University of Toronto Libraries Liaison Librarian Review

Terms of Reference

1. Assess the current (2007) description of liaison librarian responsibilities for the St. George campus. Comment on how well the current liaison description aligns with the goals of the UTL Strategic Plan , and the goals related to supporting research infrastructure expressed in the View from 2012: New & Continuing Challenges (4th bullet). Recommend needed changes to the list of liaison librarian activities to meet strategic library and university goals as outlined in these documents.

2. Assess the current structural and administrative model under which liaison librarians across all 3 campuses operate, compared to established best practices at comparable institutions, and recommend any needed structural or administrative changes.

3. Recommend changes to liaison assignments that can make it easier for the U of T community to identify and contact the right librarian.

   Liaison librarians on the St. George campus are currently assigned variously to University departments, divisions, institutes, and centres, and disciplines. The list is long, not all departments (e.g. Medicine) are represented, does not support increasing interdisciplinarity, and many important specialists (e.g. copyright, media specialists, scholarly communication, archivists, digital scholarship) are not included.

4. Recommend any needed service principles to be followed in the handling of inquiries or requests.

   Many faculty are unaware that liaison exists. Others find it difficult to identify the right librarian to assist them. Our faculty focus group identified challenges with follow-up on their requests.

5. Consider and recommend mechanisms and approaches to achieve improved internal collaboration among librarians who liaise with faculty.

   Because most liaison librarians do not provide services in all aspects of a discipline (ie reference, teaching, collection development, technical services), internal referrals to other library staff are frequent. One of the central themes that emerged from our 2014 librarian focus group report was an interest in improved internal collaboration, including consideration of a team-based approach to liaison, triage of incoming requests, and transparency in tracking internal referrals.

In all of the terms above, please pay special attention to issues of scale.