LIBRARIAN & ARCHIVISTS FORUM

Meeting Notes, September 14, 2023

Co-Chairs: E. Hill and H. Rykse

Notes: E. Bourgard

Approval of Agenda: Approved

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

No land acknowledgement given at this meeting

MEETING NOTES:

1. **Introduction of Guests –** Y. Cengay, S. Lee

Welcome to our guest attendees, Western Libraries' current MLIS co-op students.

2. **Review and approval of minutes from the previous Forum -** June 9, 2023

Approval of the minutes: M. Mills
Seconded: S. Cassady

3. **Standing Agenda Items**

   a. Committee Reports

   i. Academic Activity Support Fund (C. Steeves)
   Update on report for 2023 / 2024 funds

C. Steeves highlighted the three applications and awards: J. Dyck, Z. Macdonald, and M. Mills. Expressions of congratulations in zoom comments.

4. **Business Arising**

   a. **Review Librarian and Archivist Forum Terms of Reference**
   The TOR of the LA Forum are to be revisited every 2 years.

   Expected Outcome: Decision on how to proceed with reviewing of ToR.

Suggestions were made for a small group to review the ToR and bring back to Forum. Initial volunteers for the group include H. Rykse, E. Bourgard, K. Thompson, & K. Pereyaslavska. The point was raised that

the smaller group should have balance through representation from both Administration and Librarians/Archivists. J. Robinson volunteered to be another representative from Administration.

ACTION: H. Rykse, E. Bourgard, K. Thompson, K. Pereyaslavska, and J. Robinson will review the ToR and present to Forum at next meeting.

  b. **"Getting Stuff Done" days**

   Meeting free Wednesdays to be evaluated during fall 2023

Suggestion that the original group that worked to set up a pilot of "Getting Stuff Done" days could conduct the evaluation of the pilot. Member of that group, K. Carson, added that she would be happy to work on this later in October.

It was suggested that we do a quick 'litmus test' at Forum to hear peoples experiences with meeting free Wednesdays thus far.

Here are some of the comments shared:
- Wednesdays are now very busy with non-WL meetings, and research consults etc
- Lots of comments in support of meeting free days.
- Comments about other days, with specific mention of Tuesdays, being meeting heavy.
- Hit and miss. Sometimes it works really well for focused work, sometimes I have outside WL commitments book up.
- Not a meeting free Wednesday yet - many standing meetings with other departments fall on Wednesdays
- Other days are now jam packed. Makes for an "uneven" work week.
- Maybe we could switch to meeting free Fridays? external things seem to be booked less on Friday
- We should have meeting free Mondays or Fridays…no one really wants to meet on those day so it would be easier.
- Would love to have a meeting-free Friday. It seems to be a quieter day both on campus and off and therefore more conducive to undisturbed "getting stuff done" efforts.
  - A reminder that you can just make a meeting free day for yourself
  - We can make the day of the week part of the formal assessment
- The number of meetings has not changed they're just being rearranged
- It helps me be mindful about my schedule generally. A reminder to book in blocks of focused work time so I'm not overloaded by meetings. Better preparing meetings that are task oriented rather than updates.

ACTION: Members of the original group (C. Zoricic, J. Robinson, & K. Carson) will evaluate "Getting Stuff Done" days, beginning this work in mid to late October.

  c. **Professional Development Funding Allocation transparency – B. Bell**

   Expected Outcome: Information on updates from June MC meeting.

There have been discussions at Forum and at Management Committee that the allocations have remained the same for a long time and a need to consider rising costs of travel, conference fees, etc.

that are a part of professional development expenses. At Management Committee there were discussions about the need to be transparent in these allocations.

B. Bell shared the updates to Professional Development Funding Allocation. She contextualized the funds, sharing key details:

- Professional Development Funding Allocations are funded by carry over funds
- Funding formula is based on each functional unit's members with $1000 allocated for each UWOFA-LA member and $550 allocated for each UWOSA member of the unit.
- These allocations are for the unit to share and not meant to be tied to any individual in the unit, rather, the unit works together to determine their needs for professional development.
- Unit Heads and the requester will determine needs
- Signatures on the request form will look different – all levels, requester, manager, & SLT representative
- Request may be made in advance, but the money is expensed when spent

Question: How are the requests to be prioritized?
Answer: Outlined in the [Expense Request Policy](), 2ⁿᵈ page.
From the policy –
All l Unit approved allocations should be fairly distributed, i.e., available to all staff on a rotating basis and funds available. Criteria to assist in approving travel requests in conjunction with availability of l Unit funds:

- *Priority will be given to librarians/archivists/staff that have presentations, posters, etc., accepted for conferences over those who are not on the program.*
- *Opportunities for professional and career development within Western Libraries, at Western, other locally located events may be preferred to workshops at distant locations, etc.*
- *Importance of and significance (size and prominence) of the event/committee.*

Answer is challenged: Yes, there is criteria to prioritize for presenters, but the request may come before the call proposal for presentations is open.
Also, Heads/Managers to really think about the importance of this fund allocation for UWOSA staff, who don't have access to other PER accounts. To consider their value to Western Libraries.

Zoom comment:

- I tend to submit requests closer to the date it's spent. It's not realistic for me to know whether I'm presenting at ER&L in March 2025 and have to apply for funding in May 2024. Maybe I won't be accepted

Question: Is there any consistency overtime for who receives these funds? Seeking clarity on equal opportunities.
Answer: Encouragement to Heads/Managers to look at a longer-term review of these expenses.
This can be brought back to management to refine. An example she shared that the Human Resources Coordinator made the spreadsheet that RSC uses to track expenses, and this may be useful to other teams.

This response led to discussion about formalizing a spreadsheet for expenses as a tracking tool. Some zoom comments:

- Perhaps a rolling total over 3 years that we compare in order to determine who should be prioritized for funding in addition to the criteria already set out?
- or a report to members similar to the one on the academic support fund?
- I like the idea of a public document as Kelly suggests.
- In the spirit of transparency there should be a public document AND a regular report to this Forum.

There was also discussion about the need for advanced funding at times – B. Bell added clarity, stating that advance requests are sometimes an option for those who need it.

Question: Knowing that some units will have more demand, is there possibility to do a review part way through the year to reallocate funds across units?
Corresponding Zoom comment: It sounds equitable to consider needs across the system - not all units' needs will be the same every year
Answer: Central funds are accessible to all of WL, reserved for 'on behalf' representation of Western. This has been increased to $40, 000 (slight increase). These can be requested to support direct training for team efforts.
Clarity added to answer: Beyond representing Western. Eg. Research Data Institute, which supports strategic priority, or the Chat GBT sessions held in the community room.

Question: Is the funding allocation based on a reimbursement model only? Curious about financial barriers, for those who cannot absorb costs, personally, in order to maintain a practice of continuing professional development and/or participation in professional communities, conferences beyond Western. More specifically, the concern/question is about provisions for people who cannot take on the costs, even temporarily, until reimbursement occurs after the event.
Answer: The Human Resources Coordinator can provide guidance in how we can assist with this. Discussion redirected to transparency and sharing expenses of the funds, which varies between units. This can be standardized.
Statement that SLT is working with mangers to standardize.

Question: Does SLT also have access to centralized funds?
Answer: Yes.

Question: Do SLT members have other sources of funding?
Answer: Access to PER and Central.

Question: Technical. How are funds allocated for L/A's that straddle more than one functional unit?
Answer: Allocations are made to home unit.

Question: Have we considered having one large pool of funds for WL staff?
Answer: One pool of Funds adds complexity. Each team has a different approach to training & training needs. At the end of the day, Administration still needs to talk to Heads, being too far away from the request to understand the value for the requestor.

Comment: This discussion has been a good model of how Forum can be a place for collaborative discussions between SLT & L/A Members.

5. **New Business**

a. **Communications and Meeting Agendas**
Where to store / post Forum meeting agendas / notes (e.g. Teams, intranet)
Expected Outcomes: Discussion

Comment: This agenda item is two items mixed into one - how to improve communications more broadly and a process for Forum notes & agendas.

Clarification: This is correct. E. Bourgard requested this item remain on the agenda. As part of the larger communication channel discussion, she wants to know how to present the agendas in advance of Forum. Where a process is established for notes, there is currently no standard for the agendas.

Discussion:
- It is important that they are easily accessible.
- Teams is universal to the institution; WL Intranet is WL-centric. UWOFA-LA extends beyond WL.
- Anything on Teams/SharePoint file goes with the employee – no institutional permanence. Great features on the font-end, but also need to consider back-end and WTS settings. This needs to be considered as we set up these structures.
- Suggestion to use SharePoint
  - Given that Teams is backed by SharePoint, that folder could still be in Teams
  - We'd have to make sure (1) the person posting the notes in Sharepoint makes them public, and (2) What would be would if said person leaves Western and the previous notes are no longer available?
- Notes should not be editable by anyone but the secretary.
- Teams is cumbersome. E.g. file sharing
- Teams is good for day-to-day, but the notes & agendas should be finalized on intranet for preservation.
- Teams is not ideal for file-sharing but it good for chat/discussion.
- Transparency. Widely open is good.
- I like the Intranet——>Public website pipeline. Please do not add TEAMS to this process.
- And strong support of open governance (i.e., publicly posting Minutes)

ACTION: The smaller group that is reviewing the ToR can look at where to publish agendas as part of the review.

6. **Any other New Business?**

New Business raised: There are best practices for accessibility in hybrid meetings to consider. Two things to do when speaking into the mic – identify yourself before you start and end your statement with 'End of thought'.

Question: Is this for captions? Seeking more clarity
Answer: It is to let those online who cannot see you know who is speaking and when they've finished.

Zoom comments:

- I can tell most people's voices apart, but not everybody's, so knowing that the speaker has changed is valuable.
- I think its a basic accessibility commitment.
- For those who are listening its helpful to know. We aren't always observing body language via zoom.

ACTION: The smaller group looking at ToR add this detail to them to improve accessibility.

New Business raised: Can we do a review of Organizational Renewal Initiative through Forum?

Comment: In the past we have done a review of the library to give candidates a view of the 'state of things'. With the active recruitment of a new VP&C Librarian, it would be good to do an external review soon. Do we know if this is happening?

Response: C. Steeves confirmed that she received an external review of the library system, but not as part of recruitment. She received this review information once she started at Western Libraries.

B. Bell mentioned that as a committee member, she can share that this question was raised at the recent Town Hall meeting. The response was that the had not yet thought about this.

There were many expressions that this should be raised again in the upcoming Town Hall meeting

Discussion returned to the possibility of an ORI review:

Suggestion: If a review of ORI comes from Forum, it still must include members from all the bargaining units within the system.

Zoom Comment:
- Assessment of OII is needed. Let's start the discussion here at the Forum and roll out to WL more broadly.
- We should have assessment/evaluation started while Catherine is still with us so that we are getting "organizational memory" of the process.
- ORI has never been assessed, and it should be.
- Less an assessment of ORI and more an assessment of the current org structure and how it meets folks' needs

Question: Did ORI have a score card built in?
Answer: No. An attempt was made to build in a score card for the 1st strategic plan not for ORI.

Comment: C. Steeves shared that she submitted an end of term report to the selection committee

Question: Can this document be shared more broadly?
Answer: Unsure. It was written for a specific purpose. Right now, it is confidential as it's part of the hiring process.

Question: How do we want to move forward with this?
Answer: Add it to the next agenda for a more fulsome discussion. Small group of volunteers to determine a suitable methodology and put out a call for working group members.

A reminder: membership needs to include members from all bargaining units in the system.

Suggestion: It's important to think about what this group is called. The Organization Renewal Initiative (ORI) was a project and not what needs to be evaluated – We need to evaluate the organizational structure. Not evaluating ORI but evaluating the outcome of that process.

Comment: This needs to be kept within a timeframe that's viable. Needs to be done in a timely manner so that the results of the review are of benefit to our next leader.

ACTION: There was a call for volunteers. S. Spong, K. Hoffmann, and E. Bourgard will develop a strategy for evaluating the library's organizational structure and will put a call out for WL staff to participate in the group.

7. **Future Meeting Agenda Items**
    a. **Appointments and Selection Committee**
Update provided at June 2023 Forum. Next update will be at the spring 2024 forum.

    b. **Promotions and Continuing Appointment Committee**
Update provided at June 2023 Forum. Next update will be at the spring 2024 forum.

Motion to adjourn: D. Fiander
Seconded: E. Carlisle-Johnson
Adjournment at 11:34 a.m.