

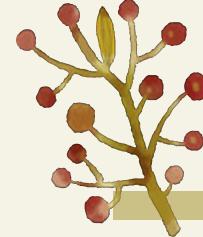
Repotting with Purpose:

The Impact of Organizational Restructuring on Embedded Academic Librarianship

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June 2, 2023



Agenda



01

Embedded Librarianship

02

Liaison vs. Functional models

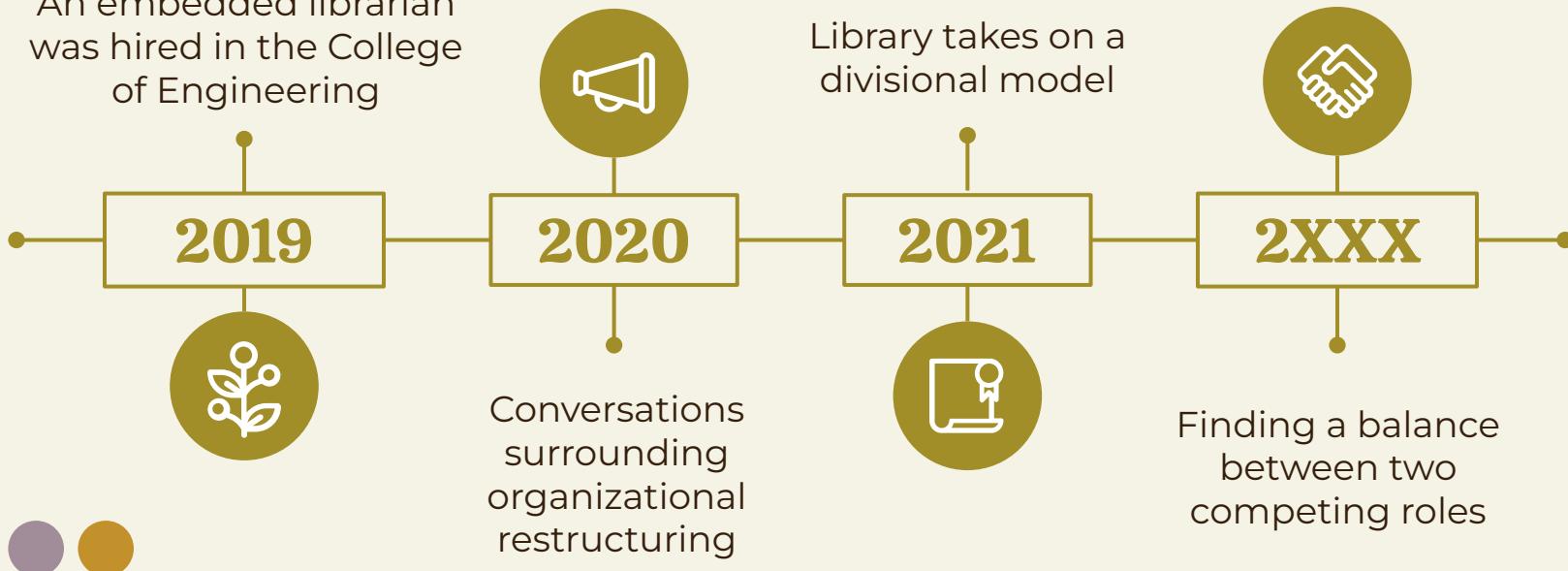
03

Recommendations

Embeddedness at USask



An embedded librarian was hired in the College of Engineering



01

Embedded librarianship



Embedded Librarianship

“[T]he librarian becomes a member of the customer community rather than a service provider standing apart”

- Schumaker, 2009, p. 240



Four Pillars of Embedded Librarianship



Location

Office location among the user group

Funding

Position is funded by the user group

Supervision

Responsible to the user group, not just the library

Participation

Engagement on committees, at events, etc.





02

Liaison vs. Functional



Library Organizational Structures

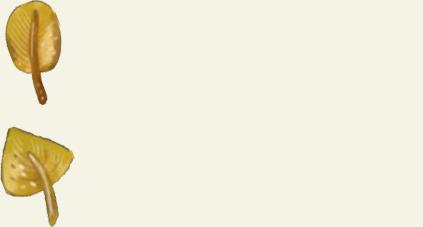
- Liaison model
 - Librarians have subject expertise
 - “Jack of all trades”
- Functional model
 - Librarian roles focus on an area of librarianship
 - Librarians grouped based on service areas
- Hybrid model



Liaison Model



- Allows for development of subject expertise
 - Stretched thin for librarianship expertise
- Information from one area informs another
 - Knowledge of courses from teaching informs collection development, creation of subject guides, development of new services
- Build relationships with students, faculty, staff
- More conducive to incorporating the **embedded librarianship** model



Functional Model



- Allows for development of expertise within fields of librarianship
 - Less subject expertise
- Better and more consistent service provision
- Relationship building? Advocacy? Communication?



Impacts on Embedded Librarians

Fully Functional Model

- Pulled back into the library
- Shift in focus toward area of librarianship expertise, away from subject expertise
- Loss of autonomy
- Fraying relationships with colleagues in their user group



Impacts on Embedded Librarians

Hybrid Model

- Increased workload
- Torn between two allegiances
- Split focus between an area of librarianship expertise and subject expertise
- Some loss of autonomy
- Potential for stronger relationships with library colleagues, at the expense of relationships with colleagues in their user group



Post-Pandemic Impact



- Shift toward more online services
 - Easier to become embedded in places relevant to the user groups
 - Learning management systems, Teams, website
- Moving back to in-person library meetings
 - Added complication of “location”
 - Potential for hybrid meetings



03

Recommendations



Communication is key!



From the library administration

- To library professionals
 - New roles defined
 - Clear expectations and priorities
 - Language for consistent communication with user groups
- To campus partners
 - Library reorganization
 - Shift away from liaison



Communication is key!

From (former?) embedded librarians to their user group(s):

- Change in role
- Who can help with what?
 - Subject-specific research questions, functional questions
- Clear and easy-to-find pathways for help seeking



Maintaining relationships

- Critical for promoting library services
- “Location”
 - Office location?
 - Online presence
- “Participation”
 - Attending events, engaging with user group, informal reference interviews



Assessment



- Built into embedded librarianship approach
- What elements best benefit the user group?
- How can you have the greatest impact on student learning?
- Are your various approaches impacting students in a positive or negative way?



Avoiding overload

- Request clear expectations as to priorities
- Learn to say “no”
- Communicate workload and capacity
- Conversations about changing role



Summary

- Requesting clarification on expectations regarding evolving priorities.
- Advocating for your own workload capacity.
- Developing and implementing an in-depth communication plan.
- Building and maintaining relationships is a priority.



Next steps...

- How have other fully/partially embedded librarians dealt with organizational restructuring?
- Impacts on workload, job satisfaction
- Impacts on student learning and user group satisfaction

Questions?

Comments? Ideas?

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