

**MEMORANDUM**

ATTENTION Senate **DATE** August 16, 2024
FROM Dilson Rassier, Provost and Vice-President **PAGES** 1/40
Academic, and Chair, SCUP *bj*
RE: External Review Report for the Library (SCUP 24-32)

At its meeting on July 10, 2024, SCUP reviewed the External Review Report for the Library that resulted from its External Review.

The Educational Goals Assessment Plan was reviewed and is attached for the information of Senate.

Motion: That Senate approve the Action Plan for the Library that resulted from its external review.

C: Gwen Bird, Dean of Libraries

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MEMORANDUM

ATTENTION SCUP
FROM Dilson Rassier, Provost and Vice-President Academic
RE: External Review of the SFU Library

DATE June 26, 2024
PAGES



Attached are the External Review Report and the Action Plan for the SFU Library. The site visit took place from February 12 – 14, 2024. The external review committee visited the Burnaby, Surrey, and Vancouver campuses and met with students, researchers, faculty members, library employees, and senior administrators.

Excerpt from the External Review Report:

“University libraries fulfill a unique role within the heart of their parent organizations. Despite ongoing challenges, libraries have demonstrated resilience in recent years in their efforts to address the changing needs of its students, researchers, faculty, and community. SFU Library is an excellent example of how university libraries demonstrate commitment, innovation and flexibility in support of the university’s academic mission.”

Following the site visit, the report of the External Review Committee* for the Library was submitted in March 2024. The reviewers made a number of recommendations based on the Terms of Reference that were provided to them. Subsequently, a meeting was held with the university librarian and dean of libraries and the vice-provost and associate vice-president academic to consider the recommendations. An action plan was prepared taking into consideration the discussion at the meeting and the contents of the external review report. The external review report and the action plan have been reviewed by the Senate Library Committee. The action plan has been reviewed and endorsed by the Provost.

Motion:

That SCUP approve and recommend to Senate the Action Plan for the Library that resulted from its external review.

*External Review Committee:

Talia Chung, University of Ottawa (Chair of External Review Committee)
Lisa O’Hara, University of Manitoba
Xuemao Wang, Northwestern University
annie ross (internal), Simon Fraser University

Attachments:

1. SFU Library Action Plan
2. External Review Report (March 2024)

cc Gwen Bird, University Librarian and Dean of Libraries

Simon Fraser University Library

External Review Report

March 26, 2024

Prepared by

**Talia Chung, University Librarian and Dean of Libraries, University of Ottawa, and Chair of the
External Review Committee**

Lisa O'Hara, Vice-Provost (Libraries) and University Librarian, University of Manitoba

**Xuemao Wang, Dean of Libraries and Charles Deering McCormick University Librarian,
Northwestern University**

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Simon Fraser University's (SFU) three libraries, the W.A.C. Bennett Library, the Belzberg Library, and the Fraser Library are located on the unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skw̱xwú7mesh (Squamish), səlilw̱ ətaʔɬ (Tsleil-Waututh), kʷikʷəƛ̱əm (Kwikwetlem), q̱ícəy̱ (Katzie), qiqéyt (Qayqayt), q'ʷa:ňɬ'ən (Kwantlen), Səmyámə (Semiahmoo), and sc̱əwaθən (Tsawwassen) Nations, in what are now known as the cities of Burnaby, Vancouver, and Surrey.

As required by the Senate of Simon Fraser University, the Library, like other academic units, is reviewed on a periodic basis, typically following a seven-year cycle¹. External reviews serve to ensure that units continue to offer high quality programs, and that their operations, programs and stewardship of resources contribute positively to the attainment of the University's academic, research, and community engagement objectives.

Throughout this report, the External Review Committee (ERC) strives to comment on the Library's strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement drawing on evidence the committee has gathered from documents submitted by the Library and from the many rich interactions with SFU students, researchers, faculty members, and Library employees.

University libraries fulfill a unique role within the heart of their parent organizations. Despite ongoing challenges, libraries have demonstrated resilience in recent years in their efforts to address the changing needs of its student, researcher, faculty, and community. SFU Library is an excellent example of how university libraries demonstrate commitment, innovation and flexibility in support of the university's academic mission.

There is lots to be proud of in considering the state of the SFU Library. We had many conversations with highly engaged library staff, researchers, and faculty members who spoke (and wrote) appreciatively of SFU Library's innovative support. As well, senior administrators expressed an understanding of the library's collections acquisitions and other challenges.

In addition to its multifaceted contributions to SFU academic life, SFU Library enjoys a national and international reputation in the area of open scholarship innovation, most notably due to its incubation and long-standing commitment to the Public Knowledge Project (PKP), globally respected as a mature, established, and academic community-based open science publishing infrastructure.

Acknowledging the many positives, nevertheless, current financial circumstances will obligate

¹ Senate Guidelines for External Reviews of Academic Units, Office of the Vice-President, Academic, March 2020

the Library and the university to make difficult resource allocation choices.

The findings in this report were enriched through the guidance and contributions of Dr. annie g. ross, Professor in the Department of Indigenous Studies and SFU member of the External Review Committee.

We want to thank the SFU community who shared a wealth of constructive comments and to Simon Fraser University for the invitation to participate in this review. We hope that our report presents opportunities for the Library and the university to continue to thrive.

1.1 PROCESS

Guided by SFU's Senate External Review Guidelines and the Terms of Reference for SFU Library's External Review 2023-24, the Committee was provided with the following documents ahead of its site-visit:

- SFU Academic Plan Update June 2020
- Strategic Research Plan 2023-28
- Simon Fraser University Institutional Accountability Plan and Report 2022-23 (submitted to the Minister of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills, July 4, 2023)
- SFU Strategic Review 2022
- SFU Library's Self-Study Report from February 2024, which included reports from library divisions and key areas, along with materials which the Library deemed important to share with the ERC, such as its 2022-24 strategic plan, financial overview of the library, its 2021 Mid-cycle report on action plan following its 2017 External Review, among others.
- SFU Library External Reviews from 2017, 2011, 2004

The site visit took place from February 12-14, 2024, and included visits to the three campuses (Burnaby, Surrey, and Downtown). Tours of each of the libraries were accompanied by meetings with employees in each of the locations.

At the request of the ERC, SFU provided additional information and an opportunity to discuss the proposed medical school, including the new school's anticipated needs for library services and resources.

In all, the three-day visit allowed us to meet with graduate and undergraduate students, faculty members from across the institution, academic leaders including deans and vice-provosts, service leaders including the Chief Information Officer, University Archivist, SFU senior administration, and many groups within the Library. Meetings were held in both in-person and in hybrid mode (Zoom), and written comments were received.

As a result, we are confident that we have had adequate opportunity to gather input to round out our understanding beyond the Library's self-study report and institutional priorities as expressed through strategic documents and action plans.

1.2 PROGRESS SINCE 2017

Since 2017, there have been many significant developments impacting the operating environment of postsecondary institutions in Canada and internationally.

SFU Library's last external review was completed in 2017. Since then, the Library has made good progress in addressing many of the recommendations.

In 2023 the University Library's reporting line was transferred from the VP Research and International to the Provost and VP Academic portfolio. In parallel, both Surrey and Vancouver campuses' reporting lines moved from the VP External Relations to also report to the Provost and VP Academic. These are positive developments for the Library, as most university libraries report to VPs academic and provosts, strengthening the role of the library within the academic mission, and creating opportunities for greater alignment and integration in SFU's academic planning. An additional benefit to this restructuring is the ability to bring together the operational budgets of the three campus libraries, as recommended in 2017, thereby creating greater flexibility and opportunity for collaboration, coordination and scaling of programs, staff training and utilization of limited staff time. This change improves the library's ability to examine and potentially redeploy human resources (positions) across the three locations to respond to student needs for opening hours best suited to their work habits, something that was clearly and repeatedly expressed to the ERC. The consolidation of collections budgets across the three libraries is also a positive development.

As well, the 2017 external reviewers recommended securing base funding for critical and innovative programs offered by SFU Library. Despite flat staffing levels in the last seven years, the Library has made efforts to sustain programs with base funding through reallocating and transforming positions as opportunities arose. In the case of digital humanities supports, the ERC heard concerns from SFU researchers regarding the precariousness of funding for programmer positions in this area. Highly qualified technical staff are constantly in demand, and the importance of securing long-term funding for developer positions will have positive effects on recruitment and retention.

Following a 2017 recommendation, an advancement team has been put into place. The Library Advancement Officer works closely with SFU's central advancement office, library communications, and other library staff who contribute to community outreach and engagement. These changes have resulted in significant gifts from donors including financial

support for the Dick Kouwenhoven Books Arts Studio (in development), endowment to support peer tutors in support of the Student Learning Commons, and several donations of rare and collectable books and materials.

Some areas originally flagged in 2017 continue to require attention, most notably, library spaces and buildings and SFU's special collections found both within the university library as well within University Archives.

During the site visit, the ERC had the opportunity to observe significant shortcomings in the Bennett Library building, including asbestos remediation underway on the fifth floor and issues of rooftop water infiltration. Unfortunately, these issues are longstanding. The condition of the Bennett Library precipitated a feasibility study for Bennett Library's base building renewal. Following the feasibility study, in 2019, a Master Space Plan for Bennett Library was completed. Despite university endorsement of the Library's master plan, it remains unclear as to when and how Bennett Library's infrastructure needs will be prioritized and addressed. Additional proposals, such as the addition of a new Research pavilion and a new glass enclosure over the current building, have been placed on hold.

The ERC was interested to learn about SFU's rich and unique special collections, work undertaken in both the Library and the University Archives. The 2017 recommendations suggest that the relationship between the University Archives and the Library be examined for operational linkages, and we heard of progress made in clarifying and differentiating mandates for special collections. That said, opportunities for greater coordination and efficiencies continue to exist.

SFU Library has been active in offering employee professional development opportunities, across all employee groups, in areas including mental health, anti-racism, manager skills, customer service, and obligatory training mandated by legislation. Universities and libraries are on the frontlines of evolving knowledge creation and digital transformation, for this reason SFU leadership is strongly encouraged to continue to offer robust professional development and training opportunities to its employees which will positively impact recruitment, retention, inclusion and innovation.

Finally, the COVID-19 pandemic upended universities around the globe. As a result, universities and their libraries are working to better understand the changing habits of students, researchers, and employees. SFU Library employees expressed appreciation of the library's leadership approach throughout the most intense periods of the pandemic, and spoke highly of Dean Bird's leadership, her availability, her care and compassion. It is clear that the Library placed people and relationships first during the health crisis, whether students, researchers, or colleagues inside and outside of the library. Since returning to campus, usage of several

traditional library services, such as circulation of materials, remains well below pre-pandemic levels, a trend that is equally observed in other university libraries in Canada. Looking to the future, resourcing and service models should be assessed and re-examined for opportunities to re-envision library services for greatest impact and alignment to SFU academic, research, and engagement objectives.

2.0 COMMENTARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Note: in several areas, the External Review Committee is suggesting that new or additional staffing capacity be added. These changes can be accomplished through new and additional resources but may also be implemented through reallocating existing positions and examination of current roles and responsibilities.

2.1 SERVICES

SFU Library offers an array of services, programming, and initiatives to its user community including the Student Learning Commons, Research Commons, subject liaison librarian program, research support program, library instruction, and community scholar initiatives. Its programs provide direct services to its user community, specifically undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, researchers and staff. Typical of research libraries in North America, these services are offered through various modes, in-person, online and occasionally in hybrid mode by librarians, library assistants, and professional staff.

The ERC heard many positive comments about library services during our meetings with students, faculty, staff and librarians. That said, it is difficult for the Library to communicate all services to all stakeholders at the time and place where the service or resource is needed; this is not an uncommon problem across academic libraries as both students and faculty are often inundated by information.

Library services to support undergraduate students are strong, particularly those offered through the Student Learning Commons (SLC). The ERC consistently heard appreciation of services provided through SLC, particularly from undergraduate students and faculty. Challenges were expressed regarding research engagement with undergraduate students, as well as library activities in support of instruction and information literacy.

The Library offers many research support services to graduate students and faculty, mostly through its Research Commons programs and Digital Humanities Innovation Lab (DHIL). To provide these services, the Library has been strategic in allocating spaces which serve as physical hubs for research collaboration and where library expertise can reliably be found. Support for facilitated theses deposits into SFU's digital repository is appreciated by the graduate student community although concerns were expressed by library staff concerning the time-intensive nature of this work. Overall, the ERC noted repeated praise of these library research support services by students, faculty and researchers.

Library service hour reductions implemented as a direct result of budget cuts are a source of frustration and complaints from both undergraduates and graduate students, and this frustration is recognized by staff at all levels. There are widely shared perceptions that such

reductions negatively impact students' learning. Even students who have access to 24/7 spaces within their department indicated a strong preference to study in the library, which they describe as a safe place. Many SFU students commute to campus and belong to historically underrepresented communities, including those who identify as women. For these students, the availability and quality of library spaces provide an important place of safety and belonging.

The liaison model at SFU is complex, with liaisons having responsibility for teaching, research support, and collections for multiple departments, some of which may be on a different campus from the librarian's home campus. The ERC heard from students and faculty that the outreach and engagement work carried out by liaison librarians is invaluable, especially in making library services known to faculty and students. However, capacity is an issue with increasing demand for library research support, concern that "one-shot" instruction is no longer adequate, and the need for coordination for a more effective support to both undergraduate and graduate students. Lastly, lack of time to learn and to master emerging areas of academic library practice, such as research data management and bibliometrics, or to explore new technologies such as AI, highlights a need to clarify core services and scope of responsibility across library roles which provide direct support to users.

The Library's Community Scholars Program is active and successfully connects academic research to critical change in communities. By facilitating access to academic literature for scholars embedded in community groups addressing issues such as climate change and domestic violence, the Library helps to connect real community challenges with evidence-based approaches. This work, strengthened by the participation of the Library's Advancement Officer and its Communications Librarian, should continue to be supported.

Beyond the InSync survey, we observed that there is little analytic, data-driven assessment and measurement of the actual effectiveness of services, programming, and initiatives offered by the library. We repeatedly heard comments about the library's lack of dedicated and professional assessment expertise.

Recommendations

- The Library should add capacity for outreach and engagement, with a focus on undergraduate and graduate students
- The Library should clearly delineate the roles of Academic Engagement librarians, aiming for more cohesion in and among the units. Expectations for teaching should be re-examined and clarified for all librarians and staff in Academic Engagement.
- Outreach and engagement aspects of the liaison librarian role should be maintained as their direct connection with faculty and students is highly valued. To manage workload and capacity, the Library should work with liaison librarians to identify core services to be

provided to their respective user communities, which will allow the Library to keep pace with researcher expectations and the research goals of the institution. Liaison librarian engagement with research support should be clarified, with expectations and responsibilities clearly defined.

- The Library should ensure that all programs have a liaison librarian assigned from inception, and that this should be incorporated into the university process for the creation of new programs. As well, the Library should try to align liaison assignments to their home campus wherever possible.
- The Library should consider reassigning collections work from liaison librarians to a Collections Analyst Librarian as this work can be streamlined through the use of approval plans and evidence-based acquisitions.
- The Library should examine demand for knowledge synthesis work (and expected increase that will come with a medical school) and consider setting up a program to be implemented across all faculties that will be manageable within the capacity of liaison librarians, or the Research Commons. The possibility of a fee-based model should not be disregarded.
- For the library's ETD submission support services, the Library should consider seeking co-funding from Graduate Studies to support increased staffing for ETD submission. Although this model strengthens ties between the Library and graduate students, the ERC feels that there are not enough staff assigned to this task during high-volume periods.
- The Library should consider increasing opening hours at the Fraser and Bennett Libraries, as inadequate service hours weaken the library's ability to support student learning. Increasing hours for these locations should be a high priority regardless of budget constraints and should be informed by an assessment of needs and usage patterns.

2.2 COLLECTIONS

The Library is typical of Canadian and other research libraries in employing approval plans and evidence-based acquisitions to acquire monographs, and in subscribing to "big deal" and transformational agreements with publishers for journals.

However, the collections budget is an area of concern because of foreign exchange rates (many subscriptions are paid for in US dollars) and because of the anticipated cuts to the collections budget. Although the Library did receive relief for the exchange rate, as a base adjustment to their collections budget, there remains an upcoming \$800,000 cut to the collections budget which will have a large impact.

As noted in the InSync survey, user satisfaction with SFU's information resources were rated

below the benchmark for libraries participating in the survey in the same year. This finding was echoed by graduate students who commented that they were unable to access needed resources directly through the SFU Library and that items needed for their research were only available through interlibrary loan, or were accessed through other university library collections. The ERC are particularly concerned about the strength of the collections in health sciences, due to feedback from graduate students as well as SFU's plans for a medical school. The demands and expectations in support of medical education will put additional pressure on the acquisitions budget and therefore it must be properly resourced as medical collections are among the most expensive resources to acquire.

The Library has recently re-written their collection policy so that the collection is curated through the addition and culling of materials, as is typical of most academic and research libraries. As a result of the issues on the 5th floor of the Bennett Library, 40,000 print serials volumes have been culled where the Library has perpetual access to the electronic copy. Over 40,000 monographs have also been culled and the Library participates in the Shared Print Archive Network (SPAN) and North/Nord, both of which are partnerships that ensure that print copies of materials are retained among academic library partners. Academic libraries across Canada and North America are facing space constraints similar to the SFU Library and are employing similar measures to ensure continued access to materials while freeing up space for new services such as the Indigenous Curriculum Resource Center.

The Library's commitment to open scholarship is impressive and the support for faculty was noted in conversations with faculty, deans, and the Senate Library Committee. However, the Open Access fund, while appreciated by faculty, is a burden to administer and is a cost that researchers may be able to finance through funder grants or other means. Through participation in the Canadian Research Knowledge Network, SFU is involved in negotiating transformational agreements that cover article processing charges, therefore the need for direct financial support for open access publishing should be decreasing. The Library supports faculty who choose to publish in open access through a myriad of ways, including green, gold, and diamond routes.

Recommendations

- If the University has a practice of establishing provisional funds, consideration should be given to establishing one for foreign exchange costs for the Library that will protect the collections budget from unfavorable exchange rates.
- The University should consider protecting the Library's collections budget from future budget cuts to ensure that the current offering of journals and monographs is maintained to support programs and research.
- The University must ensure that sufficient funds are received and maintained for

acquiring and making available resources to support the new medical school. These must be coordinated with the resources that are available to community health practitioners so that supervising physicians and medical students have access to the same resources. Failure to do so may lead to issues with access inequity to medical information and may potentially impact accreditation.

- The University's purchasing services should work with the Library to ensure an automated feedback loop for costs and payments between systems. This would allow both systems to be updated in real time and enable forecasting in Alma for the acquisitions budget, especially for items where foreign exchange is paid.
- The Library should discontinue the OA fund.
- The Library should continue to look at ways to automate collections acquisition while still ensuring that requested materials are acquired. This should be part of the work of a Collections Analyst Librarian position.
- The Library should continue to cull its collections according to the new collections policy and in consideration of shared print and other initiatives.
- The Library should look at the feasibility of partnering with other Western Canadian academic libraries on shared print collections and shared storage.

2.3 RESOURCES

The ERC noted that SFU library user satisfaction with service delivery was above the benchmark when compared to other libraries², an accomplishment for which the SFU staff should be commended. That said, planned budget reductions in operating will likely affect many library services currently enjoyed by SFU's community. One area of impact will be library service hours. The committee heard multiple concerns from both students and faculty about reduced service hours at library locations. The anticipated \$800,000 cut to the collections budget will be a significant challenge as it will further weaken the library's research collections, which are core resources in supporting SFU's research ambitions.

The consolidation of the three campus libraries' operating budget is a positive development which allows for more cohesive human resources planning. However, the ERC notes that circumstances continue to exist which prevent library administration from reallocating positions, including collective bargaining agreements and organizational culture.

Library space and facility planning is among the biggest challenges that the ERC observed, most notably, the deferred maintenance issues on the Burnaby campus, as well as the university's shifting capital project priorities. These concerns were expressed by multiple stakeholders along

² InSync Survey, Simon Fraser University Library Client Survey (Summary Findings Report), November 2023.

with general worry about the state of the Bennett Library. The Library has made good efforts to make the best use of Bennett spaces, but funding must be secured to address much needed deferred maintenance of campus buildings so that students, researchers, faculty, and employees have a safe, healthy, welcoming and accessible library, serving as an academic hub for SFU's campus community.

At the Surrey campus, Fraser Library benefits from a modern facility which suffers from understaffing and therefore an inadequate number of opening hours. Vancouver campus's Belzberg Library is underutilized, and the ERC heard concerns regarding Belzberg's alignment with programs offered at the Vancouver Campus and with SFU's overall academic mission.

The ERC acknowledge that university-wide budget cuts are required due to financial circumstances, but the challenge for any organization undergoing budget reductions is to strategically manage reductions while continuing to offer the most impactful core services and nurturing emerging areas.

Recommendations

- The Bennett Library building renovation and deferred maintenance should remain among the university's highest priorities for capital investment.
- Because Belzberg Library is underutilized, Library administration must carefully consider potential scenarios for this location and its alignment with SFU's academic programs and goals.
- The Library should seek opportunities to shift resources and positions towards activities and services of highest value and impact for students and researchers.
- The Library needs a more robust assessment capability. With anticipated budget cuts, a stronger evidence-based approach will enable the Library to critically examine its activities and programs, to more effectively communicate the need for new resources and new mandates, and to redistribute resources into areas of strategic importance and greatest impact.

2.4 ADMINISTRATION & MANAGEMENT

The Library administrative structure, policies, processes and practice are sound and well-documented. Plans are shared, and reporting seems to be consistent and extensive, although units were sometimes unable to clearly state their unit mandate.

The Library works well with campus partners such as the Center for Accessible Learning, Information Services, and University Archives. The Library is effective in cooperative ventures with other libraries and memory organizations, taking part in shared print initiatives, consortial

licensing, and open access projects and programs where the Library is considered a leader in Canada.

Unique collections are highly valued academic assets of the university which offer unique donor engagement opportunities. As mentioned in 2017, the University Archives is solely responsible for university records, while both the Library and the University Archives collect personal records with collection policies defined between the two units. However, services and workflows are not coordinated leading to differences in how records are managed and duplication of effort.

The Library currently reports to the Provost and the Dean is part of the decanal cohort. We believe that this placement in the governance structure allows the Library to continue to work as part of the academic center of the institution.

Recommendations

- The Library should have a clear mission statement that clarifies its role in supporting the university. Aspects of this are found in their strategic documents but it should be stated explicitly and referred to in documentation. In addition, each unit should have a mandate statement that defines their role in supporting the mission of the library.
- The Library should ensure that mandates and goals for emerging services, such as the Digital Humanities Innovation Lab, should be documented and clear to all stakeholders.
- The Library should have sole responsibility for personal records at the university while the University Archives should retain control of university records. Consolidating the university's collection of personal records (and staff working with personal records) into a special collections unit will increase advancement opportunities with donors. Activities such as digital preservation should be coordinated and shared between the two units, increasing capacity for both.

2.5 PLANNING

SFU's Five-Year Academic Plan (2019-2024) progress update³, identifies five key challenges: Student Life, Learning, and Success; Academic Quality/Curriculum; Engagement; Bridging Divides/Interdisciplinarity; Faculty Renewal. The Library's 2022-24 strategic plan is well aligned with the academic plan, with many accomplishments achieved under the current library strategic plan implementation, from proactive learning support, exploring research partnerships, and meaningful community engagement. However, we observed a gap when considering SFU's research ambitions, particularly in the area of collections as outlined in 2.2.

³ SFU Academic Plan 2019-2024 – Update to the Community – September 2020

There were some concerns about internal communications around the budget cuts and lack of consultation, but there seemed to be a general understanding of why the cuts are necessary. That said, the ERC are concerned about the level of organizational readiness needed for deep budget cuts and its inevitable impact on library services.

Recommendations

- Building on the success of the Library's Advancement program, the Library should be an important pillar in any upcoming university capital campaign.
- With the change of reporting line to the Provost, the Library's integral role in the academic enterprise is strengthened. Going forward, the University must articulate a clear role for the Library within its academic strategic plan.
- The Library should continue to ensure that communications about upcoming budget cuts are clear, both within the library and across the SFU community. Consultations should take place wherever possible, in order to prepare the community for strategic decisions which will impact services, staffing and community engagement.
- Upcoming budget cuts should be managed by current Library leadership and will require a library-wide change management process. This work should be completed before a new library dean begins.

2.6 WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT

The ERC have no concerns about the workplace environment at the Library. Many staff expressed appreciation of their colleagues and administration, and noted that the people with the right expertise are assigned to teams and tasks, and decisions are delegated appropriately.

Working relationships within the unit are exemplary and we heard only praise for working relationships between the Library and other university units.

Recommendations

- The Library should continue the practice of involving staff and librarians in decisions and planning that affect their areas and where their expertise is needed.

2.7 ISSUES OF SPECIFIC INTEREST

2.7.1 Alignment with stated university values, including Reconciliation and Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

The Library on the whole works towards identified university values as seen in their strategic planning documents. The university's three goals of engaging students,

engaging research, and engaging communities are reflected in the self-study and were evident in conversations with library staff. We were particularly impressed by the Library's work in supporting these three areas and the fact that these were spoken to by staff at all levels of the Library.

The Library is identified by many groups as a campus leader in Reconciliation and Equity, Diversity & Inclusion and is in alignment with stated university values. A clear example of alignment is seen in the establishment of the Indigenous Curriculum Resource Center which is an example of the Library working to support the university's goal of Indigenizing curricula.

Recommendations

- The Library should continue to work closely with the University Indigenous and EDI communities.
- Library Administration should look for opportunities to support the Indigenous Initiatives Librarian and EDI Director by ensuring they are integrated into the work of the Library.
- Library Administration should ensure that Reconciliation and EDI are recognized throughout the three libraries to be the responsibility of all staff, not just staff dedicated to these areas.
- Library Administration should encourage the Indigenous Initiatives Librarian and EDI Director to plan for time to connect as part of their duties (whether that is with the land, with community, with colleagues doing the same work, etc.) in order to counter the toll of working in these areas.

2.7.2 Capacity of the Library to respond to emerging needs of researchers and students

The ERC were impressed by the Library's level of innovation and exploration of new and emerging library services. The ERC heard much praise for the Research Commons, Learning Commons, Digital Humanities Innovation Lab, and other digital initiatives such as makerspaces, digital scholarship labs, graduate theses support, and research data management. With the pressure of maintaining traditional library services such as collection development, reference, information literacy instruction, as well as new and emerging services described above, library capacity has been stretched thin, and sustainability and deeper engagement is at risk. The Library lacks the capacity to support and further advance these new services which support faculty and students through improved access and use of software and digital technology. The ERC wishes to note Dean Bird's success in securing soft funding in order to kickstart innovation and new library services.

In some emerging areas such as research data management and digital humanities, the Library

has a greater potential to contribute and to assume a leadership role at the university. The Digital Humanities Innovation Lab (DHIL) has supported projects across disciplines and has been involved in projects equaling \$8.6M in grant funding. However, in order to continue such a role, the Library needs to consider shifting resources and priorities.

Recommendations

- The Library must be strategic in its approach to budget reduction, protecting core and highly-valued services and essential collections. Since budget reductions will be university-wide, Library administration will need to carefully plan the reduction, ensuring decisions remain focused and aligned with university directions.
- Challenges in baseline funding for the library's Digital Humanities Innovation Lab will likely continue due to the budget cuts. Library administration must decide whether the DHIL, in its current form, is a critical and core function of its service portfolio and whether it contributes to the library's new value proposition. As recommended in 2017, the Library should examine whether the DHIL's mandate should serve a broader disciplinary base, supporting digital scholarship beyond strictly the humanities. If so, they must find baseline funding. If not, due to upcoming budget reductions, the Library should consider whether the program should continue or should be ceased.
- The Library demonstrates leadership in its support of SFU's research data management needs, an area which requires engagement with Central IT and SFU's Research office. The Library should continue its leadership role with SFU's RDM working group, contributing to SFU's Institutional RDM strategy, and demonstrating library value in this area.
- The ERC heard from multiple stakeholders that SFU does not have a cohesive university-wide strategy on artificial intelligence (AI), and we heard that SFU Library has not initiated any systematic discussion and planning of AI strategies. The Library can play a role in bringing together and collaborating with other units in planning university-wide AI strategies, contributing to AI literacy education, AI ethics, data training, and data stewardship.

2.7.3 Assessment of accessibility initiatives and recommendations for next steps in this area

There is concern expressed within the Library about their ability to meet the regulations in the AccessibleBC Act. There are already many resources in place to support accessibility in the three library locations, such as group study rooms that can be booked for neurodivergent students, accessible work-stations for those with mobility issues, screen-readers and alternative format availability for print-disabled library users, etc. However, there are major concerns with physical accessibility to library buildings and continuing issues with accessibility standards for library resources and services.

Recommendations

- The Library should follow through on plans to establish a standing Accessibility Committee with representation from all areas that will be able to respond to the rollout of new legislation, evaluate current accessible services and supports, identify gaps, and develop and expand expertise among library staff in the provision of services and resources.
- The Library should hire an external auditor to evaluate and make recommendations on accessible spaces and services for all library users with a disability. For example, we heard about issues for print-disabled library users including the lack of Braille to mark group study and other rooms, lack of floor announcements in elevators, etc.

3.0 FUTURE AND CONCLUSION

At time of writing, the recruitment of SFU's new dean of libraries is underway. As reflected in this report, there is much to be proud of when it comes to SFU's Library and there exists good momentum on which an incoming dean can build.

The prospect of a medical school provides an exciting and unique opportunity for any senior library leader. The opportunity will require skill in articulating what is needed to put into place appropriate library support for a medical school (staffing, services, facilities, and collections). In discussions with those leading the development of SFU's medical school, we were excited by the vision of a program that will experiment with cutting edge technology but stay strongly rooted in community needs, primary care and social medicine.

SFU Library's strength in digital initiatives positions it well to play an active role in the university's AI strategy and actions.

Although there will be many opportunities for an incoming new leader, they will also face challenges which will require considerable change management skills. The next dean of libraries must also be highly skilled in strategic decision-making, managing people, articulating a vision, securing institutional support, and demonstrating strategic and creative approaches to resource allocation.

The University should continue to integrate the Library into its academic planning and encourage its next library dean to create a new vision for the Library which aligns with SFU's updated priorities and directions.

4.0 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Note: in several areas, the External Review Committee is suggesting that new or additional staffing capacity be added. These changes can be accomplished through new and additional resources but may also be implemented through reallocating existing positions and examination of current roles and responsibilities.

Services

- The Library should add capacity for outreach and engagement, with a focus on undergraduate and graduate students
- The Library should clearly delineate the roles of Academic Engagement librarians, aiming for more cohesion in and among the units. Expectations for teaching should be re-examined and clarified for all librarians and staff in Academic Engagement.
- Outreach and engagement aspects of the liaison librarian role should be maintained as their direct connection with faculty and students is highly valued. To manage workload and capacity, the Library should work with liaison librarians to identify core services to be provided to their respective user communities, which will allow the Library to keep pace with researcher expectations and the research goals of the institution. Liaison librarian engagement with research support should be clarified, with expectations and responsibilities clearly defined.
- The Library should ensure that all programs have a liaison librarian assigned from inception, and that this should be incorporated into the university process for the creation of new programs. As well, the Library should try to align liaison assignments to their home campus wherever possible.
- The Library should consider reassigning collections work from liaison librarians to a Collections Analyst Librarian as this work can be streamlined through the use of approval plans and evidence-based acquisitions.
- The Library should examine demand for knowledge synthesis work (and expected increase that will come with a medical school) and consider setting up a program to be implemented across all faculties that will be manageable within the capacity of liaison librarians, or the Research Commons. The possibility of a fee-based model should not be disregarded.
- For the library's ETD submission support services, the Library should consider seeking co-funding from Graduate Studies to support increased staffing for ETD submission. Although this model strengthens ties between the Library and graduate students, the ERC feels that there are not enough staff assigned to this task during high-volume periods.
- The Library should consider increasing opening hours at the Fraser and Bennett Libraries, as inadequate service hours weaken the library's ability to support student learning.

Increasing hours for these locations should be a high priority regardless of budget constraints and should be informed by an assessment of needs and usage patterns.

Collections

- If the University has a practice of establishing provisional funds, consideration should be given to establishing one for foreign exchange costs for the Library that will protect the collections budget from unfavorable exchange rates.
- The University should consider protecting the Library's collections budget from future budget cuts to ensure that the current offering of journals and monographs is maintained to support programs and research.
- The University must ensure that sufficient funds are received and maintained for acquiring and making available resources to support the new medical school. These must be coordinated with the resources that are available to community health practitioners so that supervising physicians and medical students have access to the same resources. Failure to do so may lead to issues with access inequity to medical information and may potentially impact accreditation.
- The University's purchasing services should work with the Library to ensure an automated feedback loop for costs and payments between systems. This would allow both systems to be updated in real time and enable forecasting in Alma for the acquisitions budget, especially for items where foreign exchange is paid.
- The Library should discontinue the OA fund.
- The Library should continue to look at ways to automate collections acquisition while still ensuring that requested materials are acquired. This should be part of the work of a Collections Analyst Librarian position.
- The Library should continue to cull its collections according to the new collections policy and in consideration of shared print and other initiatives.
- The Library should look at the feasibility of partnering with other Western Canadian academic libraries on shared print collections and shared storage.

Resources

- The Bennett Library building renovation and deferred maintenance should remain among the university's highest priorities for capital investment.
- Because Belzberg Library is underutilized, Library administration must carefully consider potential scenarios for this location and its alignment with SFU's academic programs and goals.
- The Library should seek opportunities to shift resources and positions towards activities and services of highest value and impact for students and researchers.
- The Library needs a more robust assessment capability. With anticipated budget cuts, a stronger evidence-based approach will enable the Library to critically examine its

activities and programs, to more effectively communicate the need for new resources and new mandates, and to redistribute resources into areas of strategic importance and greatest impact.

Administration & Management

- The Library should have a clear mission statement that clarifies its role in supporting the university. Aspects of this are found in their strategic documents but it should be stated explicitly and referred to in documentation. In addition, each unit should have a mandate statement that defines their role in supporting the mission of the library.
- The Library should ensure that mandates and goals for emerging services, such as the Digital Humanities Innovation Lab, should be documented and clear to all stakeholders.
- The Library should have sole responsibility for personal records at the university while the University Archives should retain control of university records. Consolidating the university's collection of personal records (and staff working with personal records) into a special collections unit will increase advancement opportunities with donors. Activities such as digital preservation should be coordinated and shared between the two units, increasing capacity for both.

Planning

- Building on the success of the Library's Advancement program, the Library should be an important pillar in any upcoming university capital campaign.
- With the change of reporting line to the Provost, the Library's integral role in the academic enterprise is strengthened. Going forward, the University must articulate a clear role for the Library within its academic strategic plan.
- The Library should continue to ensure that communications about upcoming budget cuts are clear, both within the library and across the SFU community. Consultations should take place wherever possible, in order to prepare the community for strategic decisions which will impact services, staffing and community engagement.
- Upcoming budget cuts should be managed by current Library leadership and will require a library-wide change management process. This work should be completed before a new library dean begins.

Workplace environment

- The Library should continue the practice of involving staff and librarians in decisions and planning that affect their areas and where their expertise is needed.

Alignment with stated university values, including Reconciliation and Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

- The Library should continue to work closely with the University Indigenous and EDI communities.
- Library Administration should look for opportunities to support the Indigenous Initiatives Librarian and EDI Director by ensuring they are integrated into the work of the Library.
- Library Administration should ensure that Reconciliation and EDI are recognized throughout the three libraries to be the responsibility of all staff, not just staff dedicated to these areas.
- Library Administration should encourage the Indigenous Initiatives Librarian and EDI Director to plan for time to connect as part of their duties (whether that is with the land, with community, with colleagues doing the same work, etc.) in order to counter the toll of working in these areas.

Capacity of the Library to respond to emerging needs of researchers and students

- The Library must be strategic in its approach to budget reduction, protecting core and highly-valued services and essential collections. Since budget reductions will be university-wide, Library administration will need to carefully plan the reduction, ensuring decisions remain focused and aligned with university directions.
- Challenges in baseline funding for the library's Digital Humanities Innovation Lab will likely continue due to the budget cuts. Library administration must decide whether the DHIL, in its current form, is a critical and core function of its service portfolio and whether it contributes to the library's new value proposition. As recommended in 2017, the Library should examine whether the DHIL's mandate should serve a broader disciplinary base, supporting digital scholarship beyond strictly the humanities. If so, they must find baseline funding. If not, due to upcoming budget reductions, the Library should consider whether the program should continue or should be ceased.
- The Library demonstrates leadership in its support of SFU's research data management needs, an area which requires engagement with Central IT and SFU's Research office. The Library should continue its leadership role with SFU's RDM working group, contributing to SFU's Institutional RDM strategy, and demonstrating library value in this area.
- The ERC heard from multiple stakeholders that SFU does not have a cohesive university-wide strategy on artificial intelligence (AI), and we heard that SFU Library has not initiated any systematic discussion and planning of AI strategies. The Library can play a role in bringing together and collaborating with other units in planning university-wide AI strategies, contributing to AI literacy education, AI ethics, data training, and data stewardship.

Assessment of accessibility initiatives and recommendations for next steps in this area

- The Library should follow through on plans to establish a standing Accessibility Committee with representation from all areas that will be able to respond to the rollout of new legislation, evaluate current accessible services and supports, identify gaps, and develop and expand expertise among library staff in the provision of services and resources.
- The Library should hire an external auditor to evaluate and make recommendations on accessible spaces and services for all library users with a disability. For example, we heard about issues for print-disabled library users including the lack of Braille to mark group study and other rooms, lack of floor announcements in elevators, etc.

5.0 TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR LIBRARY EXTERNAL REVIEW 2023/24

Library
Simon Fraser University
External Review 2023/24 - Terms of Reference

The review committee will assess the SFU Library (comprising the W.A.C. Bennett, Belzberg, Fraser Libraries, and the Library's online presence) and comment on its strengths and weaknesses, and on opportunities for improvement. The review committee should make recommendations that address major challenges and opportunities.

The review process is intended to consider the following:

SERVICES

- assessment of services to students in undergraduate and graduate programs
- assessment of services to faculty, researchers, and staff
- effectiveness of digital and in-person services, present and planned
- assessment of community engagement activities

COLLECTIONS

- adequacy of the collections
- adequacy of the design and implementation of collections policy and procedures

RESOURCES

- adequacy of Library budget and allocation of financial resources
- adequacy of the number and distribution of the professional and support staff
- adequacy of Library space and facilities

ADMINISTRATION & MANAGEMENT

- effectiveness of administrative structure, policy, process, and practice
- strength of relationships and communication both within the Library and externally with other university academic and non-academic departments
- effectiveness of cooperative ventures with other libraries and memory organizations, and external profile of the Library
- place of the Library in the University governance structure

PLANNING

- effectiveness of Library planning apparatus including strategic planning

- alignment with university, academic, and research plans

WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT

- conduciveness to the attainment of their objectives
- effectiveness of working relationships within the unit, with other university unit

ISSUES OF SPECIFIC INTEREST

- consider during the review the following questions that have been identified by the Library and SFU
- Alignment with stated university values, including Reconciliation and Equity, Diversity & Inclusion
- Capacity of the Library to respond to emerging needs of researchers and students
- Assessment of accessibility initiatives and recommendations for next steps in this area

Library External Review Action Plan

Section A

To be completed by the University Librarian and Dean of Libraries.

Date of Review Site Visit: February 12 – 14, 2024

Dean of Libraries: Gwen Bird

Notes

1. *It is not expected that every recommendation made by the External Review Committee be covered by this Action Plan. The major thrusts of the report should be identified—some consolidation of the recommendations may be possible while other recommendations of lesser importance may be excluded.*
2. *Should any additional response be warranted, it should be attached as a separate document.*

As noted by the reviewers, implementation of all recommendations in the report will require significant additional resources, including funding for several new positions within the library. This is challenging in the current budget environment at SFU. We have noted where we agree with the recommendations but are experiencing resource constraints that make it difficult to move ahead. Two cost-intensive recommendations outside of improving library operations are the provision of a new library at SFU to serve the medical school (with funding from designated medical school sources), and repair and remediation of the WAC Bennett Library building. We also note that the report does not devote as much attention to the Library's online presence as we believe is merited by its importance to students and other library users. We have noted this at several points in this Action Plan.

1. SERVICES			
1.1	Action(s) (description of what is going to be done)	Resource implications	Expected completion date
	<p>1.1.1 <i>Add capacity for outreach and engagement, with a focus on undergraduate and graduate students</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have created a new Undergraduate Engagement and Student Success (UESS) Librarian and are recruiting in spring 2024. We will create and fill a second position when resources allow. 	One UESS Librarian in 2024/25 budget; second one will require new or reallocated resources	One UESS Librarian in place by Fall 2024
	<p>1.1.2 <i>Delineate roles of Academic Engagement librarians, aiming for more cohesion in and among the units. Re-examine and clarify expectations for teaching for all librarians and staff in Academic Engagement.</i></p>	Additional librarian positions required, unless major restructuring and/or redistribution of liaison librarian work	ILIWG deliverables, including implementation plans, expected by Fall 2026
	<p>1.1.3 <i>Maintain outreach and engagement aspects of the liaison librarian role. Work with liaison librarians to identify core services. Clarify liaison librarian engagement with research support, with expectations and responsibilities clearly defined.</i></p>		
	<p>1.1.4 <i>Ensure that all programs have a liaison librarian assigned from inception, and that this should be incorporated into the university process for the creation of new programs. Try to align liaison assignments to their home campus wherever possible.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With guidance from the ADL, Academic Engagement, the Teaching & Learning Librarian and the Instruction Librarian will establish an Information Literacy & Instruction (ILI) working group with a mandate to develop information literacy educational goals and update the Library's Instruction Strategy (2020). The ILIWG will be comprised of librarians and staff from across the library, in recognition that instruction and information literacy occurs in almost all divisions/areas. (1.1.2) • Priorities identified in early 2024 by the ADL, Academic Engagement include articulation of the role of and expectations for liaison librarians and faculty departmental representatives, and consideration of liaison librarian workload. Liaisons will hold a one-day retreat in May 2024 to consider topics including: articulation of the role of and expectations for liaison librarians and faculty departmental representatives; definition and expectation of liaison outreach and engagement with research support; liaison workload. Discussion of some topics is ongoing since Spring 2023 and continued consultation and collaboration will be required over the next 1-2 years to arrive at a fully articulated vision for liaison librarianship at SFU (1.1.3 and 1.1.4) 	Fully articulated vision for liaison librarianship expected by Spring 2026	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In conjunction with rearticulation of the liaison role and workload, library administration will review curriculum and course development processes to identify opportunities for proactive resource development (1.1.4) To advance the ethos that SFU Library is “one library with three locations” liaison and functional librarians, along with some staff members, are expected to work effectively across all campus locations and online, when warranted. Most SFU programs offer courses and activities at 2-3 campus locations and the library strives to operate in parallel by reducing location-based silos. Services for the SFU medical school are planned to be located in Surrey. (1.1.4) 			
<p>1.1.5 Consider reassigning collections work from liaison librarians to a Collections Analyst Librarian as this work can be streamlined through the use of approval plans and evidence-based acquisitions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We agree it is worth considering models to reassign and centrally manage more collections work. This will impact liaisons and collection management current structures, especially to retain involvement of liaisons given their subject expertise and close relationships with departments. A new model will require more than one librarian to manage collections for all departments. We note that we do already make extensive use of evidence-based acquisitions. 	Additional staff required unless major restructuring of liaison librarians and collections support; at least 1FTE		
<p>1.1.6 Examine demand for knowledge synthesis work (and expected increase that will come with a medical school) and consider setting up a program to be implemented across all faculties that will be manageable within the capacity of liaison librarians, or the Research Commons. The possibility of a fee-based model should not be disregarded.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Library administration is in conversation with the Vice-President Research & Innovation about possible sources of funding to support knowledge synthesis work while the library investigates and considers sustainable service models that engage liaison and functional librarians 	Additional librarian positions required, unless major restructuring and/or redistribution of librarian work	Investigation: 2024/25 Implementation: 2025/26	
<p>1.1.7 Consider seeking co-funding from Graduate Studies to support increased staffing for ETD submission.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As of May 2024 Graduate Studies has pledged increased financial support for staffing in this area Discussions with Graduate Studies about opportunities to streamline recordkeeping to reduce the library’s administrative burden in this area may also provide relief 	Additional support pledged from Graduate Studies	2024	
<p>1.1.8 Consider increasing opening hours at the Fraser and Bennett Libraries.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We recognize the demand for increased opening hours at these locations. When budget becomes available, we will consider what is possible, using evidence-informed decision-making 	Additional budget required (>\$200,000/year)		
<h2>2. COLLECTIONS</h2>			
2.1	Action(s) (description of what is going to be done)	Resource implications	Expected

<p>2.1.1 If the University has a practice of establishing provisional funds, consideration should be given to establishing one for foreign exchange costs for the Library that will protect the collections budget from unfavourable exchange rates.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Library received \$2.4million as an addition to base to address currency exchange in the 2024/25 collections budget. We will continue to closely monitor the USD exchange rate and inform the Budget Review Committee if there is a need for additional support due to a drop in the Canadian dollar. 	Will depend on USD exchange rate	Annually, as part of budget request process
<p>2.1.2 The University should consider protecting the Library's collections budget from future budget cuts to ensure that the current offering of journals and monographs is maintained to support programs and research.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We agree in principle since a flat budget that doesn't cover inflation will mean cutting resources. However, it is also critical to preserve the library's autonomy in deciding how to address any future budget cuts. There is little value in protecting collections at the expense of the operating budget, leaving too few faculty and staff to select, order, process, and provide access to the resources; there must be a balance 		
<p>2.1.3 The University must ensure that sufficient funds are received and maintained for acquiring and making available resources to support the new medical school. Coordinate with the resources available to community health practitioners so that supervising physicians and medical students have access to the same resources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Library is working with medical school planners and university administration to outline costs associated with Library services, collections, and space. We anticipate the new medical library will become a specialized 4th location of SFU Library. We will ensure that start-up costs for the medical library are covered by dedicated medical school funding. Plan to initiate hiring new head of medical library in 2024/25 to continue planning and implementation 	Significant costs (multi-million dollars/year); to be covered by designated SFUMS funding	2024 & ongoing
<p>2.1.4 The University's purchasing services should work with the Library to ensure an automated feedback loop for costs and payments between systems.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Library has explored automation and workflow improvements with Payment Services in the past and will inquire again as other libraries that use the system the library implemented in 2017 have reported easier and successful automated data sync. GST rebate complicates this synchronization; we will explore what is possible 	Will require staff time from IT Services, Accounts Payable, and RAMM to implement	Investigation: 2024/25
<p>2.1.5 Discontinue the OA fund.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As of April 1, 2024, the SFU Central Open Access fund is operating at a reduced level and will be reviewed before March 31, 2025 	No new resources	2026

<p>2.1.6 Continue to look at ways to automate collections acquisition while still ensuring that requested materials are acquired. This should be part of the work of a Collections Analyst Librarian position.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed - we put considerable effort in this area and will continue to explore and incorporate efficiencies 	No new or minimal resources needed in most cases	Ongoing	
<p>2.1.7 Continue to cull its collections according to the new collections policy and in consideration of shared print and other initiatives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major weeding projects are now underway on Bennett Library 5th floor collections and Belzberg Library collection Remaining floors of Bennett Library collection and Fraser Library collections to follow in 2025 & beyond We will incorporate more recurring weeding tasks as part of existing stacks maintenance 	New collection assessment librarian 1FTE (currently term); Temporary student employees fall 24	Spring 25 (5 th floor); Fall 24 (Belzberg); 26-28 (remaining floors)	
<p>2.1.8 The Library should look at the feasibility of partnering with other Western Canadian academic libraries on shared print collections and shared storage.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SFU is already active in two major shared print networks: the Shared Print Archive Network of the Council of Prairie and Pacific University Libraries (COPPUL) in western Canada, and North/Nord nationally. We will continue to actively pursue collaborative opportunities to manage our print collections with trusted partners as appropriate In Spring 2024 we have initiated discussions with UCalgary and UManitoba to discuss additional collaborative storage and archiving opportunities 	No new resources	Ongoing	
3. RESOURCES			
3.1	Action(s) (description of what is going to be done)	Resource implications	Expected completion date
<p>3.1.1 The Bennett Library building renovation and deferred maintenance should remain among the university's highest priorities for capital investment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The dean, Associate Dean Administrative Services, and Bennett Building Manager will continue to advocate with university administration and Facilities Management about the state of Bennett Library. This is a matter of the highest importance to the future sustainability of Bennett Library and the health and safety of both employees and library users Planning continues for glass enclosure of Bennett Library to address building envelope failure 		Significant cost (>\$150million) to remediate/repair Bennett Library	Multiple phases of routine capital funding; costing & feasibility study for enclosure underway in 24/25; enclosure by 2028/29 tbc
<p>3.1.2 Because Belzberg Library is underutilized, Library administration must carefully consider potential scenarios for this location and its alignment with SFU's academic programs and goals.</p>	No new resources for assessment and weeding;	2024-2026	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehensive weeding of Belzberg collection underway summer/fall 2024 to reduce and reshape the collection and create space for additional student space and activities; to date we have heard interest in more bring-your-own device stations, more comfortable tables, makerspace and podcasting facilities We are consulting with faculty and students in academic departments at Vancouver campus; we will collaborate with community engagement departments (CERi, Public Square) to define strategy and avoid duplication; we will continue creating and developing community partnerships that are relevant and meaningful for both University and local residents Belzberg Library will be integral to academic planning for Vancouver campus 	resources likely needed for new technology and furniture		
3.1.3 <i>Seek opportunities to shift resources and positions towards activities and services of highest value and impact for students and researchers.</i>	No new resources beyond those outlined in 3.1.4	Ongoing	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed – this is linked to increased assessment capacity (3.1.4); we will continue to evaluate usage patterns and emerging needs and move positions and resources accordingly Part of this evaluation includes continuing to direct substantial resources toward our online services and resources 			
3.1.4 <i>The Library needs a more robust assessment capability. With anticipated budget cuts, a stronger evidence-based approach will enable the Library to critically examine its activities and programs, to more effectively communicate the need for new resources and new mandates, and to redistribute resources into areas of strategic importance and greatest impact.</i>	New Assessment Officer position, either new or reallocated funding required 1 FTE	Work with IRP in summer/fall 2024; additional work ongoing	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed – we are working with Institutional Research and Planning to get a baseline of all data collected in the Library and develop an overall assessment plan; ongoing work will be required in this area Opportunity to partner with Learning Experiences & Assessment Planning in AVPLT area to benefit from their expertise in assessing impact on learning 			
4. ADMINISTRATION & MANAGEMENT			
4.1	Action(s) (description of what is going to be done)	Resource implications	Expected completion date
4.1.1 <i>The Library should have a clear mission statement that clarifies its role in supporting the university. Aspects of this are found in their strategic documents but it should be stated explicitly and referred to in documentation. In addition, each unit should have a mandate statement that defines their role in supporting the mission of the library.</i>	No new resources	Spring 2025	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be developed as part of academic planning exercise in summer 2024, to be finalized when new dean is in place Cascading statements for units will be developed once library-wide statement is finalized 			

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These statements and plans will be an opportunity to advance the values stated in What's Next and the Equity Compass, the goals of the Strategic Research Plan, and to demonstrate where the Library adds capacity 			
4.1.2 <i>Ensure that mandates and goals for emerging services, such as the Digital Humanities Innovation Lab, should be documented and clear to all stakeholders.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will happen as part of 4.1.1 above, and will include input from users and stakeholders involved with these services 	No new resources	Spring 2025	
4.1.3 <i>The Library should have sole responsibility for personal records at the university while the University Archives should retain control of university records. Consolidating the university's collection of personal records (and staff working with personal records) into a special collections unit will increase advancement opportunities with donors. Activities such as digital preservation should be coordinated and shared between the two units, increasing capacity for both.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We agree this is worth further exploration. We have initiated discussion with the University Archivist and the Provost 	No new resources	2025	
5. PLANNING			
5.1	Action(s) (description of what is going to be done)	Resource implications	Expected completion date
	5.1.1 <i>Building on the success of the Library's Advancement program, the Library should be an important pillar in any upcoming university capital campaign.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Library Advancement Officer and dean are involved in campaign planning and including Library priorities in campaign Priorities include supporting public programming, Special Collections, and the new medical library 	No new resources	Duration of campaign
	5.1.2 <i>With the change of reporting line to the Provost, the Library's integral role in the academic enterprise is strengthened. Going forward, the University must articulate a clear role for the Library within its academic strategic plan.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of the next Academic Plan has begun in Spring 2024; the Library will be included along with academic Faculties and other units reporting to the Provost. A draft plan for the Library will be developed as part of this process, to be finalized by new dean upon arrival 	No new resources	Spring 2025
	5.1.3 <i>Continue to ensure that communications about upcoming budget cuts are clear, both within the library and across the SFU community. Consultations should take place wherever possible, to prepare the community for strategic decisions which will impact services, staffing and community engagement.</i>	No new resources	Ongoing

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed – we will continue to communicate clearly and regularly with library faculty and staff and the SFU community about impacts of budget reductions 			
<p>5.1.4 Upcoming budget cuts should be managed by current Library leadership and will require a library-wide change management process. This work should be completed before a new library dean begins.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We acknowledge the library-wide impact of budget cuts in 2023/24 and 2024/25, along with the impending change in leadership. We agree it will be useful to adopt a unified change management strategy throughout the library in response to current fiscal pressures and other significant changes. Following exploratory discussions with the library's management team in summer 2024, we will identify a methodology to put into practice over the next 12-18 months. Some of this work will continue to be needed under new leadership, once next dean is in place 	No new resources	By fall 2025	
6. WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT			
6.1	Action(s) (description of what is going to be done)	Resource implications	Expected completion date
	<p>6.1.1 The Library should continue the practice of involving staff and librarians in decisions and planning that affect their areas and where their expertise is needed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed – we will continue 	No new resources	ongoing
7. OTHER			
7.1	Action(s) (description of what is going to be done)	Resource implications	Expected completion date
	7.1 Alignment with stated university values, including Reconciliation and Equity, Diversity & Inclusion		
	<p>7.1.1 Continue to work closely with the University Indigenous and EDI communities.</p> <p>7.1.2 Support the Indigenous Initiatives Librarian and EDI Director by ensuring they are integrated into the work of the Library.</p> <p>7.1.3 Ensure that Reconciliation and EDI are recognized throughout the three libraries to be the responsibility of all staff, not just staff dedicated to these areas.</p> <p>7.1.4 Encourage the Indigenous Initiatives Librarian and EDI Director to plan for time to connect as part of their duties to counter the toll of working in these areas.</p>	No new resources	Ongoing; summer/fall 2024

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Library will continue to work closely with University Indigenous and EDI committees, and within the context of the Equity Compass and What's Next (7.1.1) Two Indigenous Initiatives (II) Librarians will move into the Learning and Engagement division in fall 2024. In preparation, the ADL Academic Engagement and Acting division head will consult with II Librarians in summer 2024 to re-clarify the scope of their positions and how their work intersects with and is supported by other librarians and staff (7.1.2 and 7.1.4) New Equity in Action Steering Committee will be established summer 2024 and will work closely with the existing Decolonizing the Library Working Group (7.1.3) While it is important for EDI and Reconciliation work to be mutually informed, we do not agree that these should be grouped together. We recognize the importance of both streams of work, but see Reconciliation as a unique priority deserving its own attention and respecting the history and present-day relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples and communities 		
7.2 Capacity of the Library to respond to emerging needs of researchers and students		
<p>7.2.1 <i>The Library must be strategic in its approach to budget reduction, protecting core and highly-valued services and essential collections. Library administration will need to carefully plan the reduction, ensuring decisions remain focused and aligned with university directions.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed – we will continue We foresee that this will include continuing to direct substantial resources toward our online services and resources, as these are highly valued by students, researchers and other library users 	No new resources	Ongoing
<p>7.2.2 <i>Library administration must decide whether the Digital Humanities Innovation Lab, in its current form, is a critical and core function of its service portfolio and whether it contributes to the library's new value proposition. The Library should examine whether the DHIL's mandate should serve a broader disciplinary base, supporting digital scholarship beyond strictly the humanities. If so, they must find baseline funding. If not, due to upcoming budget reductions, the Library should consider whether the program should continue or should be ceased.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Library will continue to fund the DHIL in its current form into the 2025-2026 fiscal year to provide sufficient time to review the lab's mandate and assess its relationship to other services. This will include broad consultation with stakeholders from around the university and will be undertaken with a goal to offer a highly visible suite of digital scholarship services with stable baseline funding available for researchers across many disciplines, including digital humanities and others. We have had initial conversations with the VPRI about possible funding sources to pursue 	Assessment requires no new resources; Implementation likely to require new resources or substantial reallocation of existing resources	2025/26

<p>7.2.3 <i>The Library should continue its leadership role with SFU's RDM working group, contributing to SFU's Institutional RDM strategy, and demonstrating library value in this area.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Library will continue to lead the operationalization of SFU's Research Data Management Strategy, working in close collaboration with IT Services' Research Computing Group and the VPRI. The Library and other partners will also plan for and introduce Research Data Management support required by the medical school. 	Additional RDM librarian position will be required by 2026; 1 FTE	Ongoing
<p>7.2.4 <i>The ERC heard from multiple stakeholders that SFU does not have a cohesive university-wide strategy on artificial intelligence (AI), and we heard that SFU Library has not initiated any systematic discussion and planning of AI strategies. The Library can play a role in bringing together and collaborating with other units in planning university-wide AI strategies, contributing to AI literacy education, AI ethics, data training, and data stewardship.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SFU IT Services has formed an interest group to bring together units on campus around AI, including Faculties, the Library, and other units supporting teaching and research at SFU. Senate committees and other university-wide committees are engaged in discussions about developing university-wide guidelines on the use of genAI in a variety of contexts. Within the Library, Learning & Instruction are collaborating with Student Services' Academic Integrity Office, and Library administration is working with employees to support them as the impact of AI on people's work, and the university in general, evolves. Areas of particular focus for the Library will include privacy, critical thinking in the use of AI, and ways of instilling trust in AI such as Explainable AI 	Not yet clear what resource implications may be	Ongoing
7.3 Assessment of accessibility initiatives and recommendations for next steps in this area		
<p>7.3.1 <i>The Library should follow through on plans to establish a standing Accessibility Committee with representation from all areas that will be able to respond to the rollout of new legislation, evaluate current accessible services and supports, identify gaps, and develop and expand expertise among library staff in the provision of services and resources.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Library Accessibility Council to be established summer/fall 2024 with mandate as recommended Associate Dean of Libraries, Academic Engagement will continue serving on SFU-wide Accessibility Committee 	No new resources	Summer/fall 2024
<p>7.3.2 <i>Hire an external auditor to evaluate and make recommendations on accessible spaces and services for all library users with a disability. For example, we heard about issues for print-disabled library users including the lack of Braille to mark group study and other rooms, lack of floor announcements in elevators, etc.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bennett Library was assessed by an external auditor as part of a campus project and received a Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility (RHFA) Certification and score in 2019. We will work with the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) and RHFA certified employees in SFU Facilities to identify outstanding issues and remedy where possible, then seek an updated 	Resources provided by Facilities Management	2024/25

<p>external RHFA assessment. This audit covers accessible signage, and the University will be starting a project in summer 2024 to upgrade the remaining Bennett elevators, including provision of floor announcements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will continue to collaborate with CAL on the provision of and updates to designated study rooms for CAL-registered students, including consideration of these spaces at Fraser and Belzberg Libraries. In Spring 2024, tactile markers were added to CAL study rooms in Bennett Library and Access Services is in discussion with CAL about the creation of Braille signage. • We note the Library has also prioritized accessibility of our online communications, spaces, and resources and will continue to do so 		<p>2024-2026 Ongoing</p>
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The above action plan has been considered by the unit under review and has been discussed and agreed to by the Provost and Vice-President Academic.

Unit Leader (signed)	Date
Name  Gwen Bird	Date May 29, 2024
Title Dean of Libraries	

Section B

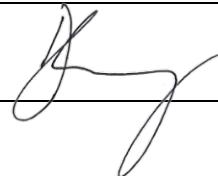
PROVOST'S COMMENTS AND ENDORSEMENT OF THE ACTION PLAN

The Library, and especially its outgoing Dean Gwen Bird, are to be congratulated on an exceptionally strong external review. The detailed recommendations of the ERC are all addressed in the Action Plan. I am particularly pleased that the Library will be using the Academic Plan process over the coming months to strengthen its connections to the academic mission of the University, and to identify priority actions for the coming years. Priorities which my office supports – directly and indirectly - include but are not limited to:

- (1) working closely with the VPR on Knowledge Synthesis, Digital Humanities, Research Data Management and related matters;
- (2) addressing the under-utilization of the Belzberg Library and making it integral to the reinvigoration of that the Downtown Campus;
- (3) serving the new SFU School of Medicine via specialized services, eventually becoming “one library with four locations”; and
- (4) addressing the physical condition of the Bennet Library via routine capital maintenance.

As the ERC and Action Plan note, budgetary constraints will limit the ability to fund the various positions identified in the External Review and Action Plan. The Plan identifies approximately 8 FTE positions (0.5 Academic Engagement Librarian; 0.5 Collections Assessment Librarian; RDM librarian; Undergraduate Engagement Librarian; Knowledge Synthesis Librarian; collections staffer; assessment officer; 2 Digital Humanities developer). This level of staffing is not possible in the current budget climate, and the Plan does note the possibility of potential staff reallocations. I look forward to working with Dean Bird’s successor to develop a staff reorganization plan, and to support hiring to the extent possible.

Provost and Vice-President Academic (signature)



Date

June 26, 2024