To: Senate Committee on University Planning, Western University

From: Catherine Steeves, Vice-Provost & Chief Librarian

Date: May 1, 2017

RE: Western Libraries Annual Report to Senate 2016/17

It is my pleasure to submit this annual report to Western University's Senate for 2016/17.

Each academic year Western Libraries' librarians, archivists and staff make valuable contributions to the University’s teaching, learning and research mandates and provide excellent service. This report will highlight key initiatives, activities, and select accomplishments for 2016/17.

The major organizational initiatives for this period have been: continued implementation of the Western Libraries strategic plan; completion of the Organizational Renewal Initiative report and recommendations; facilities enhancements and development of a Western Libraries Master Space Plan; and, continuation of an acquisitions cost reductions and serials review process in direct response to the low value of the Canadian dollar and publishers’ price increases.

All of the activities and service developments of Western Libraries are guided by the following Strategies of Excellence in the strategic plan:

- Manage world-class print and digital collections and resources
- Advance 21st century literacies
- Partner in and support research to advance research excellence
- Champion open access and transform scholarly communication
- Cultivate purposeful partnerships on campus and beyond
- Provide user-centred spaces and technologies
- Actively engage with our communities
- Deliver service excellence to library users and the University

Organizational Renewal
Throughout 2016/17 we have advanced our organizational development efforts. The Organizational Renewal Initiative (ORI), launched in July 2016, continued the work begun last year by the Workforce Analysis and Planning project. The outcome of the ORI was to recommend a new service model and organizational framework for Western Libraries designed to deliver four core user-centred services or functions: research and
scholarly communication; teaching and learning; content management discovery and access; and, user experience and community engagement.

The ORI process enabled wide participation and allowed for leadership from across the libraries outside the formal management structure. It involved fifty-three individuals, participating on a steering team or one of four working groups. The final report and recommendations were released to all library staff in January 2017. Since then Western Libraries’ Senior Leadership Team (SLT) has been assessing the implications of the ORI recommendations on role definitions and team, service, and management structures.

SLT is now designing a new organizational structure and developing an implementation and transition plan to enable the new strategic framework within available resources. SLT is also consulting with Human Resources and Faculty Relations to ensure a proper implementation plan and process is put in place that respects current policies, practices and employee agreements. We anticipate that 2017/18 will be a year of significant transition as we transform Western Libraries’ structure and evolve our service model.

Service Perceptions and Satisfaction: LibQual 2016
In early 2016, Western Libraries conducted the LibQual survey to obtain feedback from students and faculty on their levels of satisfaction with different aspects of library collections, services and spaces. Overall, 1,674 participants responded to the survey, with 735 of those including textual comments.

The LibQual survey asks several general satisfaction questions, including a rating on a scale of 1 to 9 for ‘overall quality of the service provided by the library.’ The following chart shows that these ratings have remained fairly consistent for faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students for each implementation of LibQual since 2004. Comparing 2016 results to 2013 there is a slight increase in overall satisfaction with library staff and services, and with resources and access (i.e. collections); satisfaction with library as place (i.e. library spaces) has declined.
A number of comments addressed general satisfaction with the library, most (72%) being positive, with the majority of others supplying more neutral suggestions or observations (only 5% were negative).

“In the end, this is one of the best libraries in the academic world with some of the most courteous, professional, and lovely staff.” Faculty

“Long live the Library! They are central to the "best student experience" and our need for these seems to grow with the increasing online environment, rather than diminish.” Graduate Student

“Overall I am very happy with the services that the library provides. It helps me achieve my academic goals and provides an excellent source of resources.” Undergraduate Student

Summary scores for 2016 are reflected for the three areas below. The bottom and top of the gray box indicate the average minimum and average desired service levels, respectively. The perceived service levels are indicated by the top of the orange bar. Western Libraries is meeting at least the minimum service levels of users, but is not fully addressing their desired levels of service. We are doing quite well in Staff and Services, have some room for improvement in Resources and Access, and have significant work to do to address needs for Library Spaces.

![Chart showing average minimum, perceived, and desired service levels for LibQual Quantitative Questions]
Facilities Improvements and Western Libraries Space Master Plan

Each year Western Libraries undertakes renovation and facility projects of varying sizes and complexity in order to improve physical learning spaces and overall student experience. Particular focus for 2016/17 was on the second phase of the Taylor Library main floor renovations, which incorporated a new learning commons, improved lighting, and refinishing of the second portico area to create inviting, inspiring and collaborative learning and research spaces to meet the needs expressed by our users. In the Music Library student space was increased and improved with new furniture to add variety to study seat options and fresh paint to brighten and enliven the environment.

Since June 2016, Western Libraries, in collaboration with Facilities Management and Institutional Planning & Budgeting, has been working with the architectural firm Perkins+Will to create a Western Libraries Space Master Plan (WLSMP). The goal of the plan is to create a long-term vision and guide for evolving library spaces to meet the changing and diverse learning, teaching and research needs of our community. The project provided multiple opportunities to engage with stakeholders. The feedback received through face-to-face meetings and online surveys indicated overwhelming support for refreshing and enhancing library spaces for students and faculty that enable technology-rich learning and research environments within individual, collaborative and community spaces. The draft programmatic space plan was made available for staff, student and campus community feedback in February and we anticipate the WLSMP will be completed by June 2017.

The WLSMP focusses on our two largest libraries, The D.B. Weldon Library and the Allyn & Betty Taylor Library. LibQual results show that our busiest location, Weldon, is showing its age, with the following comments reflective of the many received:

“…The D.B. Weldon Library is definitely very outdated and a bit depressing to study in.” - Undergraduate Student

“Please consider bringing the environment within Weldon Library into the 21st century. It is not a pleasant physical environment to come into, even when compared to other Ontario Universities main libraries. The facility is very dark, stale and dated. It feels like nothing has been touched since the 1970s. A renovation would do wonders.” - Graduate Student

Such comments are a concern as we recognize the growing body of research that indicates learning environments can both positively and negatively influence student success.

The intention is to use the WLSMP to build a case for reinvestment in our libraries and to demonstrate both the need and the possibilities and opportunities a rejuvenation of our spaces present. A funding strategy will be developed and the plan will provide rough cost estimates and phasing opportunities to allow for gradual renovation as funds are secured.
Acquisitions Strategy
The financial crisis precipitated by the falling value of the Canadian dollar and publisher price increases began last year and continued into this fiscal year. In 2015/16, we reduced serials expenditures by $315K and one-time expenditures by $815K. The university allocated $1.1M in one-time funds to cover a year-end deficit and added $500K to the acquisitions budget for each of the remaining years of this four-year budget cycle. Over the last two fiscal years, working within the available library acquisitions budget, we carefully reviewed and reduced serials expenditures by $1.3M and monograph expenditures by $300K. We anticipate a near-to balanced acquisitions budget for 2016/17. For more information, please see the collections management strategies web page. To help manage fluctuations in the Canadian dollar moving forward, Institutional Planning & Budgeting developed a strategy that pegs the exchange rate of US dollar serial subscriptions at 1.25, which allows for planned predictability in subscription expenditures.

Work reviewing our serials will continue in order to ensure we get the best value in support of Western’s research and academic priorities. This requires a review of publisher packages of journal subscriptions, which comprise 43% of our acquisitions budget. The results from the CRKN Journal Usage Project and Survey on Scholarly Journals in Research and Teaching, recently distributed to Western’s faculty, post-docs and doctoral students, will be used to assist with ongoing serials review and assessment of the value of publisher packages. The survey asked respondents to identify the journals essential to their research and teaching activities. This information and the analysis of usage, cost, citation and publication data will help to determine whether alternative acquisitions strategies would better serve Western.

Teaching and Learning
Western Libraries’ contributions to teaching and learning and to student success are many and varied. We contribute to the student experience by providing teaching and learning spaces, collaborative and independent study environments, scholarly resources and information technologies, and research help services. Our librarians and archivists provide instruction in information literacy and research skills in support of our academic and research programs; 469 instruction sessions and workshops were provided in 2016/17 reaching 11,792 participants. Over 2016/17 we developed Information Literacy Learning Outcomes designed to be used in conjunction with the Western Degree Outcomes. They will be used by librarians and archivists working with faculty to develop and deliver meaningful information literacy learning experiences that support and enhance classroom learning outcomes.

We also develop and integrate e-learning strategies for information literacy and create online learning modules and research guides. We are collaborating with the Teaching Support Centre on the Supported Course Redesign (SCoRe) project, with librarians providing both general curriculum and discipline-specific support. Last year’s report highlighted the introduction of a new platform for the delivery of online research guides. To enhance this service, in 2016/17 we collaborated with ITS to include direct links in each OWL course to the library’s specialized research guides, thereby making it easier...
for faculty to link students to high-quality information resources. Comparing October/November 2016 to the same time period in 2015, there was a 45% increase in the number of visits to the library’s Research Guides and the total number of uses for 2016/17 was 457,847.

There were over 2.4 million visits to our physical locations in 2016/17 and virtually the same number of visits to our website. Staff responded to 2794 chat-based research help queries and 16,752 in person research help questions.

A new Course Readings service was implemented over the summer of 2016. Instructors of 14% (1301) of Western courses used the service in 2016/17, providing access to 8741 items (e.g., book chapters, articles) through the new online system. With enough notice, a library managed full syllabus service available. Feedback from instructors and students has been overwhelmingly positive, and students accessed the readings 70,639 times throughout the fall and winter semesters. The service has enhanced student access to required learning materials while decreasing student costs.

In 2015/16 the Copyright Office was established within Western Libraries to promote copyright literacy and engage the campus community to grow understanding of copyright legislation, educational fair dealing and the responsible use of copyright-protected materials in teaching, research, personal study, and publication. The Office uses the Ares system to manage copyright clearance processes for materials used in courses and it is proving to be both efficient and cost effective. A Western Copyright Governance Group has been formed with an immediate focus on developing proactive advocacy strategies related to the review of the Copyright Act taking place in 2017. More information can be found at Copyright@Western.

Research
Western Libraries is contributing to the advancement of research excellence by fostering new modes of scholarly communication; by stewarding research collections; through statistical and geo-spatial data services and collections; and by providing research skills workshops and research consultations including literature searches and systematic reviews, research data management, and research metrics analysis. Our librarians and archivists conducted 979 advanced research consultations over 2016/17, with half for graduate students, faculty and researchers, and the other half for undergraduates. They also provided 144 research workshops and instructions sessions for graduate students, post-docs and faculty.

Scholarship@Western, our institutional repository, supports the dissemination and discovery of Western’s scholarly output including online journals, scholarly papers, and electronic theses and dissertations. It continues to expand in both content and impact. In 2017, we plan to offer faculty the option of full-service assistance in depositing papers, articles, and other research materials to make it easier to comply with the Tri-agency Open Access Policy. Other quality control measures relating to the accuracy of metadata, copyright checking, accessibility requirements, and locating perma-links will be built into the service. In 2015/16 alone, 4134 new items were posted to the repository and there
were over 1M downloads. To date the 17,712 items in Scholarship@Western have been downloaded 4,219,501 times by scholars around the globe.

Western Libraries’ digitization agenda for special and unique collections benefits both local and international researchers across the disciplines. As but one example, the Historical Topographic Map Digitization Project, funded by OCUL to digitize historical Ontario topographic maps published between 1905 and 1977, has added 1150 maps to the public domain. Western Libraries played a leadership role, serving as one of the benchmarking institutions and undertaking much of the digitization work. The value of this work to researchers is significant, as the historical Ontario topographic series is heavily used to conduct comparisons with current maps of changes over time relating to issues such as urban sprawl, transportation patterns, diminishing woodlots, disappearing waterways and shoreline erosion.

Digitization projects were also completed this year for Canadian corporate annual reports, music manuscripts, and 1967 in Pictures, a collection of photographic images from the London Free Press Collection of Photographic Negatives, in celebration of Canada 150. Usage of our digital research collections and electronic scholarly resources in 2016/17 continued at a high-level, with approximately 5M online article downloads, 1.6M uses of e-books, and 18M database record views. 195,205 print items circulated in 2016/17 and over 16,051 interlibrary loans requests (borrowing and lending) were filled to meet scholars’ needs. As previously mentioned, new acquisitions for 2015/16 and 2016/17 have been very limited, although in 2015/16 Western Libraries’ collections were enhanced to support academic programs and research areas with the addition of over 16K new print titles and 73K e-books. Access to new titles through demand driven acquisitions for e-books and streaming media has also been offered to contain costs and to allow for just-in-time selection.

**In Conclusion**

Please accept this report on the academic and scholarly activities and service developments of Western Libraries. The key organizational priorities outlined above will continue through into 2017/18, indeed through the balance of the four-year planning cycle. We will continue to work on the implementation of Western Libraries 2015-2020 Strategic Plan, implement the new organizational framework recommended by the ORI in order to align our organization with strategic and user-centred functions, complete the Western Libraries Space Master Plan, and continue the acquisitions and serials review and cost management processes. Our librarians, archivists, and staff will continue their contributions to teaching, learning and research through instruction, creation of online resources and learning objects, development and management of research collections, and provision of research services and consultations.

Respectfully submitted by,

Catherine Steeves, Vice-Provost and Chief Librarian