

The Evolving Research Library: Responsive Organizational Change

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Abstract

Because of the pace of change in library environments, the organization is continuously evolving and the days of having a structure etched in stone are gone. Kansas State University Libraries engaged in a major organizational restructuring in 2009-2010 and, based on studies and assessments, two smaller but significant changes again in 2015. To assess and redesign the organization, analysis of new and emerging work, staff resources, budget, and space were critical, but the important constant was library users and meeting their needs. This article outlines development of the structural reorganizations, issues encountered during the changes, examples of task force work, lessons learned about process and outcomes, and the resulting changes.

Introduction

Many factors were driving academic libraries to rethink their collections and services in the first decade of the new century: rapid technological advancements, changing modes of scholarly communication, increased stress on the economic models for information acquisition, new ways of teaching and learning in higher education, and different expectations among library users. In order to remain relevant to their university and professional communities, libraries were striving to demonstrate the critical role they play in teaching, research, and service in this environment, including new approaches to acquiring information resources and delivering services to the university community. Reorganizations underway in many libraries influenced the process. *Challenge, Change and the Service Imperative: The University Library in the Twenty-First Century* (University Library, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign 2008) articulates the challenge to think differently about how we work:

No aspect of academic library work has been left untouched by ongoing developments in information technology, scholarly publication, and higher education. To appreciate the scope of these changes and the challenges they pose . . . one need only consider three major areas of concern: 1) the nature of collections; 2) the needs of users; and 3) the changing academic environment.

In terms of collections, there were growing expectations for digital content while budgets were strained to respond to never-ending inflation and the changing financial models that were emerging—and continue to emerge—from the publishing industry. At the same time, services had been impacted by technology as new and innovative ways were sought to meet users' needs through instruction programs and new services such

as texting and instant messaging while also striving to connect them to the information resources for which the Libraries paid so dearly. Simultaneously, the academic environment was transforming as research became more interdisciplinary and more global, modes of scholarly communications were changing, and the economic environment was forcing the university to rethink missions and priorities.

Along with these drivers, K-State was on the cusp of a leadership change with a new President coming on board, followed by a new provost. They would come to campus with their own expectations and priorities and would be presented with many requests for financial and other support. The Libraries wanted to be prepared to be at the table to speak for its needs as well and also to demonstrate its strengths and the benefits offered to campus. Also, state and university budget reductions created a heightened sense of urgency to demonstrate relevance, value to, and impact on student learning and faculty teaching and research. More than ever, the Libraries needed to allocate limited resources strategically to address emerging needs, be more flexible and responsive to change, and be purposefully efficient.

Literature Review

K-State Libraries was not alone in thinking about realignment. Prior to the reorganization, there was much discussion going on in academic library circles about organizational restructuring. The University of Arizona libraries was one institution on the leading edge of rethinking its organization as a team-based one and started the “Living the Future” conferences from 1996-2012 as a venue to discuss organizational change, new work for librarians and other related topics (Rawan and Bezanson, 2011; Stoffle and Cuillier, 2011). Themes from this groundbreaking conference sparked an active interest in the literature including two special issues of library science journals, *Journal of Library Administration* (Lee 2011) and *Library Trends* (Russell and Stephens 2004). For example, organizational development in libraries became a popular topic growing out of the conference. Stephens and Russell (2004) discuss the pace of change and the need for libraries to forecast future developments and redesign the organization in accordance with those anticipated changes. Parsch and Baughman (2010) report research on organizational development as a measure of organizational health, a healthy organization being one that is continuously learning and innovating. Organizational culture is another related theme in the literature. Shepstone and Currie (2008) discuss the change process, noting “The process of organizational culture change will require ongoing commitment and attention to this incremental process that requires time for individuals to learn new ways of working together.” As an alternative to the team-based approach used at University of Arizona and elsewhere, Yoose and Knight (2016) present a cluster structure model that resulted in “an organization that was flexible in both staffing including facilitating cross-training and cross-functional projects, and in distributing responsibility and decision-making.”

More recently, as organizations have restructured, and many more than once, assessment has become an important topic. Farkas (2013) discusses building a culture of assessment and notes, “For a change process to be successful over time, the organization must also change structures and policies to both accommodate the change and embed it in the culture.” Franklin (2011) focuses on changes in library work and encourages “an assessment program that demonstrates the value of the academic

research library in providing quality services that advance the institutional mission.” Related to assessment, evidence-based change is suggested as a means to move past organizational habit and folklore embedded in the culture, which alters the narrative to support new structures and new work (Town, 2015). The challenge of moving change forward is also noted by McGuigan (2012) who notes that “tension exists between the mechanistic, hierarchical structures of academic libraries and the new roles academic librarians play in delivering this information.”

It is clear that breaking old habits and models has proven to be difficult. Change is not easy, and applying organizational development theory to practice is challenging and requires ongoing commitment. As we moved forward with reorganization plans at K-State Libraries, we chose what seemed appropriate to our situation from the existing research and applied it, as relevant, to our libraries.

Responding to a changing environment

The Libraries’ 2007-2012 Strategic Plan (K-State Libraries 2007) became the foundation for change. A reorganization in 2009-2010 was an effort to achieve the following objectives:

- Move from a collection-centered to a user-centered organization
- Recognize diverse users’ needs
- Make data-driven decisions about resources through improved quantitative and qualitative data collection and assessment
- Improve delivery and coordination of information services
- Manage for flexibility and relevancy to users
- Clarify reporting relationships and balance supervisory workload
- Streamline workflows
- Reallocate human resources to new, emerging needs in order to be more adaptable and responsive to current and future environment
- Maximize staff strengths, talents, and interests
- Build organizational capacity
- Recognize the organization as continuously evolving
- Build tolerance for ambiguity and flexibility

To assess how to better position the Libraries for these challenges, the Library Leadership Council (LLC) comprised of the dean, associate dean, and department heads started by building, on paper, an organization that looked at continuing and new work emerging in the libraries including the migration from print to digital, the growing presence of the institutional repository, and the need to focus resources on developing digital collections. The group worked with a management professor at the university who offered excellent suggestions and also cautioned that when the organization was redefined, it must also be aware that it will not last forever in that new form. The pace of change meant continuous evolution as an organization and the days of having a structure etched in stone were gone. This more ambiguous organizational environment would challenge library staff to get comfortable working in what might be described as an ongoing organizational experiment that relied on continuous testing and assessment of what was working well and what was not. The important constant in this experiment would be the

users; ultimately, the success of the organization depended on effectively and efficiently meeting their needs.

As LLC assessed the environment, two interrelated structures emerged. One was a matrix structure that created a network to bring together expertise, interest and focus on work that cut across the organization. The matrix organization overlaid a second, more traditional organizational structure. The purpose of the organizational structure was to give everyone an organizational home or work group in which to do the work of the libraries. It brought positions with similar functions into the same accountability structure under a division, department, or unit head so that they could share resources and build more efficient workflows. These structures were not meant to be impermeable, however, because of the increasingly integrative nature of the work. There would be a need for continuous training and learning, particularly cross-training between similar jobs, to build increased capacity to meet user needs. The resulting organizational structure created two divisions, Content Management and Scholarly Communications (CMSC) and Research, Education and Engagement (REED). CMSC was comprised of three departments: Content Development and Acquisitions; Metadata and Preservation; and Scholarly Communications and Publishing. REED was made up of Undergraduate and Community Services; Faculty and Graduate Services; and the Morse Department of Special Collections. In addition, two offices were established, Planning and Assessment and Communications and Marketing.

The matrix overlay was intended to provide cross-organizational input into policy development, the ability to understand the inter-relationships and integrate work across the organization, and project oversight and development which was flexible enough to include those people with the right expertise at the right times. Two types of matrix groups were identified. Councils, for areas such as collections, systems, and services, were to be more permanent, ongoing matrices that provide policy, planning, program development and review, and resource allocation. Project teams would be more short-term and task-oriented, proposing and testing solutions to identified problems or needs in the organization. Those projects could generate from a matrix or from an organizational entity such as a division, department, or unit. In both cases, membership in a matrix came from across the organization. Individuals could be assigned to a matrix by virtue of their role in the organization or because of a particular skill set they brought to a project. In either case, an individual's supervisor would seek evaluation input from the matrix leader to incorporate into the individual's performance evaluation.

Responsibility and accountability permeated both the organizational and matrix structures through clearly articulated individual and group work plans. Coordination would occur through two library leadership bodies: an executive committee comprised of the dean, associate dean, assistant deans, and the senior director for administrative services and a leadership council that included the executive committee, department heads, representatives from faculty and classified staff leadership and matrix leaders. Also, while budgetary reductions were not the primary motivator for these changes, they were certainly a factor in moving forward. The library administration anticipated a workforce reduction of 15% in the coming year as a result of a hiring freeze, resignations, and retirements. It was hoped that the reorganization would help the libraries better adapt to these budgetary fluctuations.

The plan was vetted widely with library staff who had opportunities to question, comment, and discuss. Once the organization was ready to move forward, the following

implementation process was put into place:

- Inventory the interests, skill sets, and knowledge bases of classified staff to identify the “best match” for current position descriptions and classifications, with review and revision of PDs and classification over time.
- Inventory the interests, skill sets, and knowledge bases of faculty and unclassified staff, ask them to rank their top three job preferences in the new organization, and make assignments for a “best match.”
- Form working groups to flesh out work responsibility and staffing and other resources needed for new departments and units including development of new position descriptions.
- Conduct internal searches for administrative/management positions and other new positions that currently do not exist in the organization, beginning with the assistant dean positions.
- Form matrix councils and new leadership/administrative groups.

The separation of reference and instructional support services between the departments of Undergraduate and Community Services and Faculty and Graduate Services was based in part on the varying informational needs of undergraduate students, graduate students, and faculty. It was at this point that K-State Libraries moved away from subject liaison librarians assigned to specific academic departments for collection development, instruction, and reference support to a structure based more on needs of specific user groups. Subject expertise was still valued and utilized in the different structure. Collection development was centralized with full time staff and moved to the CMSC division.

No jobs were lost in the reorganization, but jobs and responsibilities did change. While this caused anxiety for some, others embraced the change. All affected staff members were given the opportunity to declare where they best fit according to skills, interests and abilities and, for the most part, were placed in that position after talking with the respective department head and assistant dean in a “mini-interview.” Also, the Libraries supported training and retooling for new job roles and responsibilities within its resources. An assessment of the reorganization would be ongoing with a formal review planned in 12-18 months from the start of implementation.

Internal searches were conducted for six department heads, meeting a goal of providing leadership opportunities to faculty. One search was not successful internally and took longer to go through the process of external recruitment and hiring so that position was filled with an acting head. One department head had been in a management position previously but the new assignment was with a different department, and the other heads were taking on administrative responsibilities for the first time. Consequently, there was a very steep learning curve for the heads, and administration was committed to supporting their development. Encouragement was offered to attend any campus-wide orientations or other leadership training opportunities and all were given the opportunity to attend the Harvard – ACRL Leadership Institute for Academic Librarians. Mentoring was offered by the dean and assistant deans and some of the expectations for service and/or research and creative activities were adjusted for an initial period in order to help the heads focus on leading their new departments.

A new strategic plan guides assessment

One of the first major undertakings of the new university administration was to develop the K-State 2025 Visionary Plan with a goal of having Kansas State University recognized as one of the nation's Top 50 Public Research Universities. This strategic plan was developed during an eighteen-month planning process which involved K-State faculty, staff and other stakeholders. Once the university plan was completed in 2011, the president asked each unit on campus to develop similar aligned plans. There was wide staff participation to develop the libraries' plan in 2011-2012 (K-State Libraries 2012). Strategic planning coincided with the intent to evaluate and assess the reorganization and served as a guide during assessment.

In the fall of 2011, the Libraries' Office of Planning and Analysis conducted a survey asking the staff to rate the overall success of the 2009-2010 reorganization, to list positive changes that had resulted, to identify any gaps in the work or barriers to getting the work done, and what things might be stopped or done in a different way. The survey was not mandatory and the response rate was 38%. The vast majority of respondents (81%) indicated they thought the reorganization was either somewhat successful or very successful, but there were also some negative comments as was expected. Several overall themes were identified including some ongoing issues that had been identified before the reorganization and face many other libraries. Issues included the need for improved communication about what new work was being done and staffing shortages. Other themes included concern about the changes to the subject liaison model and the lack of definition of new responsibilities, opportunities for classified staff, workload and/or workflow issues, and questions about whether the matrices were functioning. Ideas for next steps were discussed and implemented to various degrees such as training for meeting and time management, use of focus groups, departmental/division discussions, consideration of different communication methods, and how to fold the libraries' work into the university strategic plan.

While the original intent was to formalize the matrix structure, and include matrix leaders as part of the leadership council, after further deliberation it was decided to let matrices arise organically in the organization based on interest and need. The results were mixed. Since the matrix structure was identified as an area of concern, an assessment was conducted in October, 2012. Nine matrices were in place at the time of the assessment. Based on a survey of matrix members, four (AgBioscience, Humanities, Social Sciences, and Sustainability) were characterized as communications groups that brought together subject experts to share information and coordinate work between collection development and reference/instruction. Five matrices were defined more as project management groups (Arts, Digital Preservation, Digital Projects, Education/Instruction, and Government Documents) where workflows crossed departmental and divisional lines. The assessment indicated that staff involved in the matrices generally found them to be helpful, but some felt the addition of one or more matrices to their workload was an unnecessary burden. The matrices proved to be a benefit in thinking about future library directions that resulted in additional reorganization. For example, the communication groups of AgBioscience, Humanities and Social Sciences became the foundation for the 2014 REED reorganization described below. Also, matrices such as digital preservation and digital projects have morphed into more formalized teams in the organization indicating the ongoing and institutionalized nature of what was once considered "new work" for the libraries.

From large scale to small scale reorganization

One of the new departments formed in the 2009-2010 reorganization was Scholarly Communications and Publishing whose responsibilities included copyright education, open access advocacy, digitization, and management of the institutional repository (K-Rex) and New Prairie Press (NPP), the libraries' publishing arm.

The Libraries founded NPP in 2007 and is one of a growing number of libraries committed to open access publishing. NPP is a reliable full-spectrum publishing platform for journals, conference events, open access textbooks, monographs and other special publications. The Press originally used Open Journal Systems software, but is now powered by Digital Commons at bepress and hosts publications from all disciplines that are written, edited or sponsored by scholars affiliated with Kansas State University. There is a full-time coordinator for the press, with other faculty and staff in the department providing outreach and non-technical support.

The K-State Research Exchange (K-REx) serves as the institutional repository using D-Space, an open source application. The repository provides a platform to collect, preserve, and enable discovery of the creative and scholarly works of K-State students, staff, and faculty, as well as digitized historical documents and images from the University Archives and Special Collections. Responsibility for coordinating the scholarly repository content lies mainly with one faculty member in the department, but there is important additional support from others in the department, metadata and digitization services, and information technology services staff.

In 2014, the department head began a phased retirement program that required her to leave her administrative role. Internal applications for an interim head were accepted and library administration determined that this interim transition period provided a two-fold opportunity. The first was to assess the key functional areas of the department. The cross-departmental nature of this work suggested that options to the current organizational arrangement existed and models from other research libraries could provide examples for consideration. The second was to document the process in order to help library administration evaluate the potential use of a task force model in reviewing other departments established during the reorganization.

The Scholarly Communications and Publishing Organizational Assessment Task Force (SCPTF) was formed with the following charge: "Create a report with recommendations regarding structural and functional changes to optimize and enhance the work of the department. K-State 2025 goals and objectives will provide the strategic foundation for the work, and the task force will be expected to also examine human resource allocation, organizational fit, and established and emerging models for scholarly communications and publishing efforts in other research libraries in order to make recommendations." The two assistant deans were appointed as co-chairs of the task force and the other nine members represented nearly all departments of the libraries, with a mix of library faculty and support staff.

The task force operated on a fairly aggressive timeline with a preliminary report being due to administration six weeks after receiving the charge and a final report 30 days later. The task force met weekly with "homework" assignments to prepare for

meeting discussions. Each member researched models at other libraries (approximately 40 total) and entered findings into a shared spreadsheet so the group could make general observations, and look for commonalities and features they especially liked or disliked. The next assignment was to review an outside consultant's report (completed previous to the task force formation) and recommendations on digital workflow analysis and potential structural changes to the digitization unit in the department. Task force members were asked to develop scenarios of possible organizational structure for the department based on other models and the consultant's report. Eleven scenarios were submitted for discussion and several important consensus points were reached quickly with the most clear-cut opinion being that the digitization unit (production) should be separated from the scholarly communications (outreach and publishing) work. Options were narrowed and consensus on broad concepts developed for the preliminary report. The dean's response to the report was shared with the SCPTF and a final report was generated.

The first major recommendation from the task force was to hire a Digital Initiatives Librarian to head the digitization unit which would move from the Scholarly Communications and Publishing Department to the Metadata and Preservation department. While there were several reasons for this recommended move, one very important aspect was that the unit was a good fit with other technical services and that workflows are closely tied with metadata and preservation. Such a move also suggested a common mission to digitize resources both for access and preservation. There were also less appealing factors such as salary costs for a new position, adding an additional reporting unit to the current department, and defining new responsibilities for some staff. While not ideal, the physical space for this unit did not change, and still remains apart from the rest of the department. There were no funds to invest in space reallocation at the time, but that is something for future consideration. The task force felt strongly that even if a new position could not be filled immediately, the structural change and reporting lines should be implemented as soon as possible.

The second recommendation dealt with the publishing/outreach activities of the department and that was to create a "center" to encompass copyright services, open access promotion and education, and K-REx and New Prairie Press support and promotion, to be located in a physical space easily accessible to the public. The group felt it was important to increase the visibility of scholarly communications and publishing functions and such a center could allow for greater flexibility for staffing on a part-time basis from traditional areas as the work continues to transform. The recommendation was made to move the data services position from the Faculty and Graduate Services Department into the center, to consider hiring an individual with a J.D. to provide more complete copyright and intellectual property consultation and service, and to increase expertise in the areas of digital humanities and e-Science initiatives. Once the dean accepted the report and recommendations, the approval process began. When university approval was granted, the libraries began recruiting a center director and consolidating the staff into one physical space that was publicly accessible.

The Director of the center (now known as the Center for Advancement of Digital Scholarship or CADS) was hired in January of 2015, but the staffing took at least a year to become somewhat stable. There were two retirements, two new hires, and when the data services librarian relocated the libraries were not in a position to hire a replacement. There was consensus to revisit the needs of the campus for such services as well as data management and curation needs, but budgetary restrictions have not yet allowed this position to be filled. While no formal assessment has been made of the new center, some general observations can be made: the Center is not yet seen as a “drop-in” location for students or faculty needing consultations, although the intent is to grow that visibility; the Center has sponsored numerous educational and informational activities with varied attendance rates; the staff provide continuous outreach to faculty and students which helps increase interest and new publications with New Prairie Press; current practices and new policies are being documented; copyright education sessions are offered for the rest of the library staff; and workflows are being evaluated and improved. While the vision initially was for CADS to have a major role in digital humanities on campus, that movement has not progressed as planned due to a variety of factors including those outside of the libraries. A formal assessment of the effectiveness of the Center is planned for the future.

The assessment librarian (who was appointed to the task force in that position) conducted an evaluation of the task force process and prepared a report for the dean. The overall impression was that it was an efficient and open process with most individuals contributing appropriately to homework assignments and discussions. Because the process worked well, a similar task force was appointed to review the structure of the REED division.

The mission and vision articulated in the K-State Libraries 2025 Strategic Direction Action Plan focus on the Libraries’ striving to elevate academic success by being integral partners in research, learning and discovery. For REED, key activities include enhancing the research reputation of K-State through development of supportive services and collections, developing relationships with university interdisciplinary research activities, and building a culture of teaching and learning that promotes and supports undergraduate and graduate student success.

After four years’ experience with the new structure, the Libraries felt there was an opportunity to assess the functional areas of the division, services provided, and inter-departmental relationships within and outside the division. In the summer of 2014, REED staff members participated in a facilitated all-day retreat. Through a series of exercises at the retreat as well as follow-up departmental feedback, central themes emerged. In order to better serve users, it was felt that enhanced communication and collaboration among the REED departments as well as with other library and campus units and offices were essential. Collegial relationships needed to be fostered and maintained within REED and more permeable departmental boundaries created. A desire to explore pooling or sharing of resources, expertise, and staff was articulated. Was the division being responsive to the needs of users and how might they be better served? As well, a certain level of

confusion existed among user groups as to which librarians were most appropriate to contact in a particular situation.

There was a strong desire to examine current activities, services, and programs with the intent to improve or enhance those that were strategically important to the faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students and cease those demonstrating low impact. Principal barriers that users encounter needed to be determined and sustainable solutions provided. It was viewed as important to move outside traditional roles and re-conceptualize core duties. The ever-increasing cross-departmental nature of work and new paradigms for providing reference, instruction and outreach suggested that opportunities might exist to reconfigure current functions and services.

As a result of the 2014 retreat and based on the process used for assessing scholarly communications functions, a REED Organizational Assessment Task Force (RTF) was formed and charged to create a report with recommendations regarding service, functional, and/or possible organizational changes to optimize and enhance the work of the division. K-State 2025 goals and objectives provided the strategic foundation for this work and the focus remained on the needs of users. The RTF was tasked to examine human resource allocation, overall organizational fit, and interdepartmental workflows. As well, the RTF considered established and emerging models for reference, instruction, outreach, and interdisciplinary collaboration in other research libraries in order to make recommendations. The twelve-member RTF was composed of representatives from each of the REED departments as well as participants from other library units and was chaired by the two assistant deans. It met weekly from February through May 2015 and also undertook additional small sub-group assignments. An anonymous survey sent to the forty-one members of REED asked the following questions:

- What is one thing we should start doing to move us toward our 2025 goals?
- What is one thing we should continue doing that aligns with our 2025 goals? How can we perform that activity or service more effectively or efficiently?
- What is one thing we should stop doing because it is ineffective and/or not aligned with our 2025 goals?

There was also an opportunity for general comments and suggestions. Major themes emerged that expanded on those expressed at the 2014 retreat: there was overlap of functions in multiple places, communication and coordination between and among departments needed improvement, and priorities required clearer definition. As well, more assessment of user needs was desired and it was felt that there should be more emphasis placed on librarians' individual subject expertise. Major barriers to excellent service were also identified. Boundaries were not always clearly defined, both internally and to external audiences, causing confusion as to where to find the most appropriate assistance; there was sometimes a lack of communication between library departments; staff talents may not have been fully utilized where capacity gaps existed; there was a need to break down departmental silos and decrease territorialism; and an expectation existed that users should come to the libraries rather than staff taking a more

proactive approach.

When two of three REED department heads indicated a desire to step away from their positions following five years of service as well as other factors, the task force began considering organizational change as a way to address some of the themes and barriers described above. Several restructuring models were proposed prior to a final proposal being submitted to library administration. All proposed models had a high level of agreement on the following priorities: enhancing collaborations, better utilization of staff subject expertise, increasing research efforts, assessing user needs, and expanding virtual offerings. During the summer of 2015, library staff had the opportunity to provide feedback via focus groups that included all REED staff members and through anonymous written comments. A final modified reorganization proposal was approved by the K-State Provost during the fall 2015 term.

As a result of the division's restructuring, the Undergraduate and Community Services and Faculty and Graduate Services departments were merged into a single department named Academic Services (AS). AS is comprised of teams of librarians based on three major disciplinary areas of STEM, Fine Arts and Humanities, and Social Sciences, Business and Education, as well as staff focused on undergraduate experience and instructional design. A second reconfigured department became Library User Services (LUS). This department is comprised of Library Help and circulation staff (including a large number of student assistants), and branch library staff. The Morse Department of Special Collections remained as previously structured. Transition to the new division structure occurred at the beginning of 2016. Internal and external searches were conducted to fill two department head positions as well as other positions that had been held vacant since spring 2015. These positions included three LUS specialists and two AS librarians. The REED restructuring addressed many of the barriers outlined previously, but it was recognized that structure alone cannot change behavior patterns. A high level of cross-communication continues to be required to avoid creation of new insular issues. Also, improved accountability is being developed by divisional leadership.

The 2016 merging of Undergraduate and Community Services and Faculty and Graduate Services into AS has given those librarians a higher level of comfort interacting in focused discipline areas with users of all levels. There is now closer collaboration and a better capacity to back up fellow team members. The Library User Services department has dedicated staff and student assistants who are well-trained and who have in-depth knowledge of library policies, procedures, circulation, reserves, and basic reference. The Libraries are transitioning to a concierge model of service with LUS staff handling initial inquiries and referring more in-depth questions to AS, which has freed AS librarians to focus on specialization, opened collaboration opportunities, and allowed for increased external outreach and engagement. The new structure is enabling the Libraries to move away from a traditional "everyone does everything" mentality and to enhance embedding in academic courses and research projects and further explore data and digital humanities work.

As of the writing of this article, the new REED structure has only been in place six months, so its long-term success is yet to be determined. Initial feedback from both staff and users has been positive. A more formal assessment is planned in the future.

Conclusion

K-State Libraries has a history of openness to experimentation and a willingness to move away from traditional organizational structures in order to better meet strategic goals of the institution. As the Libraries continue to evolve, it is important to build on lessons learned.

Transparency is essential. Before the 2009-2010 reorganization, there were a number of open meetings and opportunities for feedback and questions. There is a difference though, between input and decision-making. Individual ideas are always welcome, but it needs to be clear that the feedback may not result in implementation. Managing staff expectations both about the process and the outcome is an important piece of something as major as a structural reorganization. It is normal for people to have ideas and opinions based on personal perspective and experience, but it is ultimately the responsibility of leadership to see the big picture.

Every large project or reorganization can usually find room for improvement and nothing should be set in stone with no hope of flexibility or change. Care is needed to gauge whether certain aspects of the implementation need minor tweaks for improvement, need more time for development, or are simply not working as envisioned. Periodic formal assessment (such as the surveys and two task forces described in the paper) or more informal feedback can be used effectively to determine success and is essential. As was found in the case of the K-State Libraries, there is value in looking at different pieces of the organization at different times or phases, resulting in several “mini” reorganizations within a larger one that resulted in responsive change.

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