LIBRARIAN & ARCHIVISTS FORUM

Meeting Notes, Wednesday, January 25, 2023

Co-Chairs: K. Thompson, K. Hatch (this meeting facilitated by B. McMillan and J. Robinson)

Notes: E. Carlisle-Johnston

Approval of Agenda: Approved

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Given by K. Thompson.

MEETING NOTES:

1. **Business Arising**

a. Disciplinary Coordinators discussion – S. Cassady and K. Carson

Background Context

After a shared meeting on December 6th the T&L and CCS teams are pleased to report full support in moving forwards with a Community of Practice approach to organize Disciplinary Coordinator work. In advance of the Forum, please review the attached the synthesis report which summarizes the meeting and proposed model. At the Forum, Kim and Samuel will speak to the synthesis report and vision, first steps in forming the CoPs, and welcome others across WL to think about and share how they could participate.

Discussions about the Disciplinary Coordinator model continued in late Fall of last year. The intention now is to formalize a flexible approach, in a collegial model that's reflective of how we support different disciplines on campus. Every team has a different model for working with disciplines, but we don't currently work intentionally across teams to discuss how we each work with different disciplines. CCS and T&L teams are organized by subject, where other teams are not.

The intention is to have different communities of practice, meeting once a month for 30 minutes to share information. The Communities of Practice would be led by CCS and T&L.

Question to members: How do we make it easier for other teams to participate in the Disciplinary Coordinator model and on these COPs?

Comment: RSC has talked about what disciplinary work looks like within the team. RSC has created a shared document describing the general work of RSC, and then the specific people/projects we're working with across each discipline. Once Communities of Practice are in place, Disciplinary Coordinators and members of each CoP can read the document to learn about what RSC is doing and

who members of RSC are working with to support each discipline. These reports are intended FOR disciplinary coordinators to facilitate collaboration, knowledge sharing, and potentially new opportunities to support disciplines.

> **Comment:** Members believe this report will be useful, and that it would be helpful to create similar reports in the other functional units that aren't already organized by discipline, to share with the Disciplinary Coordinators.
>
> **Comment:** Would be helpful if the report included archived projects and ongoing projects.
>
> **Comment:** Want to be sure that this won't be too much onerous work on top of other operational updates and reports. These documents can be updated periodically so that they remain current useful for Disciplinary Coordinators.
>
> **Comment:** Can keep these reports in Word for now, but may eventually want to move them into a database or tool that is easy to search. Would need to work with LITS on this.

Question: How do people join? What does that look like?
Answer: Disciplinary Coordinators will have to get together and develop similar structures and invitations. Then calls will go out. Commitment for people not on CCS and T&L is 30 minutes per month.

Question: How do people who work with multiple disciplines choose which to attend? Can we just know when the Community of Practice meetings are and plan to attend?
Question: Are invitations to Communities of Practice open to the FIMS Library?
Answer: Yes

Question: Are we opening Communities of Practice up to Affiliates?
Answer: Yes, we should open participation to affiliates
Comment: Some groups work a lot with research institutes. We should document this.

Action: Disciplinary coordinators will work on calls for Communities of Practice.
Action: RSC will send the draft disciplinary report out draft for feedback. Other units can then see if a similar report would be useful to capture their disciplinary work.

2. **New Business**

a. Pause Week proposal (E. Johnson and K. Pereyaslavska)
> *Pause Week is a week in which an organization agrees not to schedule any (nonessential?) meetings.*

This proposal is more about introducing meeting free days. It is not an original idea; other libraries in Ontario do this, and there is a lot of literature on the topic. In general, our time in meetings has increased since the pandemic. Some members are spending 50-60% of our time in meetings.
A study has shown that 1 meeting free day a week increases employee satisfaction, decreases stress levels, and leads to a rise in productivity and feelings of autonomy. However, there is a sweet spot; too

many meeting free days and staff are less productive and feel more isolated. The optimum number of meeting free days a week is 3.

Question to group: How can we achieve this together?
Comment: Can we assess the frequency of our standing meetings to see if it is possible to meet less frequently? We might be able to replace some meetings with less formal methods of conversation, such as Teams chats or emails; most questions can get answered at a virtual water cooler.
Comment: Can we identify an organizational meeting-free day, such as Mondays or Fridays? (there is a lot of support from the group for identifying an organizational meeting-free day).
> **Comment:** This requires a cultural shift; we need to commit, as an organization, to doing this. It can't start at the individual level. We have to also commit to reassessing how we do meetings and how frequently we need to meet so that we don't all have the same number of overall meetings condensed into 4 days.

Action: E. Johnson will collect data about when standing meetings across Western Libraries are held, as a start.

2. LARSN Update (K. Hoffmann and L. Olson)
Activities and proposals for the Librarians and Archivists Support Network

Current LARSN Members: K. Hoffmann, K. Meadows, L. Olson, S. Spong, K. Thompson
LARSN Research and Writing Retreats are held on the first and third Mondays of the month, online in a Teams chat. These aren't exclusively research and writing retreats; people sometimes do other work. Many people who come appreciate the communal aspect and the ability to dedicate focused time to a task. If members would like to be added to the Teams site where the writing retreats take place, they can reach out to one of the LARSN members.

LARSN has also held professional development events, such as guest speakers and recent panel discussions about building research agendas and research collaborations.

Question to members: Are there other things LARSN could be doing?
Comment: There is interest from some members in mentorship opportunities.
Comment: Workshops on research skills.

Question: Is LARSN relevant to people doing systematic and scoping reviews?
Answer: Many things are, such as the writing retreats, but perhaps some things should be changed.

Action: There should be future discussions about the structural supports that are in place to support the work of LARSN. For example, a budget.

3. Professional Development Funding Allocation transparency (K. Thompson on behalf of members)

Some unit leaders share the budget allocation for PD funding and to whom it is distributed, and others do not. Members have raised that consistent practice is needed and would like to discuss what that practice should look like. Please see this as background:
https://staff.lib.uwo.ca/professionaldevelopment/index.html

FYI: People can bring forward agenda ideas and ask LA Forum Chairs to speak to them if they'd prefer to remain anonymous or to not be the ones speaking to the item.
The PD funding being addressed here is the funding that is allocated to each unit, not that which is outlined in the collective agreement. Western Libraries allocates funds in the budget annually to enhance what's available in the collective agreement. PMA and UWOFA-LA staff each have $2000; UWOSA staff do not. Allocation is based on the number of staff in the unit (at an amount of $700 per librarian and archivist, $250 for each UWOSA member), and is intended to support unit activity. It is not necessarily intended that each individual in a unit will receive training each year. The manager of each unit is to determine how these funds are spent. More information is available on the intranet:
https://staff.lib.uwo.ca/professionaldevelopment/index.html

Question to members: Is there anything that individuals would like to see changed?
Comments: People would like to know how much money is available at given points in the year so that they don't apply to opportunities they can't afford.

Question: have the amounts allocated per individual been static over the last several years?
Answer: Yes, and not sure how much room there is to increase the amount it since carry forward and one-time funds are becoming diminished.

Question: There is interest in the distribution of unit funds being a more transparent process, so that it is clear how decisions are made, who is being funded, and what is being funded. Can this become a more collaborative process?
Comment: Can unit heads do a wishlist? (Some unit heads may incorporate this into annual goal-setting processes, but others do not). Or, can we allocate a maximum spend per staff member?
Comment: We need to find a way to be transparent but also flexible.
Comment: It is important to make professional development opportunities available to UWOSA staff.

Action: This discussion will be taken back to Management Committee. Managers will then return to teams to discuss various approaches. Results of these discussions will be added to a Forum agenda in the future.

Adjournment at 2:45 pm