Q and A with Associate Vice-President Lori Ferris – Liaison Update Forum – May 12, 2016

Q: What are your thoughts re: compliance of OA requirements of Tri-agencies grants? What does compliance entail?
A: The Tri-Agencies do not have specific frameworks for compliance, leaving it to individual institutions to enforce OA compliance requirements. I don’t have a ready answer on how to accomplish this. We lack resources to check everything so will need to consider other options, including possible spot checks; relying on the individual divisions to ensure that their faculty are in compliance. There may be a library role in this too that we could consider.

Q: The Library’s ITS is working towards engagement regarding OA. Currently, OA compliance is based on researchers coming to ITS. This poses a problem with compliance as not everyone will come to us. We need to get the word out, and working with VPRI can help us achieve this.
A: We can work towards providing links to each other’s websites, now is a good time because we are redeveloping our website. We can talk to academic units in a coordinated fashion.

Q: From your perspective are the oversight and regulations hindering research?
A: Many researchers say it’s too onerous. With more regulations and oversight, more issues will be discovered. Sometimes this is a good thing, but some researchers will tell you that some regulations are challenging. Researchers tend to be amenable to regulation that confers accreditation.

Q: What exists for measuring the research impact in the humanities?
A: The e-Annual report will have more information. This is a difficult question. There is no standard. Right now, we’ve looking at grant levels, but this is not necessary telling in humanities research.

Q: [following a comment about interest in a common CV for U of T researchers] Please tell us more about divisional reporting on research and levels of standardization of CV’s across the U of T.
A: Not necessarily. For example, in the Faculty of Medicine, electronic CVs feed into an access point that allows for research impact to be measured and added to the divisional annual report. There might be an opportunity for the library to help with this area.

Q: We would like to work together on offering sessions about research impact in order to reach more professors.
A: This would great to bring forward at the Research Advisory Board. It’s important to get the message out about your services. For example, the Faculty of Social Work is leading knowledge mobilization services. U of T has these sorts of services, but needs to make them more visible.

Q: Tell us more about the “My Research Applications” portal and its development?
A: This is the portal for grant application management – from application to tracking contracts and other legal documents. It will allow for a digitized archive of documents related to research
grants. We hope that PIs have their own document repositories as well. “My Research Documents” supports electronic management of contracts and other important documents related to grant recipients. The system allows us to capture and analyze a lot of data to better understand how and where research takes place across the U of T.

Q: How do we engage with grant applicants at earlier stages? Are there opportunities to tag new applications in order to alert the library of new applications? One of the challenges is informing the library.

A: All awarding of grants is public information. This is available online, but VRPI may be able to provide the library with an easier to view format. Like you, we have trouble with identifying grant applicants during early stages (pre-application) at VPRI. The really big grant applications will get our help with writing. In terms of outreach, engaging with a subset of applicants for (large grants; other subsets?) might be a good way to begin your outreach efforts. Also, given that there are fewer SSHRC awards granted than other Tri-agencies awards, think about opportunities to engage with faculty from the humanities and social sciences in the area of grants.

[comment from library] One of our challenges that we have is that researchers come to us with short time lines for their grant applications. It would be great if they could come earlier.