Introduction

Western Libraries’ mission and vision from its strategic plan Library-as-Place & Place-as-Library serve as context for the retrospective and prospective content in this report.

**Mission:** Western Libraries is committed to excellence: anticipating information and service needs related to the University’s goals for research and scholarship, teaching and learning, and service to our university community and key partners. Our staff engages the Western academic community in the development of new services, and continuously strives to exceed the expectations of our diverse user groups.

**Vision:** Western Libraries will be a leader in providing both the best library-as-place and the best place-as-library experience for the Western academic community.

This annual report presents a highly selective list of achievements for Western Libraries during 2007-08, and priorities and goals for 2008-09.

Highlights of 2007-2008

**Support to Research and Scholarship: Responding to graduate student expansion and research needs: looking at new services and new ways of doing business** (Aligned with Engaging the Future’s commitment to expanded graduate enrolment, increased research intensity, and interdisciplinarity)

- Western Libraries was a founding institutional member of Portico – an international initiative, still in experimental mode, that is designed to ensure a secure digital archive for scholarly resources, a critical consideration given that the bulk of our collections budget is devoted to electronic content.
- Librarians have begun to reach out with new programs designed for graduate students, for example from the Allyn and Betty Taylor Library: *Introduction to library research at Western*, Basic searching skills, Advanced searching skills, Advanced searching in PubMed, *Introduction to RefWorks*, *Keeping current with scholarly literature*, and *Introduction to SciFinder Scholar*, all featured in the 360º Graduate Student Professional Development Initiative booklet developed by the Teaching Support Centre.
- Improved interlibrary loan (ILL) services: Western Libraries hosted an OCUL Interlibrary Loan Coordinators Business Meeting focusing on “The Future is Now: Conversations about Resource Sharing”. In partnership with the OCUL Access & Delivery Strategic Committee and the Scholars Portal Operations Team, ILL Coordinators from across Ontario were able to discuss ILL issues that impact all locations. An internal review has commenced that will incorporate a review of the Western Libraries ILL departments for effectiveness and efficiency. New strategies for delivering resources more quickly and more effectively are also being explored.
Taylor Library is currently designing a needs assessment to be conducted among a pilot cohort of interdisciplinary research teams to ascertain the information service needs of the team members. The goal of the proposed pilot is to offer customized, needs-based information services that enhance the information management skills of team members that then, in turn, will lead to enhanced research output for the selected research teams. The results of the pilot will be used to develop the Libraries’ research support programs and value added services specifically aimed at research groups. It is recognized that the current services offered are not sufficient to meet the needs of large multi- and interdisciplinary teams.

The provision of records management services to the University continues to be one of the new core businesses of Western Libraries/Western Archives. However, with changes to internal functions and a leveling off of some service demands, it is now possible for Western’s archivists to focus more of their efforts on acquiring and making available primary research material. This is facilitated in part by the creation of thematic portfolios that identify areas of current strength or anticipated growth in archival holdings. This work is being targeted largely, albeit not exclusively, at the needs of graduate students and faculty members.

**Support to Teaching and Learning: Maintaining our core business with an ongoing commitment to assessment and library service quality** (Aligned with Engaging the Future’s commitment to the best student experience for undergraduate and graduate students)

- Student Services librarian position created last year has proved successful at increased outreach and interaction with academic departments and student groups.
- Information literacy programming continued to develop in quantity and quality, with new examples of faculty-librarian partnerships to embed information literacy competencies in undergraduate academic programs and some penetration of graduate programs; increased presence and participation of librarians in Teaching Support Centre programs; invited presentations at library conferences on Western Libraries’ initiatives and programs; new ways of doing business re information literacy programming involving technology were necessary to manage the increased demand.
- In March 2007, Western Libraries invited faculty, graduate and undergraduate students to complete a library service quality survey called LibQUAL+™. Measured against the results of the 2004 survey the results indicate that Western Libraries is moving in the right direction. However, it is clear improvements are needed to support the best experience for our faculty and students. The primary desire voiced in relation to all libraries is the need for quiet, clean, individual study space in an environment conducive to study and learning. The Libraries’ Assessment Committee will continue to analyze the data from the survey and to address the most critical issues throughout this four year plan.
- Hours of operation had been reinstated to 2005/06 levels in January 2007 following a strong message delivered by students during the fall of 2006. The dissatisfaction with the hours were reflected in the Survey of Graduating Students 2006-07 and in the LibQUAL comments requesting extended hours of opening during the midterm and end of term exams along with earlier hours of opening on weekends for some libraries. Although some users suggested 24/7 for at least one library on campus, there did not appear to be a strong desire for this in the comments received. Effective September 2007, Western Libraries has put in place a plan that will maintain the reinstated hours, increase weekend hours in the Weldon Library, and ensure continuation of the extended hours of opening during midterm and year end examination periods.
**Place-as-Library - the Digital Library**

- LibQUAL comments from faculty and graduate students identified the need to redesign the website, describing it as an ‘untapped resource’. Comments indicated that it was too difficult to navigate and took too many clicks to reach needed information or services that were hidden in the confusing layout and described in library jargon. Our Next Generation Website Implementation Team (NGWIT) began to plan, design and prepare for the implementation of a new Western Libraries website in May 2008. In addition to consulting widely with students, faculty and others who may have an interest in our website, the Team has already identified a content management system (Drupal) and tested its implementation with the staff Intranet site. A video, “Finding Our Place” (now on YouTube) was produced for exploring the concept of the library beyond our physical walls. The video enabled conversations among staff about the ‘Place as Library’ strategy and the role that Western Libraries staff play in delivering anything/any place/any time to users accessing the Libraries’ website. In the context of the evolving world of Web 2.0/Library 2.0, staff discussed the need for a website to support ‘digital conversations’ with our users as well as to provide opportunities for customization or personalization. To inform the new website design, NGWIT also hosted a number of focus groups with library leaders, staff and student groups to explore why users go to the Western Libraries website and what they like (or don’t like) about the current site.

- Continued the move towards increased “born digital” content, with support of national and provincial collaborative efforts (CRKN, OCUL) complemented by the tools and services for access offered by Scholars Portal; Western now offers access to 45,000 full-text electronic journals.

**Library-as-Place – the Physical Library** (Aligned with Engaging the Future’s commitment to creating community space)

- Library-as-Place continues to flourish in a hybrid research library environment, evidenced by the ongoing increase in gate count for the seven physical service locations, with over 3,000,000 visitors projected for 2007-08.

- Library staff continued to be actively involved in the ongoing implementation of the strategic plan through participation in annual staff planning sessions. The theme of the sessions this year was Library-as-Place/Place-as-Library and offered excellent presentations. Michael Ridley, Chief Information Officer and Chief Librarian, University of Guelph, spoke on Nurturing Community: the Opportunities of Academic Libraries in Virtual and Physical Space where libraries exist in ‘permanent beta’ and where there is a need to look at new tools to promote access to and discovery of the wealth of available information resources. A second theme was the concept of the library as the ‘academic town square’ or a community space where the academic community meets and interacts to exchange ideas and perspectives and to create new areas of knowledge and understanding. The concept of community space was further developed within the broader Western context by Jerry White and Duncan Hunter. In his presentation Creating Social Learning Space: from Theory to Practice Jerry White moved from the theory of social learning space to discussing why we need this kind of space. He also talked about how social learning fits into Western’s planning for physical and virtual space. Duncan Hunter picked up that theme and talked about the Campus Master Plan and the opportunities provided within that plan to create community/social learning space. All three speakers challenged staff to imagine, dream, and become engaged in the possibilities created by the changing library and academic environments.
Collaborative and Cooperative Initiatives: Working with others for the benefit of Western and Western Libraries

- Western Libraries continued as an active participant in the Ontario Council of University Libraries (OCUL)’s internationally recognized Scholars Portal project. Of particular importance was the consortial purchase of more online journal packages. LibQUAL 2007 comments included frequent kudos for online resources although more online backfiles of journals are desired. It is clear that online access is the preferred mode of interaction for the majority of disciplines: our users want more and more in electronic form. In order to optimize the investment there also is need for better marketing of new library resources along with services that provide instruction in how to use the resources. Our physical monograph collections in some disciplines did not fare as well as those for online resources: comments included ‘outdated’ and ‘of insufficient quantity’. Consequently, new opportunities for collaborative purchase of electronic books are being explored and will be tested to see if that format addresses the need for current resources in support of research and learning.

- Western Libraries provided a leadership role and is a key partner in the formation of the Western Ontario Health Knowledge Network (WOHKN), a newly created not-for-profit, voluntary cooperative between The University of Western Ontario and many of the hospitals that participate in an Affiliation Agreement with the University. The basis for the WOHKN partnership is the mutual care, teaching, and research goals of The University of Western Ontario and its Affiliated Hospitals. Each WOHKN member has in place a signed and current Affiliation Agreement that includes general responsibilities for the delivery of library services. By means of a Letter of Intent, WOHKN members have further defined the role and collaborative relationship of their libraries with respect to resources, access, services and operations. WOHKN will improve access to appropriate, relevant and reliable evidence-based health care, research and education through the practice and expertise of qualified professional librarians to ensure the best possible access to tools which are essential for informed decision-making. The parties recognize that health information needs are acknowledged in the standards of such accrediting organizations as the Canadian Council on Health Services Accreditation (CCHSA), the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME), and the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada’s Accreditation of Residency Programs; and that within this context the Medical Library Association and Canadian Health Libraries Association provide standards for structuring library services within a healthcare facility.

- Western Libraries has extended access for electronic resources to students and faculty at the affiliated university colleges for several years; during 2007-08, the libraries at the affiliates reciprocated by making specialized resources (those directly related to affiliate programming) available to all members of the campus community through Western Libraries’ Shared Library Catalogue.

- Western Libraries has joined with more than 80 other institutions as a development partner with Innovative Interfaces Incorporated for Encore, a new interface for our Shared Library Catalogue that incorporates Web 2.0 attributes.

- Western Archives received a $3,600 grant from the London Endowment for Heritage Fund, a fund within the London Community Foundation to support the ‘London Women’s Archives Project’. The money will be used to assist the London Women’s History Group (WHG) in partnership with Western Archives in their collaborative efforts to identify, acquire, preserve and make accessible archival materials documenting the contributions of local women to the community.

- As a member of the Association of Research Libraries (ARL), Western Libraries submitted three entries for consideration for the ARL’s 75th Anniversary publication: Celebrating Research: Rare and Special Collections from the Membership of the Association of
Two of the entries were from The James Alexander and Ellen Rea Benson Special Collections, and the third was the Gustav Mahler-Alfred Rosé Collection. It was a great honour to have the Gustav Mahler-Alfred Rosé Collection selected as one of the collections featured in the publication.

**Staff Development, Renewal and Succession Planning:** (Aligned with Engaging the Future’s commitment to creating a positive working environment and placing value on staff)

- Staff turnover is escalating with several early retirements of long service staff and recruitment of new staff, creating a mix of various generations, a blend of the older and the younger in terms of experience and style, resulting in a rich blend of staff. Western Libraries’ 20+ Club, celebrating the contributions of library staff with twenty and more years of service, now includes 85 members, representing a total of 2,500 years of service. Western Libraries’ longest serving staff member – Raj Jain - will be retiring in early summer, having served 42 years with undiminished enthusiasm and pride in her work.
- Staff are involved in alumni and community activities, serving as ambassadors for the University and the Libraries.
- Library staff continued to be actively involved in the ongoing implementation of the strategic plan through participation in annual staff planning sessions (see section above on Library-as-Place).
- The Western Libraries “family” is reinforced by various social and educational events throughout the year: annual summer BBQ; annual Christmas party; 20+ club for those with 20 or more years of service; staff development activities with wellness, recreational and educational offerings; annual display of art work from children of staff members; fundraising for United Way and other charities through silent auctions and bake sales; monthly newsletter; dynamic Intranet, departmental blogs and wikis.
- Efficiencies- Western Libraries has been at the forefront in taking advantage of opportunities to reorganize and to find efficiencies in how our work is done. This has continued with the reorganization of the Office of the University Librarian and the establishment of the shared service desk in The D. B. Weldon Library. Additionally, internal reviews are currently being undertaken by Western Archives, Weldon Library’s and Taylor Library’s Resource Support Services, and Interlibrary Loan Services in order to optimize the use of our staff resources and streamline processes in the face of increased demands.
- Western Award of Excellence: Two librarians- Debbie Grey (Law Library) and Walter Zimmerman (Weldon Library) - were recipients of the award in recognition of their long service contributions to the University, and the staff of the Education Library were nominated by graduate students as a tribute to the excellent service provided.

**Accountability - Performance Measures and Assessment** (Aligned with Engaging the Future’s commitment)

- Considerable strides have been made towards the development of a culture of assessment for Western Libraries; in witness of this, the Report of the Libraries Workload Committee includes assessment for each of the priority areas for 2008-09.
- Staff have built an extremely strong culture of service in Western Libraries and this has been frequently recognized through internal (survey of graduating students) and external (LibQUAL, Globe & Mail, Maclean’s) surveys.
- Participated in 2007 LibQUAL survey with other CARL libraries during March 2007, with over 2000 responses from faculty, graduate students, undergraduate students, 50% of whom provided comments.
- Western Libraries once again were highly rated in the 2006 Graduating Students survey.
Western Libraries received an “A” from students in the fall 2007 Globe & Mail Report Card, the highest score among large Canadian universities.

Priorities and Goals for 2008-2009

Western Libraries’ mission and vision from its strategic plan Library-as-Place & Place-as-Library (revised November 2007) serve as context for the priorities and goals for 2008-09.

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The priority areas below – research and scholarship, teaching and learning, and administration and operations – reflect the core mission of the University and the role of library staff - librarians and archivists, professional, technical and clerical - in supporting that mission. The points within each area have been identified as a result of a review of Western’s strategic plan Engaging the Future, the academic plans of the Faculties, and consultation with librarians and archivists through the Libraries Workload Committee.

Supporting the Research and Scholarship Mission of the University

In support of Western’s role as a major research intensive university, the Libraries provide services, and facilitate and coordinate access to scholarly resources for faculty members, graduate students and others involved in advanced academic research.

Collections
- develop, manage and assess digital collections, particularly in new and developing areas of research, and in support of new or expanding graduate programs, while maintaining access to existing information resources
- selectively build print (including archival) collections, particularly in new and developing areas of research, and in support of new or expanding graduate programs, while maintaining access to existing information resources
- selectively digitize unique collections and investigate options for data curation, including institutional repositories
- develop, manage and assess collections to support cross/inter/multi-disciplinary research

Services
- support graduate students and faculty members in making effective use of new and existing resources when conducting research
- regularly assess the needs of graduate students, faculty members and research teams for support with respect to current and developing areas of research
- analyze various sources of assessment data and apply knowledge gained to enhance or develop appropriate resources and services
- educate graduate students and faculty members about open access for scholarly communication
Supporting the Teaching and Learning Mission of the University

In support of Western’s commitment to the student experience, the Libraries provide services, facilitate and coordinate access to information resources, and/or deliver information literacy programs to address the teaching and learning needs of undergraduate and graduate students.

General
- provide a physical environment conducive to the efficient and effective access of information, to individual and group study, and to the learning needs of an increasingly diverse student population
- plan, develop, deliver and assess services and resources provided outside the physical libraries
- plan, develop, deliver and assess online services to allow for customization and/or personalization of library and information resources in response to diverse learning needs and to provide new methods for information discovery

Undergraduate
- plan, develop, deliver and assess undergraduate student information literacy programs to support curriculum, course and individual needs, in collaboration with faculty members

Graduate
- plan, develop, deliver and assess graduate student information literacy programs to address the needs of individuals with discipline-specific and/or interdisciplinary learning needs, in collaboration with faculty members
- expand and/or enhance support for graduate students, as appropriate

Supporting the Administration and Operations of the University

In support of Western’s overall mandate, the Libraries offer a range of activities designed to facilitate the effective operation of academic units, administrative units, individual libraries and departments, and/or compliance with legislation.

- provide records management and archival services (e.g., storage, retention and disposal, digitization, etc.) to support the work of academic and administrative units across campus
- provide advocacy/educational programs and services related to copyright
- provide effective management of Western Libraries through its senior leadership team, and of individual libraries and departments through the work of designated library directors and department heads.