitted to an institutional repository. There is also an opportunity to use the skills that staff have developed in new contexts: to organize and describe materials in digital collections and the institutional repository.

The major threat to Technical Services is irrelevancy. In the current library environment, there are many competitors for the basic services provided by Technical Services operations. In addition, the very nature of library collections is shifting dramatically; libraries are increasingly involved in managing access to and delivery of resources that are not part of the physical collection.

There is a threat of being marginalized within the institution if Technical Services views its role as merely responding to the changes taking place in academic library services. The department can choose to help shape its future and define its own role in the evolving information environment. The Strategy Map we are presenting here is a starting point. Discussions should be ongoing and the department should embrace the goal of continuous improvement. There is an opportunity to explore ideas for new services that support the research and teaching needs of the faculty and students, making use of the existing skills of Technical Services staff and expanding these skill sets as well.

Strategy Map for Technical Services

Financial resources

As noted, financial management must be a collaborative effort. This will require staff in Technical Services to spend additional effort. Allocating monograph funds will mean an additional detail for Acquisitions staff to note in ordering. Ensuring that allocations do not over expend will require collaboration between Acquisitions and individual subject liaison librarians. Regular reports should be generated from Voyager to accomplish this. It is critical to maintain the accuracy of the Voyager data.

Multi-year budget modeling, a collaborative effort between the Collection Development Unit and Technical Services will aid in identifying potential budget problems, such as insufficient funds to cover serials inflation. We have some concerns about the adequacy of this year's funding to cover all continuing obligations. This should be investigated. Technical Services staff can help with this by providing monthly or quarterly expense balances in each major budget category over the last three to four years. If the knowledge to produce this report does not currently exist it will need to be developed.

People: knowledge, skills ,and abilities

In general, Technical Services staff have the expertise needed to carry out the traditional functions of acquisitions and cataloguing. The upcoming retirement of the serials specialist represents a significant loss of expertise that will need to be replaced. There is a need to distribute some skills more broadly and to make better use of the knowledge, skills, and abilities of paraprofessional staff. There is also a need to begin educating staff about new approaches to organizing and describing resources, including non-MARC metadata schemes.

In Cataloguing, paraprofessional staff have a high level of understanding of descriptive cataloguing practices. For editors of catalogue copy for books, there appears to be an emphasis on using this knowledge to ensure that all elements of the bibliographic record conform to the rules. Copy cataloguers routinely edit fields that have no impact on access, for example, ensuring that the place of publication is transcribed precisely as it should be according to AACR2 (rather than that it matches the piece in hand) or measuring each book and editing elements of the physical description (rather than checking the pagination quickly to ensure that the book matches the record). Accuracy and detail are important in bibliographic control, but there appears to be an overemphasis on the rules for their own sake, a culture of perfection rather than a focus on access.

To help shift staff resources toward an emphasis on access, paraprofessional staff should be more involved in higher level cataloguing tasks, specifically providing subject analysis and classification (as is already the case for music cataloguing). The skills of the higher level paraprofessionals could be better targeted: completing cataloguing for minimal level records, working on complex cataloguing problems, creating complete original records, tackling uncatalogued collections and digital collections

Given the proliferation of electronic resources and the number and variety of record loads, it would be useful to distribute this work more broadly.

Two observations made in the section on collection development also apply to Technical Services. The ability to collaborate effectively appears to be generally lacking; communication and collaboration with external units is uneven. Broad discussion of priorities and communication about user needs would contribute a great deal to improving the department's performance. In addition, the ability to pull data from the Voyager system needs to be broadly distributed. This would facilitate many processes in Technical Services; it is a critical component of a transition to performing less quality review upfront. Improving communication and collaboration for financial management among several units within the library and with Financial Services is essential.

Collections

Several people mentioned the difficulty the Archer Library was having in developing a comprehensive collection of Canadiana material. This may or may not be a deficiency of the vendor selected to provide the material. There are not a lot of vendor choices. Colleagues within the Canadian Library Association should be consulted. Are other libraries having the same problem? If not, what vendors are being

used? If yes, how are these libraries addressing the problem? This is an excellent opportunity to work collaboratively with other professionals in the region.

The scope of activities carried out by Technical Services has focused on the collections acquired through traditional selection and ordering processes: print and audiovisual materials, licensed electronic resources. A broader scope is needed in the current library environment, to better reflect the resources available to patrons. Technical Services should be involved in organizing and describing all resources available to patrons of the Archer Library, including the unique collections in University Archives. Concentrated effort in this area could be an important step in enhancing access to Canadiana material.

Efficient processes and effective services

The fundamental issue for Technical Services is maximizing efficiency of processes. The “high touch” approach has a high cost in productivity. A great deal of staff time is expended on handling routine materials and processes. There is a need to focus more on timely processing of items requiring more attention, including Canadiana, exhibition catalogues, and non-print formats.

Technical Services should make use of staff experience and technology to streamline workflow. Routine materials should flow through more quickly to allow staff time to focus on more specialized materials that require more time and attention. For example, the unit should identify categories of material that can go through a fast cataloguing stream with minimal or no editing. Many libraries have successfully implemented cataloguing-on-receipt processes for full level copy that meets certain criteria (such as encoding level and the presence of a Library of Congress call number and subject headings). The emphasis is on matching the record to the book and moving the item along, rather than on checking or re-doing the work of the library that originally catalogued the item. Errors that impede access are corrected, upfront or in post-cataloguing quality review processes; cosmetic errors that do not impede access are accepted as is. To a certain extent, this approach of minimal editing, focusing on access, already happens for records that are purchased from a vendor and batch loaded; it should be extended to those materials that have already been fully catalogued by another library.

Bottlenecks are created in processes where materials are handed off from one staff member to another. It would be useful for the department to review the flow of materials and the situations that cause an item to be handed off. While there is some cross-training, with a small staff it is very important to maximize the effort. Cross-training can reduce hand-offs in the workflow in addition to providing better coverage during vacancies. In Cataloguing, it seems logical that the staff member who is the first point of receipt should be able to complete the cataloguing for a high percentage of items, given clear guidelines and training. (We were not able to observe the work processes of this staff member due to the timing of our visit, but it appears that sorting of material by format takes place here, rather than in Acquisitions, that this staff member does not search OCLC, and that most materials are handed off to another staff member.) Many materials are passed on to the half-time librarian for subject analysis, causing considerable delays in completion.

Given the amount of editing of full bibliographic records that occurs at the point of order it might be beneficial to consider the options for a streamlined workflow. One option would be to use that record essentially “as is” at the first point of receipt for a high percentage of items. That way the work done at the front end of the process creates a time savings later on. Another option would be to save time at the front end by using brief bibliographic records at the point of order instead of full records. These records could be provided by a vendor or downloaded from OCLC using a filter that would strip out the problematic fields. Acquisitions staff would then not need to take the time to edit the record. Upon receipt, staff would search for a full bibliographic record and complete the cataloguing or route the item to appropriate staff based upon characteristics of the record.

Major monograph vendors, including Blackwell’s Book Services, can provide a range of value-added services that should be investigated. For example, currently Acquisitions staff place orders directly into the Blackwell’s database and then enter the information again into Voyager. One of these steps could be eliminated, either by entering the order only into Voyager and sending an electronic order file to Blackwell’s or by entering the order only into Blackwell’s database (or releasing a request already placed there by the subject liaison librarian) and having Blackwell’s send a file of brief bibliographic and order records back. Blackwell’s can also supply full bibliographic records and fully processed “shelf-ready” books. Cost comparisons with current in-house processes should be made to see if the economies of scale achieved by the vendor make this an attractive choice.

Regarding authority work, some internal processes seem unnecessary given that new cataloguing is sent out for authority processing. There is an emphasis on verification of headings in the Voyager system and processes delayed or items handed off to the librarian or department head for lack of an authorized heading. It is not clear why this should happen if records are sent to the vendor for clean-up on a monthly basis. When authority work is contracted to a vendor on a post-cataloguing basis, the need for upfront authority work should be minimal.

Manual processes should be minimized or eliminated. The capabilities of the Voyager system should be further explored in this respect; consultation with other Voyager libraries could be very useful. In terms of call number label formatting, it would be useful to explore the capabilities of the OCLC Connexion software if Voyager does not provide adequate capability for producing formatted labels without manual editing. A “shelf-ready” service would be an attractive option if an alternative to manual formatting is not found. Another strategy is to look for ways to minimize repetitive handwritten notes with forms or stamps that list common situations that need to be communicated to the next person in the workflow.

User satisfaction

It was noted in several of our interview sessions that a strength of the Technical Services operation is the ability to keep up with service demands, in particular routine processing of orders and cataloguing of items received. While there is a fully developed workflow in place, routine materials could move through much more quickly with some adjustments. This would allow the unit to focus its efforts on

timely access to less routine materials and enhance access to a broader range of materials. Redefining the measure of quality and success is an important step for Technical Services – timely access to materials is an important aspect of quality service.

We heard on several occasions that scrutiny of catalogue records is not limited to cataloguers, and that “corrections” received from Circulation and from Research Services were a factor in increasing cataloguer review of full level LC copy. While feedback is important, it will be difficult for Technical Services to shift its priorities to timely access and to correcting errors that affect access. Communication will be essential in developing a broader understanding of these priorities within the library.

Summary

Commendations

- Staff are well trained, comfortable with technology, and focused on high quality work.
- The capacity to improve service by increasing timely access to a broader range of materials exists within Technical Services. Some training and re-design of workflows will be necessary.

Recommendations

- It is imperative to improve the financial management of the collections budget. Start with collaborating with the Collection Development Unit to enter accurate budget allocations into Voyager. Reconcile budget and expense balances with Banner no less than monthly. Record tax credits in Voyager monthly based on Banner reports.
- Streamline invoice processing by moving forward on a payment interface that uses Voyager output as Banner input. Financial Services supports this effort.
- Streamline workflows for ordering, receipt, cataloguing, and processing of materials.
- Move routine materials through more quickly in order to focus staff time and expertise on materials requiring more time and attention.
- Broaden the range of responsibilities of paraprofessional cataloguers to include subject analysis and classification. Shift the focus of experienced paraprofessional cataloguers to working on more complex materials, uncatalogued collections in University Archives, and digital collections.
- Minimize or eliminate manual processes and highly customized practices. Making better use of the capabilities of the Voyager system is an important component of this transition.

Summary of Recommendations

Collection Development Recommendations

- It is imperative to improve the financial management of the collections budget. Start with multi-year modeling of major expense categories. Establish discretionary allocations for monograph expenditures. Use the Voyager system to regularly track expenditures, comparing actual expenditures to predicted expenditures to identify anomalies.
- Vest authority for selection with subject liaison librarians who work in close collaboration with academic units.
- Streamline workflows for monograph orders and for processing donations.
- Reallocate staff in the Collection Development Unit to provide a more appropriate balance of librarians and support staff.
- Increase collaborative decision-making. A first step would be to institute regular meetings of all subject liaison librarians.

Technical Services Recommendations

- Improve the financial management of the collections budget. Start with collaborating with the Collection Development Unit to enter accurate budget allocations into Voyager. Reconcile budget and expense balances with Banner no less than monthly. Record tax credits in Voyager monthly based on Banner reports.
- Streamline invoice processing by moving forward on a payment interface that uses Voyager output as Banner input. Financial Services supports this effort.
- Streamline workflows for ordering, receipt, cataloguing, and processing of materials.
- Move routine materials through more quickly in order to focus staff time and expertise on materials requiring more time and attention.
- Broaden the range of responsibilities of paraprofessional cataloguers to include subject analysis and classification. Shift the focus of experienced paraprofessional cataloguers to working on more complex materials, uncatalogued collections in University Archives, and digital collections.
- Minimize or eliminate manual processes and highly customized practices. Making better use of the capabilities of the Voyager system is an important component of this transition.

End Notes

ⁱ See “Collection Development Unit, Terms of Reference” approved by the Librarians’ Council, December 16, 2004.

ⁱⁱ See “Report of the Library Unit Review Team, November 29, 2005” by Charrier, Ellis, Lints, and Swanson.

ⁱⁱⁱ See Joe Matthews’ 2007 presentation “The Library Balanced Scorecard: The Results Please!” linked from the ALA website:

<http://www.ala.org/ala/lama/lamacommittees/measurement/BalancedScorecard.htm>

^{iv} See “Library Liaison: A Philosophy of Service Provision”, William Sgrazzutti, Dr. John Archer Library, University of Regina, 2007.

^v See Libqual+ results notebook prepared by the Association of Research Libraries and several interpretive reports prepared by Julie McKenna, 2006.

^{vi} See “Norms, Dimensions of Service, Satisfaction & Information Literacy Outcomes” prepared by Julie McKenna, University of Regina, July 29, 2006.

^{vii} See “Reengineering Technical Service Processes”, Karen Huwald Zuidema, *Library Resources & Technical Services* 43, no. 1 (1999): 37-52.

^{viii} See “The reorganization of monographic cataloging processes at Penn State University libraries”, R. Freeborn and R. Mugridge, *Library Collections, Acquisitions & Technical Services* 26, no. 1 (2002): 35–45.