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Rebuilding the structure at a medium-sized research library: A case study

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Title: Rebuilding the structure at a medium-sized research library: A case study

The University of New Hampshire (UNH), the flagship research campus of the University System of New Hampshire, provides over 900,000 print titles and over 1.6 million electronic titles to a student community of approximately 13,000 students (2,000 graduate and 11,000 undergraduate)ⁱ and almost 1,000 faculty membersⁱⁱ. July 1, 2021, the UNH Library moved from a traditional hierarchical structure to what we call a programmatic organizational structure—a structure defined by each employee serving on multiple groups or programs. Motivated by campus-driven cost cutting, the loss of ten library employees—20% of our colleagues—through a campus retirement incentive package, a comprehensive review of the strengths and weaknesses of our hierarchical structure and a desire to be more future-focused, the programmatic structure was selected through a well-planned process. The UNH Library had restructured only five years before, in 2016, in a similar response to organizational turnover. At that time, in addition to providing reference and instruction service to university departments and programs through each librarian maintaining a subject specialty, we reorganized library work from twelve units into six divisions, each led by a faculty librarian: Resource Acquisition and Discovery (RAD), encompassing cataloging, acquisitions, discovery, interlibrary loan and collections; Academic and Community Engagement (ACE), encompassing circulation, course reserves, branch libraries, and outreach; Research and Learning Services (RLS) encompassing reference, information and instructional services; Special Collections and Archives (SCA), encompassing university archives and distinctive collections; and Technology, Scholarship and Publishing (TSP), encompassing library information technology, data services, scholarly communication and locally created digital collections. Divisions were led for a term of three years by faculty

members selected through a competitive process, who were compensated to provide division leadership for up to 20% of their time. The idea was that the workload of leadership would be shared through temporary terms.

As the library organized into divisions the purpose of an organizational structure was identified as a means to provide strategic alignment between the organization's operations and institutional needs; reflect and operationalize the mission, vision, values and culture; create strong ties between the organization and those external to the organization; and provide all employees with a logical "home base" of manageable size, facilitating communication, collaboration, decision-making and workflow. The library endeavored to group like functions together but avoid silos, and foster a balance between stability of operations and agility and responsiveness to a changing environment. It was important to keep the structure relatively flat and add leadership and coordination in the middle where we observed it was needed.

Under the division structure the UNH Library experienced improved coordination and collaboration since division heads met regularly to work on projects like activating our "Vision for a Healthy Work Environment," document, identifying organizational and service gaps, and prioritizing new positions. Divisions also met regularly to organize their work and form workplace identity. However the division structure offered some significant limitations. The assumption that division leaders would only spend 20% of their time on leadership activities proved an unrealistic time estimate and the workload to lead a division was cumbersome. One division struggled with not having any faculty members with direct work responsibility related to their scope, while conversely, the leader of a division made up entirely of faculty members struggled with peer leadership. The library faculty as a group, which is an essential planning body, was not well integrated into the structure. Additionally, the anticipated loss of ten library

employees through a University retirement incentive meant their positions would be eliminated by July 1, 2021. In the fall of 2020, a review of the division structure was conducted to determine the best path forward for the UNH Library.

Problem Definition

Given the anticipated reduction of staff, the shortcomings of the division structure, the ways in which library work had changed, and the uneven staffing created by years of attrition without much planning, the challenge was determining how to structure a medium-sized research library to meet the needs of our campus within our current resources, and the appropriate process to identify a new structure in our highly collaborative organizational culture.

The structure review followed closely on UNH being designated a top-tier research institution with “very high research activity” by the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education and coincided with the considerable upheaval caused by the start of the largest public health crisis in recent history and the national racial reckoning sparked by the murder of George Floyd. As part of the review of the division structure, a survey of UNH Library employees was conducted in October of 2020, and a focus group was conducted with UNH Library division heads at the end of that month. Restructuring planning was conducted by the dean and associate dean of the University Library, and one of their main concerns was colleagues’ tolerance for change given the societal stress everyone was experiencing. This all coincided with the deadline for the campus retirement incentive, and ten colleagues had indicated their intention to retire on or before June 2021. By mid-November the dean of the UNH Library had considerable information for deciding about the structure. Given the considerable societal upheaval and

resultant stress, it was clear that restructuring was something to consider very carefully and with input from all library colleagues.

While the division structure successfully addressed leadership of divisions, it was less effective in shaping how the divisions were structured internally. In many divisions there had not been changes in roles or organization beyond attrition, and the result was that staffing and assignments were misaligned with current need, and imbalances existed between supervisors and staff (for example, one division had six managers and five staff). While staff positions had been repurposed and, in some cases, cut through attrition due to the evolution of library work, there was less turnover in managerial roles. Survey results indicated that issues such as the rotating nature of the division head term concerned some employees who desired more stability. The estimated time commitment of the division head role seemed unrealistic to those in the role. The division head role was designed as a visionary role but in practice the need for operational leadership was so great that in large part the role defaulted to this. The workload implications of management meant that the need for a strong middle layer of leadership still existed in our organization. There were concerns with workload—particularly, tension between increased workload of divisions heads and how promotion and tenure responsibilities could be accomplished by those division heads who were not yet tenured. There was room for improvement around communication between divisions and despite our best intentions, our work had become siloed. There were also concerns about possible conflict between certain aspects of the division structure and how faculty governance functions at the UNH Library as well as overwhelming support for the library faculty as a group being better represented within the structure.

In addition to uncovering opinions about the organizational structure, the structure review survey also illustrated that the organization had too many supervisors. Nearly half (48%) of our employees identified as supervisors. In an organization of our size (at the time slightly less than fifty employees) ten to twelve managers would be appropriate, not twenty-three. Many of these individuals focused on supervising people rather than developing or improving functions or services, which directed our scarce resources internally rather than towards serving our campus community. This inward focus resulted in a de-facto prioritization of personnel management over user focus, which made it difficult to accomplish our mission of serving the research needs of the UNH community. The need to move away from roles that were purely human resources management positions in favor of positions that take a leadership role for service improvements while leading colleagues was clear. Perhaps due to the library's size, each employee had a unique position description and most performed a wide array of tasks, both through their divisions and several library committees. Therefore, a team-based or matrix structure clearly emerged as something to consider early in the investigations.

Regardless of whatever organizational structure was chosen, the survey results uncovered a number of opportunities for creating a shared understanding of roles, work processes, and shared language. Some of the areas that needed to be addressed included:

- Disagreement about the definition of the term “operational.”
- Tension between a desire for communication and a frustration with having to explain everything.
- Misunderstanding that the same role should not be responsible for vision and operations and that only titular leaders needed to be visionary.

- A need to clarify the purpose and nature of structure, and a misunderstanding that structure of any type is the enemy of innovation.
- An assumption that collaboration across divisions was not allowed without division head approval.
- Misunderstandings about the faculty librarian role on the part of non-librarian library employees.
- A need to clarify foundational processes such as our defined decision-making process.
- Misunderstanding that leaders need to have engaged in every aspect of the work to effectively lead it and an assumption that one person holding multiple roles is problematic or undesirable when the complexity of organizations often necessitates this.

While the original focus was to create a better organizational structure in terms of our organizational chart and reporting lines, it became clear that these types of structural improvements would only be successful with improved understanding of our organizational identity related to these misunderstandings.

Structure review input was considered alongside an analysis of the gaps in our organization that the division heads conducted, a review of the library's strategic plan and a review of our committee structure.

Literature Review

A review of the literature published on library restructuring indicates few articles published in the last twenty-five years that describe the design or implementation process of a full library

restructuring, as articles published on restructuring tend to focus on the restructuring of specific departments or library membership organizations.

Perhaps one of the most well-known library restructurings is the University of Arizona's move to a team-based structure in the 1990's.ⁱⁱⁱ This approach, which retains something of a traditional library structure while adopting a team-based management approach, was the inspiration for the reorganization at Teton County Library in Jackson Hole, Wyoming.^{iv}

The literature suggests several reasons for embarking on a structural change. The reason cited most often is the changing nature of the work, particularly changes caused by the adoption and evolution of technology, as referenced in Higa^v, Yoose and Knight^{vi} and Nelson^{vii}. Crumpton^{viii} also notes budget and finance as a reason for restructuring.

Ithaka S+R's 2016 report, "Organizing the Work of the Research Library,"^{ix} published the results of interviews with eighteen library leaders on the ways in which their libraries are organized and general trends in library structure. Yoose and Knight^x, Crumpton^{xi} and Burns and Brannon^{xii} all discuss the relationship between organizational structure and organizational culture. Bartlett and Ghoshal, in their article about the shift towards matrix management as companies globalized in the 1980s, write about the importance of attending to culture while structuring an organization:

For those companies that adopted matrix structures, the problem was not in the way they defined the goal. They correctly recognized the need for a multi-dimensional organization to respond to growing external complexity. The problem was that they defined their organizational objectives in purely structural terms. Yet the term *formal structure* describes only the organization's basic anatomy. Companies must also concern themselves with organizational physiology—the systems and relationships that allow the lifeblood of information to flow through the organization. They also need to develop a healthy organizational psychology—the shared norms, values and beliefs that shape the way individual managers think and act.^{xiii}

This quote became a guidepost for the UNH Library's restructuring work.

Discussion

Process

The initial process for determining possible structure options included learning about organizational structure generally, as well as critically evaluating the current structure to identify known and anticipated gaps in the organization. The UNH Library did this conducting the survey previously described, holding focus group conversations with key groups, and consulting broader university stakeholders like Human Resources. The library's dean and associate dean looked at the structures of peer libraries, reviewed known gaps in the organization, and regularly consulted with the library's leadership team (made up of the dean and associate dean, who led the structure redesign, as well as the assistant dean and faculty chair) . By examining the results of the structure survey clear goals for a new structure were developed and shared and to be certain that all colleagues understood that the goals for the new structure were directly related to the input they provided about what was needed in the new structure. This was an important approach for all employees to understand that their concerns were integral to the structure development process, and it was well received. The detailed list of what was shared is in figure 1.

Figure 1

| We heard the current structure.... | So we decided the new structure should: |
|--|--|
| Was designed for a larger library | Work well for our size and be scalable to allow us to grow as a research library |
| Does not sufficiently focus on or foster the work of our strategic plan | Address as many known structural gaps as possible while addressing traditional and emerging areas of librarianship |
| Involves too much hierarchy/bureaucracy which impedes the ability of everyone to contribute fully | Support individual agency and accountability Recognize our reliance on collaboration over typical lines of authority |
| Relies on faculty division heads who are challenged to devote adequate time to the leadership role; the focus on vision over operational responsibility for division heads does not provide adequate operational direction | Recognize and address the need for leadership around both vision/planning and execution of those plans Facilitate operations and encourage the evolution of operational practices |
| Was intended to break down existing silos, but the term “division” is problematic | Recognize the systemic nature of libraries and facilitate the interdependence and connectedness of everything we do Stress unity and encourage a unified approach to our work |
| Does not always strike the right balance between providing each person clarity about their role and recognizing the multiple roles that any individual might play | Provide clear roles and the support and authority everyone needs to be successful. Recognize the multivariate nature of our work and the multiple hats each library team member wears |
| Does not represent well the various components of faculty work | Integrate the collective work as a faculty body into the structure, including the role of the chair |
| Relies too much on librarian experts to provide direct supervision | Carefully consider the skills and abilities of potential leaders and managers |
| (and a few additional goals...) | Provide a degree of change our organization is willing to accept and able to tolerate |
| | Encourage a broader library focus while maintaining the cohesiveness of a base |
| | Enable an outward, service focus to our work rather than getting tripped up by internal workings |
| | Work well for the foreseeable future |

Figure 1: A representation of the concerns voiced through the structure survey and our thoughts about how to address them.

Using all this information, the dean and associate dean devised and presented three possible structure options:

- A traditional, hierarchical model with two associate deans, one leading collections and discovery and the other leading public services.
- A modified version of the current division structure, which would reduce our current divisions from six to three, addressing resource acquisition and discovery, access

services and distinctive and digital collections, with each division being led by a partnership of a faculty member and a non-librarian professional.

- A structure consisting of eleven programs, defining “program” as a service we provide, thereby putting the emphasis on the user. As employees would serve on multiple programs, each employee also needed a single administrative leader to compile annual coaching and keep their time and attendance records.

Almost immediately these options were narrowed to two, eliminating the “two associate dean” model, since resources for a second associate dean seemed unlikely. After presenting these options to all library employees, feedback was considered and options were weighed in the context of how well each one filled organizational gaps and addressed the goals identified for a new structure. Since each employee would be a member of more than one program, essentially reporting to multiple “supervisors,” administrative functions of management like annual reviews and timekeeping were assigned to a different role: the administrative lead. Pros and cons of each option were explored and options were presented with their strengths and weaknesses at a meeting of library employees. All employees has an opportunity to attend several open “office hours” sessions to get their questions answers, learn more about the options through discussion and provide input. All colleagues were asked to reply to a brief survey about their preferences.

As indicated in Christopher Bartlett and Sumantra Ghoshal’s article “Matrix Management: Not a Structure, a Frame of Mind,” in the July-August 1990 issue of *The Harvard Business Review*, changes in organizational structure are not the cure-all for an organization’s challenges. Bartlett and Ghoshal liken an organizational structure to an organization’s anatomy, and note that the physiology (interpersonal relationships, decision processes, and other systems that allow the

life blood of information to flow through the organization) and psychology (shared norms, values, and beliefs that shape the way managers think and act) must also be considered.^{xiv} This resonated with the UNH Library's dean and associate dean as they considered structure options, particularly since the responses to the original structure review survey had uncovered some fundamental tensions in shared organizational understanding. That same survey indicated that library employees were looking for a significant change, but it was clear that the specific things that were cited as needing change were not all going to be addressed by a change in reporting lines. A conscious decision was made to use the structure adjustment process not only to develop a common understanding of various fundamental organizational concepts, but also to highlight our organization's agreed upon processes, values, and ways of working as a means of shoring up whatever organizational structure we chose, including:

- Clearly articulating and regularly re-visiting our organizational vision, core services, strategic plan and initiatives, and library learning outcomes.
- Refamiliarizing ourselves with our foundational documents, including the Vision for a Healthy Work Environment, decision process, and policies.
- Aligning department/division and personal goals with strategic goals.
- Meeting regularly at appropriate intervals with notes and action-items recorded and revisited.
- Clarifying our common language and asking for clarification/specificity when communication is vague.
- Articulating a commitment to collaborating across structural groupings.
- Working towards greater role clarity (that everyone is responsible for executing a vision, everyone is responsible for improvement and innovation, that a manager keeps

the work organized and does not need to be an expert in all aspects of the work, and the faculty role).

- Articulating the need to be present and future focused.

Implementation:

Input was carefully considered, and the dean of the UNH Library made the decision to implement a hybrid of the two structures that remained under consideration: a program structure that used the modified division structure, at least temporarily, as the administrative side of the structure, with employees in “sections” designed to provide each with a supportive “home base” and led by a section lead. Faculty members in sections were identified as “faculty affiliates,” and each employee had an administrative lead to manage their time and attendance and annual coaching.

Figure 2

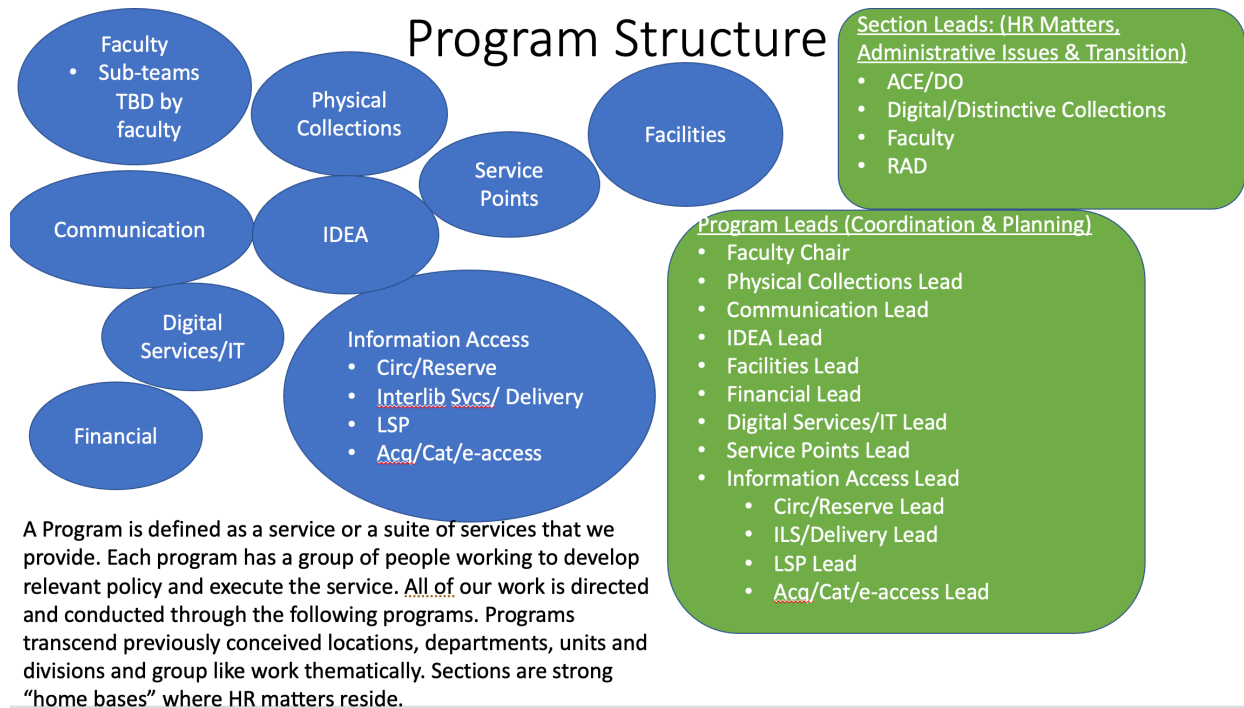


Figure 2: The organizational chart we originally used when introducing the program structure to library employees.

As noted, the twin public health crises of COVID-19 and racial injustice caused considerable disruption and stress. Library leadership knew they needed to carefully consider colleagues’ tolerance for such a major workplace change in an already stressful social environment. Given the broader social and political landscape and the stress it has caused, the library followed a careful process to support all employees through the implementation of the new structure. This work began months before the dean decided on a new structure. In October, the dean shared the library’s challenging budget situation, that several colleagues had applied for the early retirement incentive, and a process for re-envisioning the UNH library, signaling the need to identify our

core services, keep a user focus, identify what we might streamline or stop doing, and that a more involved restructuring than originally planned may come out of the structure review survey. This re-envisioning was framed as what the institution and users would need from a research library in five years. By December 2020 library leaders developed a process for determining a new structure which was also broadly shared. Monthly library meetings throughout that year highlighted topics such as defining our essential services and right-sizing our recently identified strategic initiatives given budget and staffing constraints.

Figure 3

| Who | When | What |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|---|
| Divisions | November 2020 | Divisions begin to assess the impact of the COVID retirement incentives (CERPs), and how those could be addressed (adjusting workflows, workflow/service cessation, temporary hires, new positions) |
| Faculty | November 2020 | The Library Faculty propose a process for identifying, by March 1, our core services. |
| Structure Review Task Force | December 2020 | Structure Review Task Force submits recommendations to the Dean. |
| Leadership Team | April 7, 2021 | Leadership Team announces three potential organization structures under consideration for the UNH library, soliciting internal input. |
| Dean & Assistant Dean | April 15-17 | Check in with Provost for input and check in with HR partner for initial input. |
| Dean | April 15-19 2021 | Structure decision is made and announced internally. |
| Assistant Dean and Associate Dean | April 20 | Analyze position descriptions and draft where individuals would fit in a new organizational structure |
| Dean | May 4 | Special Meeting to share more details on structure |
| Leadership Team | May 2021 | LT devises a strategy and approach for externally communicating structural changes |
| Associate and Assistant Deans | May 19 | Design and post survey call for participation—based on your pd what groups do you think you should lead? What groups do you anticipate being on? Results due by 5/21 |
| Leadership Team | May 26 | Identify and finalize Leaders of Programs & Section leadership |
| Assistant Dean and Associate Dean | June 3 | Write leader role descriptions |
| Associate Dean | June 3 | Update “sections” document |
| Assistant Dean and Associate Dean | June 2-8 | Meet individually with potential program/section leaders, share draft role description |
| Assistant Dean and Associate Dean | Beginning June 9th | Meet individually with all library employees about section and program assignments |
| Associate Dean | June 16 | Provide update at Library-Wide meeting |
| Dean | June 14 | Share assignments library wide (program lead and section leads) |
| Associate Dean and Assistant Dean | June 15 | Outline all processes and substructures that need to be consistent across programs and sections; communicate these |
| Associate Dean | June 20 | Convene first meetings of program determine their frequency |
| Assistant Dean | June 20 | Convene first meeting of section leads - ground rules, charge, determine meeting frequency, etc. |

| | | |
|--|----------------|---|
| Dean | July 1 | Announce official start of the new structure |
| Dean and Assistant/Associate Deans | July 1 | Create a high level structure picture for post-transition and a new formal organizational "chart"; seek input; finalize and put on the website |
| Assistant Dean and Associate Dean | July/August | Begin to Work with HR Partner and Supervisors on potential adjustments to PDs and any that need classification review. As changes are likely to be incremental, classification review will be requested once the position changes warrant it. |
| Section & Program Leads | July | Determine a file/records taxonomy and structure that works for the new structure. |
| Dean's Office Assistant | July | Set up files for new structure |
| Assistant Dean and Associate Dean | | Work with DHs and Supervisors on position description adjustments |
| Assistant Dean and Associate Dean | | Meet with individuals about position changes |
| Dean and others TBD | July | Library communicates structural changes externally. |
| New Section Leadership | June 2021 | Start regularly meeting to identify training, meeting topics, etc. to ensure a smooth transition |
| New Programmatic Leadership | June 2021 | Start meeting regularly to begin planning work |
| Assistant Dean? Associate Dean? Dean's office staff? | July | Review foundational documents for needed updates related to references to old structure. |
| Leadership Team | June-August | Evolve a plan to align structure with planning processes, other organizational mechanisms (e.g. hiring, goal setting, merit, coaching, etc.), foundational documents, etc. |
| Assistant Dean, Associate Dean, HR Partner | August 1? | Determine if additional compensation needs to be requested. If so, make recommendation to Dean. |
| Associate Dean | August 2021 | Document the changes made for the annual report |
| Assistant Dean | July 31 | Determine how we handle student labor in the first year of the new structure |
| Assistant Dean & Associate Dean | November | Brainstorm/identify several line reporting mechanisms for a more permanent implementation in our new structure. This may involve suggestions and input from current section leads, our HR partner, colleagues from PSU, etc. |
| Assistant Dean & Associate Dean | November | Develop a process for changing, adding or retiring a program |
| Assistant Dean | December | Determine how we handle student labor moving forward |
| Library Employees | Moving forward | Programs (and sections?) and individuals all commit to having at least one goal in support of a strategic initiative. Division Heads, Group Leaders and individuals will develop these goals in partnership with the appropriate strategic initiative relevant leader and work with the relevant leader on goal progress. |

Figure 3: A rough outline of the process steps taken to introduce our new structure.

In early May 2021 an overview of the new structure was presented to all library employees, followed the next week by detailed program descriptions, defined roles and responsibilities, and a call for individual input on the programs each employee felt were appropriate to their position. the UNH Library's leadership team made decisions on program leadership based on existing position descriptions and shared those decisions with new leaders. Program membership was

determined by position descriptions and employee input, and shared directly with each employee in a private meeting. By the end of May, program membership was announced broadly.

Throughout the process of presenting structure options and explaining our new structure library leadership was careful to be clear about what structure would and would not do and to attend to those organizational aspects that were uncovered as needing attention. The associate dean and assistant dean wrote and shared definitions of program language to ensure everyone had a common understanding of our structure. They also compiled a lengthy list of processes that would need updating as the library began to work in new ways. From August 2021 to January 2022, the library held several staff meetings on topics such as the library's decision-making process, our Vision for a Healthy Work Environment statement, and giving and receiving feedback. A concurrent conversation about library subject specialty was also occurring amongst the library faculty. The ultimate outcome of this discussion was a full realization of a subject specialist model which placed at least one dedicated subject-specialist librarian whose primary professional responsibility is service to each college at UNH beginning in the fall of 2021. This led to a change in position description for two librarians—the information literacy librarian and the government documents librarian—to serve as the librarians for the College of Liberal Arts, serving Arts and Humanities and Social Sciences respectively.

Shortly after launching the new structure, the UNH Library implemented Microsoft Teams as a communication tool. The library was set up as a single team, with each program having a channel. This allows anyone in the library to read about the work going on in any program and allows for greater transparency and less siloing.

In the program structure, each employee is a member of at least one program, with most employees serving on three or four. The structure also temporarily organized individual

employees into four “sections” intended to provide a strong homebase as we transitioned to the new structure. This is an innovative approach for libraries, as it moves away from a traditional hierarchy and emphasizes work direction over supervision while giving employees at all levels considerable autonomy in their work. Program leadership included professional colleagues from both faculty and non-faculty classifications, thereby offering a more diverse leadership perspective. July 1, 2021, the UNH Library officially began the “programmatic” structure, understanding it would take the better part of a year to adjust and realize the structure’s benefits. While Bartlett and Ghoshal assert that the matrix structure proved unmanageable, the UNH Library put in place a manageable version of a traditional matrix. Bartlett and Ghoshal write that dual reporting led to conflict and confusion.^{xv} The UNH Library addressed potential conflict and confusion by putting the worker in charge of their workload, with clear position descriptions that state the percentage of time each employee dedicates to each program and all program leads consult regularly. The library has no committees; instead, the library built a library-wide team to discourage turf battles. Work direction comes from program leads, and employees are empowered to complete their work. The structure takes the emphasis off top-level managers, which is a more sensible approach now, in the age of social networks and personal relationships, than it was in the 1980s when matrix management first gained favor.

In October of 2021, the UNH Library launched a multi-faceted evaluation to review the programmatic structure and determine necessary adjustments. Adjustments could take the form of additional programs, adjustments to sections, clarifications in the scope of programs, adjustments to position descriptions, or other tweaks, but it was too soon to evaluate the impact of the structure. Rather, the library set out to determine what minor changes could improve the

structure relative to the work that we do and the goals that we had when designing a new structure. An efficacy review of the structure is a planned future phase.

The evaluation of the new structure was conducted by the associate dean and assistant dean, and included the following goals:

- Position descriptions accurately describe responsibilities of role.
- Program leadership is appropriate to meet our goals.
- Program membership is appropriate to meet our goals.
- Program-level strategy is aligned with library and university strategic initiatives.
- Roles of faculty affiliate, administrative lead and section lead are clarified and a decision is made about their need to continue. Determine the need for sections and clearly define if and what the roles of faculty affiliate, administrative lead and section lead are in the structure.

To achieve these evaluation goals, the associate dean and assistant dean examined the definitions, visions, and goals of each program, and program leads negotiated any identified overlap. Library administration met with library faculty about the structure and noted aspects faculty felt were needed. The dean and associate dean of the University Library revisited the goals set for the new structure, exploring the degree to which those were met. the associate dean audited the library's former groups and committees to ensure that all work previously captured by groups and committees was covered by the new structure. Program leads reviewed program membership to determine if changes were necessary. Administrative partners worked with employees to review position descriptions to ensure they accurately reflected the work.

Since the assistant dean is responsible for library human resources, she and the associate dean reviewed all of the information gathered to determine if any broader changes were needed. As a

result of this evaluation, they made several recommendations, including retiring the “section” side of the structure in favor of launching a Human Resources (HR) program. This HR program would address workplace coaching and goal setting, as well as the optimization the library’s student employment program and other human resources needs. The HR program includes administrative leads (renamed to administrative partners to mirror language used more broadly at the University) and also includes any additional employees who supervise non-benefitted, adjunct labor (such as students, interns, and part-time workers) and provides support for them. Rather than some administrative leads serving 7 or more employees and others serving one employee, this change also allowed the library to make a more equitable distribution of the administrative partner role, which compiles annual coaching and approves time and leave for an employee. The first configuration of this role had not been equitably distributed throughout the organization. At this point the library not only reassigned three or four employees to each administrative partner, but also ensured the role served either exempt or non-exempt staff because both coaching and time and leave recording is different for different classifications of employees. The non-supervisory nature of the role was also highlighted and clarified since only program leads provide work direction in the structure. The library also developed a new Leadership and Planning program that collects and directs the strategic work of the library which was not originally well captured in the structure. The Leadership and Planning program is responsible for faculty hiring, library-wide celebrations and events, library fundraising and development, administrative aspects of promotion and tenure, accreditation and library assessment, and support of the dean’s work. Led by the dean of the UNH Library, the Leadership and Planning program membership includes the faculty chair, assistant dean, associate dean,

library senior administrative assistant, senior library manager, and the library’s development officer.

Figure 4

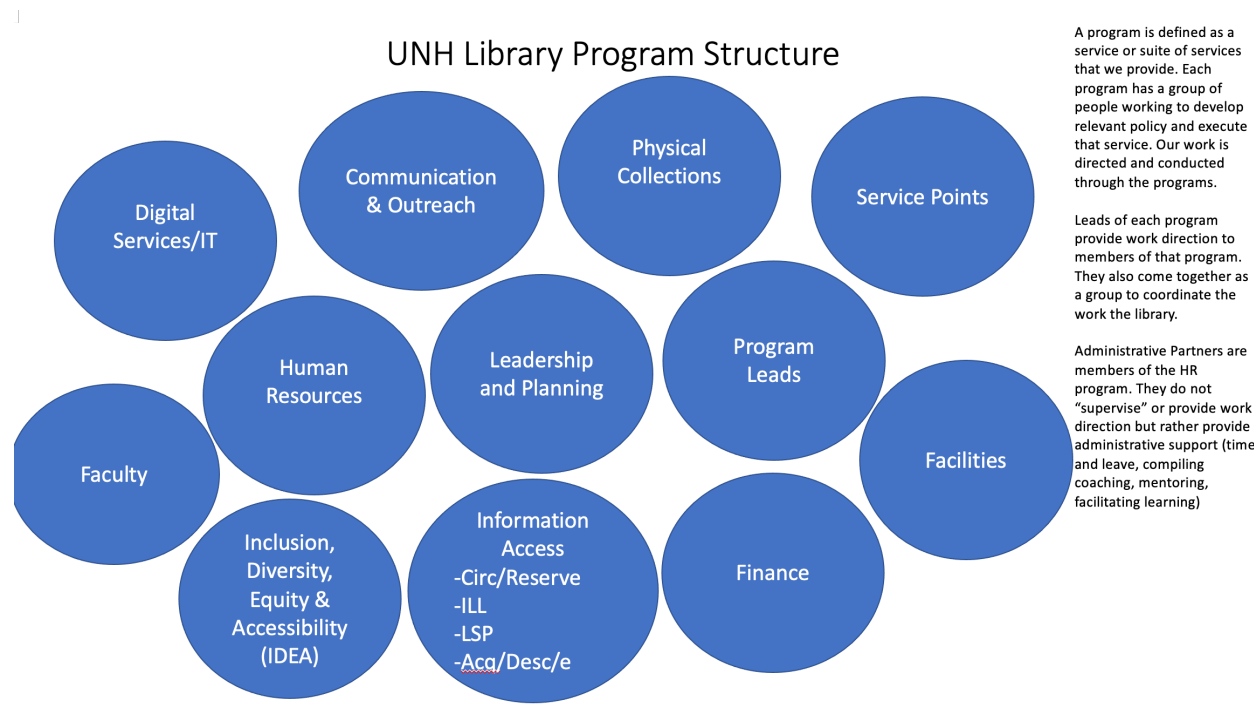


Figure 4: The revised organizational chart we use after improving the program structure based on our evaluation.

The library refined program membership, moving away from the broad, inclusive approach to membership originally taken. Given the transparency of information available through the use of Microsoft Teams, no one need serve on a program simply to get information. Other roles were identified as needing more involvement than originally anticipated. As such, five adjustments to program membership were made.

Finally, the library resolved to consider affinities among programs. Since programs are working together in new ways, it was recommended to continue the evolution of programs. Two

questions arose from the review of goals for the new structure, and the library is giving these aspects of the current structure one more year to consider:

1. The future of the internal structure of the Information Access program.
2. Ways to expand involvement in work that is managed through the Faculty program.

For the first question about the structural arrangement of circulation, course reserves, interlibrary loan, cataloging, acquisitions, e-resources, and the library services platform being grouped together under the information access umbrella, it remains unclear if these programs share closer ties to each other than any of the other four programs. The somewhat hierarchical arrangement grouping these programs into an umbrella information access program will remain for further evaluation by those leading programs within it.

For the second question about expanding involvement in work that is managed through the faculty program, this is likely to happen as a natural and appropriate evolution of the structure. As faculty conceptualize work that is squarely in their domain, aspects of that work may spin off to different programs. Examples of this are already evident, for example in the FY2023 faculty program goals:

- Collaborate with the Service Points program on research support initiatives.
- Build skills across the library faculty to support the ability for faculty across campus to identify diverse scholars and their work for inclusion in course syllabi, which integrates the work of the Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) Program.

The faculty chair and associate dean will monitor progress on this question as the year progresses.

Conclusions

The UNH Library's move from a division based hierarchical structure to a programmatic structure has been successful overall but has not been without its challenges. The structure has allowed the library the flexibility needed to improve our services and operations. The change also allowed the library to restart previously stalled talks about consolidating the circulation and research desks into a unified information desk, which was successfully launched during the first year of the programmatic structure.

The structure further allowed the library to use our limited human resources in more efficient ways. By unifying materials description, acquisitions, and e-access into one program, the library was able to consolidate and streamline these workflows. Description and acquisitions work that was previously done by seven full-time staff is now accomplished by five full time staff, many of whom also serve on other programs. Unifying the research desk with the circulation desk allowed us to repurpose the circulation desk manager role to focus on circulation service improvements as program lead for circulation and library programming, two gaps that had existed in the organization. The senior manager for circulation also had a change in duties and now focuses on library-wide management issues, primarily human resources.

After working within the structure for more than a year, the UNH Library learned it was important to articulate that program membership is comprised of individuals in different job roles and classifications who therefore contribute to program work in different ways. As an organization it is important to acknowledge these differences and allow them to inform our work. Additionally, it is now expected that each employee review their position description and program assignments annually, since positions naturally evolve.

One of the most important things the leadership of the UNH Library learned was the need to attend to our organization through clear goals, strategy, and communication. Structure alone does not make a healthy organization; but, rather, the common understandings of how members of the organization contribute to the health and well-being of an organization does achieve organizational health. For the UNH Library, this meant developing clear definitions and visions for all programs; sharing each program's goals and updates on progress towards those goals; and re-affirming several of our organization's foundational documents, such as our strategic plan, Vision for a Healthy Work Environment, and decision-making process. The library developed new meeting norms and documented important policies and procedures.

Some things remain a challenge—programs have a variety of organizational maturity levels and individual employees have embraced the structure to different degrees. Some of our colleagues have found a non-hierarchical approach difficult to get used to. In fact, two of our colleagues found employment elsewhere in the early days of the new structure at least in part because of discomfort with the new way of working. Overall, the library has observed a positive impact on our culture, with more openness, communication, and collaboration, which is not a result of the structure change alone. For the structure to be successful, it was necessary to look at our organizational processes and agreed upon ways of working—the physiology of the organization, as described by Bartlett and Ghoshal.^{xvi} Through this process all library employees learned that structure alone does not create an effective organization. The Library's shared understanding, foundational documents and organizational processes are a vital part of our success. The UNH Library is persisting with a programmatic structure and will continue to adjust and make tweaks as needed. For example, the library has recently begun to think about guidelines for the maximum number of programs in which an employee should participate.

In the future, a more comprehensive evaluation of the structure will be needed, perhaps by using the Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument and the Competing Values Framework as Yoose and Knight demonstrated.^{xvii} At the time of this writing, the program structure is still quite new, and the UNH Library does not know if it will stand the test of time. So far, changing the structure has allowed the library to address not only some structural gaps, but some of the ways of working which were not beneficial to our organization. A team-based structure in which employees are members of several teams better addresses the work of a mid-sized, leanly staffed research library than the division structure.

Endnotes

- ⁱ "Enrollment." University of New Hampshire. Accessed 6/28/2022. <https://www.unh.edu/institutional-research/data-reports/student-data/enrollment>.
- ⁱⁱ "Staff by employment status and occupational category." Institute for Educational Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. Accessed 6/28/2022. <https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/datacenter/institutionprofile.aspx?unitId=183044>.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Shelley Phipps, "The System Design Approach to Organizational Development: The University of Arizona Model," *Library Trends* 53, no. 1 (Summer, 2004): 68-111.
- ^{iv} Betsy A. Bernfeld, "Developing a Team Management Structure in a Public Library," *Library Trends* 53, no. 1 (Summer, 2004): 112-128.
- ^v Mori Lou Higa, et al, "Redesigning a Library's Organizational Structure," *College & Research Libraries* 66, no. 1 (January 2005) : 41-58.
- ^{vi} Becky Yoose and Cecilia Knight, "Clusters: A Study of a Non Traditional Academic Library Organizational Model," *Library Leadership and Management* 30 no. 3 (2016): n. pag.
- ^{vii} Jeremy Nelson, "Organizing Libraries," in *Becoming a Lean Library* (Waltham: Chandos, 2016), Proquest Ebook Central.
- ^{viii} Michael Crumpton, "Organizational Structures in Academic Libraries," in *Strategic Human Resources Planning for Academic Libraries: Information, Technology and Organization*. (Waltham: Chandos, 2015), ProQuest Ebook Central.
- ^{ix} Roger C. Schonfeld, "Organizing the Work of the Research Library," *Ithaka S+R*. Last Modified 18 August 2016, <https://doi.org/10.18665/sr.283717>.
- ^x Yoose and Knight, "Clusters."
- ^{xi} Crumpton, "Organizational Structures."
- ^{xii} Douglas Burns and Sian Brannon, "Getting Started with Organizational Design at Your Library," *Library Leadership and Management*, 33, no. 1 (2018).
- ^{xiii} Christopher A. Bartlett and Sumantra Ghoshal, "Matrix Management: Not a Structure, a Frame of Mind," *Harvard Business Review*, July-August 1990. <https://hbr.org/1990/07/matrix-management-not-a-structure-a-frame-of-mind>.
- ^{xiv} Bartlett and Ghoshal, "Matrix Management."
- ^{xv} Bartlett and Ghoshal, "Matrix Management."
- ^{xvi} Bartlett and Ghoshal, "Matrix Management."
- ^{xvii} Yoose and Knight, "Clusters."

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