ORGANIZING THE WORK OF THE RESEARCH LIBRARY

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September 19, 2016
Areas of research and consulting

• Surveys of faculty members and students
• Qualitative and ethnographic studies for libraries
• Content and collections, discovery and access
• Organizational strategy and leadership
RADICAL TRANSFORMATIONS

Print: Electronic
Local: Shared
Licensed: Open
General: Distinctive
Collections: Engagement
Selector: Partner
The research library is today moving away from organizational structures and management practices centered around building and supporting the general collection.
WHY DOES STRUCTURE MATTER?

• Foster team relationships
• Establish accountability
• Organize budget
• Create incentives
Interviews with sitting and recently retired library directors

Emphasis on the largest research institutions

Selected for institutions and leaders believed to have been innovating organizational structure
INTERVIEWEES

- Martha Bedard, University of Connecticut, previously University of New Mexico
- Jon Cawthorne, West Virginia University
- Carol Diedrichs, Ohio State University, previously University of Kentucky
- Charles Eckman, University of Miami, previously Simon Fraser University
- Geneva Henry, George Washington University
- Lorraine Haricombe, University of Texas Austin, previously University of Kansas
- Wendy Lougee, University of Minnesota
- Rick Luce, University of Oklahoma, previously Emory University, Los Alamos National Laboratory
- Brian Lym, Adelphi University
- James Neal, retired from Columbia University, previously Johns Hopkins University and Indiana University
- Sarah Pritchard, Northwestern University, previously University of California Santa Barbara and Smith College
- MacKenzie Smith, University of California Davis
- Carla Stoffle, retired from University of Arizona
- Gary Strong, retired from University of California Los Angeles, previously Queens Library
- Ed van Gemert, University of Wisconsin, Madison
- Kay Wall, retired from Clemson University, previously University of Southern Mississippi
- Karen Williams, University of Arizona
- Lizabeth (Betsy) Wilson, University of Washington
Does structure enable strategy?
THE ROLE OF THE DIRECTOR

Variations
• Titles and responsibilities
• Vision and facilitation
• Areas of functional focus
• Trust
LEADERSHIP
TEAM

Organizational leaders, not unit managers

• Inheriting vs building
• Lowering the management burden
• Managing towards a strategy
• The unit and the organization
• Leadership throughout the organization
• Reaching deeper
• Hierarchies vs. teams
RETHINKING COLLECTIONS

Reduce licensing, increase distinctiveness

• Linked with scholarly communications or materials processing?
• A budget manager or a people manager?
• Combine special and general collections to empower a strategic shift?
• Separate curatorial functions from bulk acquisitions?
• Cross-institutional collaboration?
REIMAGINING OUTREACH

Innovating new services

• As place-based outreach fades, disconnects grow?
• Discipline-based common, but limitations of the liaison model
• Community-based a different approach
REDESIGNING TECHNOLOGY

A “black box” or the strategic heart of the organization?

• Own vs outsource
• Scope of the role - from systems to omnibus
• Product organization and Agile
RESTRUCTURING

Structure is contingent, not enduring

- Big Bang vs. regular realignment
- Inclusive process vs leadership vision
- Collective agreements, tenure, and other work rules can be seen as impediments
REFLECTIONS

• Clear strategy yields smart structure.
  - Articulating strategic objectives with a high level of clarity is vital

• Empower employees across the organization
  - Not just culture but also structure

• Technology is giving way to technology-enabled services
  - Organization and management is catching up

• Universities are driven by research excellence and/or student success
  - Realigning the library is essential
THANK YOU

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