



ALIA 2006 Biennial Conference



Australian Library and
Information Association

Refereed Paper

Ms Kathryn Pearson

Macquarie University Library

Contact details

Postal: Macquarie University Library
North Ryde. N.S.W. 2109

Email: kpearson@mars.ocs.mq.edu.au

Biography

Kathryn Pearson is Manager, Resource Access at Macquarie University Library. She has held a variety of positions there, including Collections Development Manager, Serials and Document Supply Manager and Document Supply Manager. Her previous experience includes 9 years at the University of Sydney Library and several years at the University of Newcastle.

Mr Jim Kelly

Macquarie University Library

Contact details

Email: jkelly@library.mq.edu.au

Biography

Jim has worked at Macquarie University Library since 1994 beginning in the Serials team and since 1996 has been involved with Resource Sharing. Jim's current position is the Resource Access Coordinator, Document Supply. Jim is currently widely unknown to the broader Resource Sharing world, one day he may possibly be better known. This is Jim Kelly's first foray into co-writing a paper for a conference. Jim's interests are the evolution of Resource Sharing ISO compliant systems both nationally and internationally, and the impact of such systems both on the staff within ILL teams of libraries and the end users who use such services. Jim is also interested in the use of Emotional Intelligence to enhance leadership and management of team based work.

The process of Macquarie University Library's current change management has encouraged Jim Kelly along with fellow co-writers to tell the story of the newly created Resource Access Department.

Ms Meredith Martinelli

Macquarie University Library

Contact details

Email: mmartine@library.mq.edu.au

Biography

Meredith Martinelli is currently Program Manager, Library Restructure at Macquarie University Library. Meredith has had 30 years working within the Library sector, including public, academic, law and specialist library recruitment. From May 2004 to May 2006 she was a member of the ALIA Board of Directors and also convened neXt2005 an ALIA conference. A passionate advocate of career planning and professional development, Meredith plans to commence a Masters, Leadership and Management in July 2006.

Not the “r” word! Or a “breath of fresh air” – the impact of organisational restructure at macquarie university library

Abstract

Macquarie University Library has undergone an extensive restructuring process in order to realign services. The aim has been to better meet user needs and to make improved use of existing staffing resources.

The process has been a fairly lengthy one and it has been demanding for all concerned. Staff have found the lengthy process somewhat difficult, but the time was taken to ensure that all changes were well thought out and constructive. However, outcomes are demonstrating that there really can be positive restructures, which renew an organisation and add a “breath of fresh air”.

This paper discusses the rationale for the merger of Document Supply, Circulation and Reserve into a new Department aimed at improving access to resources. The paper explains how a merger has assisted in enabling improved services to clients. The new Department has been named Resource Access. Staff have expressed their satisfaction with new and changed roles. We have also received some very positive feedback from our customers on new and improved services. All three areas were experiencing increased user expectations, rising statistics and major changes in technology. The merger has been highly successful in achieving service improvement and job satisfaction. Staff have been provided with opportunities to develop new skills which will assist in future-proofing their jobs.

Introduction

In 2004 Macquarie University Library began a review of its structure and services. In January 2005, as a result of the review, the Library took the first steps in a major restructure. 18 months later the restructure is approved and currently being implemented, staff translated to new positions and recruitment processes beginning.

The aim of the change process was to create a structure that would:

- simplify services for clients;
- encourage clients to become self-sufficient in finding, using and evaluating information; and
- encourage us to view services “across the Library” from a client perspective

Outcomes of the 2004 Library Review resulted in the adoption of the following guiding principles for the proposed organisational restructure of the Library. These principles have underpinned the entire restructure program and will continue to be used as the driver for continuous review and improvement:

To achieve excellence Macquarie University Library needs to be:

- Agile – able to innovate and be flexible, by creating a focus on service development, staff development and strong project management.
- Resilient – able to renew and sustain itself by focusing on career structure, management and team “span”, entry level positions, investment in staff and their development, job satisfaction, creation of “future-proof” positions.

- Informed – making decisions on the basis of reliable data, focusing on the collection of appropriate data, research, feedback, evaluation and review.
- Connected – having close links within its teams and with its community, by focusing on understanding needs and expectations; defining services and service outcomes from a client perspective; good internal and external communication & marketing; representation on key internal and external committees.
- Successful – delivering excellent, quality service by focusing on: refreshing our quality approach, establishing measures of success from a client perspective, conducting ongoing evaluation of projects and services.
- Responsible – being ethical, professional, and accountable for providing resources and services that are value for money.

This paper presents an overview of the drivers for change and the principles and processes used to achieve it. The impact of this change is then highlighted in discussion of the impact on and outcomes for one Library Department, Resource Access, as it underwent the change process.

The restructure

The impetus for change was positive – a move for realignment of the organisation with a changing environment and the strategic goals of the University. With the retirement of the current Vice-Chancellor there was some uncertainty and anticipation about the impact of a

new Vice-Chancellor (Steven Schwartz). Three months after his arrival, Steven Schwarz articulated his vision for the coming eight years - that of a commitment to excellence in research. His focus is on recruiting research-intensive academics and establishing a culture of continuous review and performance. Fortunately the Library's *2004 –2006 Strategic Plan* and its new organisational structure will provide it with the framework essential to meeting the University's strategic focus.

The focus of the Restructure for the Library was to:

- contribute to the development of a flexible organisational structure which encourages innovation and allows us to be agile, resilient, informed, connected, successful and responsible;
- create promotional opportunities for staff across the Library;
- “future-proof” jobs using a multi-skilling approach as supported by the University's Enterprise Agreement;
- retain the skills and knowledge of existing staff; and
- incorporate best practice standards. eg: the IT Service Management Framework (AS8018)) to complement our existing total quality service, improve connections between Library staff, within the University community and within the Library community (Office of Government Commerce, 2004).

The theoretical basis for the organisational structure established in January 2005 was the strategic management approach known as the balanced scorecard developed by

Kaplan and Norton (2001). The balanced scorecard is a management system that enables organisations to clarify their vision and strategy and translate these into action. It provides feedback around both the internal business processes (capabilities) and external outcomes (services) in order to continuously improve strategic performance and results. The overall strategic response to a rapidly changing environment was to become a “thinking and learning” organisation as well as a “doing” organisation. This is reflected in our top-level structure, which complements core library services with broader organisational capabilities.

Library services

These functions are our “core business”, making us a library rather than any other kind of organisation– Information Access (find, evaluate and use information) Resource Access (get access to documents in all formats) and Information Resources (manage the life cycle of documents in all formats).

Library capabilities

These functions provide essential support for our core business operations and would be found in some form in other organisations of any size. Without them the Library cannot function – Library IT (client interface for IT Infrastructure and applications support), Library Development (staff management and development, communication (including web), community and industry outreach and partnerships), Library Business Services (facilities, compliance, financial and risk management). The Library Project Office also forms a part of Library Capabilities providing us with a focus

and process for innovation and evaluation.

Consultation and communication

Facilitating a successful restructure meant focusing on compliance with the requirements of the Macquarie University Enterprise Agreement and involving the Unions. Key concerns of the Unions were compliance, consultation and consideration of perceived disadvantage.

To manage and oversee the progress, with a particular focus on supporting staff, a Program Manager was appointed in February 2005. As part of the consultative mechanism and to ensure staff input, a Library Restructure Program Steering Committee (LRSC) was established. Convened in February 2005 the committee consisted of two management representatives (and their alternates), two Union representatives (and their alternates) and two Library staff (no alternates nominated). The role of the Committee was to:

- assist in the scoping of the process and/or formal proposal for each stage of the Program;
- ensure equity and consistency in each stage and across stages;
- facilitate consultation and communication with staff and clients on the issues involved in the development and implementation of the process and/or proposal; and
- review progress and final outcomes against the objectives set.

The LRSC established the overarching principles and processes that informed the development of proposals, the subsequent translation of staff and implementation of the restructure. The

LRSC also raised awareness of the potential for disadvantage which was considered and addressed throughout the planning process.

Consultation was a critical component of the Restructure and involved:

- all of staff briefings;
- department and team-based meetings and discussion groups;
- one-to-one meetings with all staff (by department managers);
- intranet site providing access to all documentation;
- physical copies of all documentation in a central location; and
- identification of relevant contacts

Planning and implementation

Because the Restructure would affect the whole Library it was implemented in two stages between November 2004-June 2006 so that staff could be supported throughout the change process as well as continuing to provide stability for service provision to clients.

Stage 1 – January 2005

Translation of manager positions

After a competitive selection process, appointments were made to the six new Manager positions. Positions were advertised, as agreed, to the staff directly affected by the change within the Library. This stage redistributed the responsibilities of the Library's senior management team and translated existing staff positions and their substantive occupants to the new structure by consequential adjustment of reporting lines

**Stage 2 – January 05 - June 06
Redesign of departments and
translation of staff**

Managers developed Change Proposals (CP) for their departments involving consultation with staff. Feedback from all consultative sessions was collated and analysed and used to further develop the Change proposals.

Overall the aim was to address the relative concentration of positions at Higher Education Worker (HEW) Levels 4,5 and 6 and the few specialist positions at Levels 7 and 8, which was a cause for some concern in supporting service review and development, adequate succession planning and the provision of developmental opportunities.

Another key goal for career development and the “future proofing” of jobs was to provide the opportunity for multi-skilling wherever possible. New position descriptions were to be drafted for all staff, across the Library. This has resulted in a 47% reduction in the number of unique position descriptions required. However the skills and attributes needed by staff to write all position descriptions, and the impact of backfilling the substantive roles of team members was discussed by the LRSC. The conclusion was that the required skills and expertise to write the position descriptions should be sourced from external consultants in the areas of Job and Organisational Design. Results Consulting were selected for their expertise in organisational change, job design, HR skills to support and complement this expertise.

In May 2006 the proposed Restructure received formal approval from University

HR and the Unions. The subsequent implementation has involved ensuring accurate translation of staff to substantive positions and planning for the internal recruitment to 35 vacant positions. The internal recruitment phase is expected to continue until December 2006. This will be followed by an external recruitment phase if required.

The training and development needs of the staff and the organisation have been of prime importance throughout this process. To help mitigate any adverse effect from the change processes staff are being provided with a range of information, development and support options. This has included application and interview workshops; briefing sessions prior to commencement of the recruitment phase and customer service workshops. Planning is now underway to provide training for all staff on writing personal development plans that records their skills and knowledge, their multi-skilling plan and their involvement in the training of other staff.

**Resource access – The impact of
change on one department**

For many years at Macquarie, Document Supply stood as a single department. As part of a restructure in 1997, Document Supply and Serials were placed together. Then, in 2001, Document Supply became part of a new Collection Development Department, also including acquisitions and serials. However, it was eventually realised that there was little synergy between document supply, serials and acquisitions and that serials and acquisitions would be better served by joining with bibliographic services. On reflection, it does seem that most

libraries find it difficult to know where to place the interlibrary loan function of the library. Cheung points out that there is synergy between document supply and reference because of the use of common reference tools. But there is also synergy between document supply and circulation because of the lending and borrowing function. Similarly, some libraries choose to place document supply with technical services because of the high level of back-room functions. Indeed, Cheung comments that “there is no consensus on where to place the department, and no clear trend is evident” (Cheung, 2003).

By the end of 2003, Document Supply was a very busy section, struggling to implement a new, fully automated interlibrary loan system, Virtual Document Xchange (VDX). Staff were constantly stressed because of the high workload and it was a struggle to provide the high standard of service that staff believed our clients deserved. 2004 was therefore spent trying to find a better fit for Document Supply, where more assistance was available to cope with workloads and technological changes.

Circulation and Reserve at Macquarie had been part of the Lending Services Department for many years. The department also encompassed the shelving function and the photocopy room. This made it a large, unwieldy Department and again, it was felt that there was little synergy between the various functions. As the Library’s strategic goal was to move further towards self-service and client self-sufficiency, circulation staff were left very exposed in terms of job security. Furthermore, Reserve was in the

process of re-defining itself from a collection of high-demand coursework material to the legal repository for Part VB copyright material in the University. 2004 became the year in which these dilemmas were also pondered.

Introducing the new resource access department

At the beginning of 2005, as part of the Library restructure, the Circulation, Document Supply and Reserve functions were finally merged to form a new Department, Resource Access. The role of the Resource Access Department is to deliver information resources to Library clients. This includes:

- lending physical material held in the Library’s collections;
- managing physical and electronic access to material in high demand by students on and off campus; and
- managing physical and electronic delivery to clients of material not held in the Library’s collections.

At the beginning of 2005, it was not clear how the Department would evolve. 2005 was spent reviewing the responsibilities of the new Department, considering how well these were being met and devising a new structure and new jobs to ensure that the new Department was well positioned to meet these responsibilities. The aim was to develop a flexible, robust Department that would deliver improved service to clients, more interesting work for staff, and the opportunity for staff multi-skilling to ensure that staff had increased options in terms of career development and job security. It was important to connect with the Library’s Strategic Plan by considering the strategic issues such

as the impact of new technology, the development of the hybrid library and increased client expectations with regard to increased accessibility of materials in a variety of formats.

In the new structure, Reserve has been re-named Learning Resources, to better reflect the purpose of the service. It is no longer just a collection of high-demand material, but now has university-wide copyright responsibilities and provides resources to facilitate learning. Circulation has been re-named Access Services, again to better reflect the purpose of the service. Access Services has taken on responsibility for access to materials and has thus taken over the retrieval of closed access materials for client use, a task previously done by Reference Desk staff.

The new Resource Access Department has one Manager and three Coordinators responsible for each of the three discrete services. Reporting to these Coordinators, are three positions responsible for rostering, staff training and guidance, monitoring activities of the service, and system expertise. This gives the Coordinators more time to deal with difficult customer enquiries, increased staff management responsibility, involvement in technical developments, copyright responsibilities and areas of strategic importance.

Coordinators are responsible for working with the Manager in developing new service models. For example, the Document Supply Coordinator is currently working with the manager to develop a *Push* service primarily, although not exclusively, aimed at on campus postgraduate students. It is

recognised that these students are often time-poor and would benefit from a user-pays service for collecting material from the shelves, posting material to home addresses, or delivering material around campus. Coordinators also have a strategic role to play in developing training programs to be delivered by the senior officers, or developing specific customer training modules such as online user guides.

Following on from this are positions called Resource Access Officers, with particular knowledge in learning resources, document supply and distance education, or access services. Finally, there are a range of Resource Access Assistants who perform a full range of task across all three service areas. Many of these staff currently work on the Loans Desk but, in the past, have not had back-room jobs. The aim now is to develop a range of tasks to ensure that there is always plenty to do when staff are not required on the Loans Desk. This has led to improved service to clients, more interesting work for staff and more job security.

There has been an emphasis on one Department, rather than separate units. The title Resource Access Officer or Resource Access Assistant has been used to clearly indicate that people have responsibility to the Department and are expected to move around between the different service areas from time-to-time. The idea of this is to spread knowledge and expertise as widely as possible across the Department and to move staff resources in peak times. Only Coordinators have specific responsibilities relating to a particular service, but they are required to back each other up. They are also being

encouraged to job-swap with their fellow Coordinators to gain wider experience and to provide fresh insight into the services we offer.

New Initiatives

Service to distance students was one of the first areas tackled in the new structure. As Dermody points out, “a distance student has not only the need for, but also the right to, library support services and resources”. (Dermody, 2005) Previously, the distance service had co-existed with the reserve service. The service was operated manually and was extremely under resourced.

Distance students, or what Reidel calls the “invisible constituency” (Reidel, 2004), were ripe for the picking and had long received a sub-standard service. It seemed obvious that providing material to students off campus was a very similar operation to providing material to other libraries, a function being streamlined through the VDX system. Accordingly, in early 2005, the distance service was moved into Document Supply. Students using the service were set up as users on the VDX system and all requests were handled through the VDX. The change was widely publicised and distance students were encouraged to use the new service. Staff from Access Services were trained in distance work and the supply aspects of Document Supply. This initiative has been extremely successful. Distance students are receiving articles direct to their desktop and most of them love the turnaround time. The distance service is now more streamlined because of the use of the VDX software, and turnaround time for requests has improved significantly. Turnaround time for supply to other libraries has also improved and initial evidence suggests

that statistics are on the increase. An exciting outcome has been the multi-skilling of staff that now work on the Loans Desk but are also developing skills in document supply and distance education services. Conversely, several staff from Document Supply now assist in Access Services with shifts on the Loans Desk and have developed a deeper commitment to service provision. Staff are finding the change really stimulating.

Staff Reactions

Staff initially found the changes difficult, simply because most of us find it difficult to step outside our comfort zone. However, the change process has been slow enough to afford staff the time to become used to new ways of doing things. The process has generally been viewed as positive. The restructure was never about job losses; it was always about improved service delivery and enhanced job security afforded by the implementation of more flexible roles. This message was repeated at every opportunity to promote staff involvement. Staff were able to reflect and provide feedback on suggestions relating to service delivery and the implementation of more flexible roles.

Staff have commented that they now feel more empowered, as they have been encouraged to be responsible for their own decision-making. The new Department is less rule-based, more flexible and totally service driven. Staff are really enjoying this. Particularly in Access Services, where staff have often had negative experiences when working on the Loans Desk and dealing with fine complaints, the idea of flexible decision-making has been truly empowering. Recognising that the money we make

from fines is relatively small in the overall scheme of things, and that fines do have a negative impact on service delivery, we are currently investigating the possibility of implementing a demerit system.

Several staff have expressed delight in being offered new opportunities to make their working days more interesting and to increase their knowledge base. Resource Access staff are now involved in retrieving material from closed access collections and retrieving material from the shelves for disabled students. All of these tasks have added to the variety and skill base for our staff.

Client Feedback

Implementing an automated document supply system was a challenge and going live with the VDX was difficult. However, now that the service is reasonably well bedded down, service improvement is very visible. Turnaround time has improved from 11.4 days to 7.9 days and it is acknowledged that there is still much room for improvement. Nevertheless, we have had many comments from customers about how they are able use system anywhere and anytime, how easy it is to submit a request and how much improved out turnaround time is. Distance students in particular love the speed of desktop delivery, as many of them reside overseas and mail is just too slow.

We have also concentrated heavily on encouraging our library users to use self-check machines for their loans. Many are reluctant, and some have tried without success. In most cases, this is because they have made simple mistakes or just don't understand how to use the machines. However, we have

found that, once shown how to use the self-checkers, our clients love the opportunity to lend their own books, and usage has increased approximately 10% over the past twelve months. Clients appreciate not having to wait in a queue and are very used to living in a self-service society. In light of this, we are starting to roster staff to the self-checkers rather than the Loans Desk.

The ongoing development and expansion of electronic reserve has seen library users make very heavy use of this service. Of the visits to the Library's website, close to 40% of those visits are for accessing electronic reserve (Macquarie University, 2005). The service's heavy use stems from the flexibility and ease of access and the high quality and durability of the articles within.

Future Initiatives

Interestingly enough, Macquarie hasn't seen a significant drop in interlibrary loan requests because of the uptake of online, full-text resources. Nevertheless, as Egan points out, "declining demand may also provide interlibrary loan librarians and their staff opportunities to alter their services and develop new skills". (Egan, 2005) If this were to be the case, document supply staff would be well prepared. Staff are about to start investigating the introduction of a *push service*, where fee-based services are developed for those who wish to pay. As previously mentioned, this service will initially be aimed at on campus postgraduate students. However, there is no reason why the service could not be more widely used. We certainly have anecdotal evidence that some academics would happily pay to have

material delivered to them, rather than having to come to the Library. Staffing for this type of initiative will come from staff freed up by use of self-check machines, automated services and other self-sufficiency initiatives.

In order to ensure that services are always available, despite staff leave, the new structure aims to move away from staff expertise to staff multi-skilling. Therefore, although a particular staff member might once have belonged to Reserve, they are now a staff member of the Resource Access Department. Annual Department and individual plans will determine where the needs are and where individual staff will work for the coming year. For example, someone with an individual expertise in audiovisual material will be asked to train someone else up in this and will

then be asked to develop expertise in another area.

Conclusion

It would be premature to predict the longer-term impact of the restructure. As *Rome wasn't built in a day*, similarly, the development of new services does take time. However, we intend to use the principles of continuous improvement to refine our service provision and introduce new initiatives as they become appropriate.

It has been a challenging and yet exciting journey and one that has resulted, ultimately, in new opportunities for many of our staff. Ongoing evaluation will provide for 'evidence-based' learning for those embarking on similar journey.

References

- Cheung, O. et al. (2003). Restructuring the academic library: team-based management and the merger of interlibrary loans with circulation and reserve. *Journal of Interlibrary Loan, Document Supply and Information Supply*, 14(2), 2003, 5-17.
- Dermody, Melinda. (2005). "We cannot see them, but they are there: marketing library services to distance learners. *Journal of Library & Information Services in Distance Learning*, 2(1), 2005, 41-50.
- Egan, Nancy. (2005). "The impact of electronic full-text resources on Interlibrary loan: a ten – year study at John Jay College of Criminal Justice" *Journal of Interlibrary loan, document delivery & electronic reserve*, 15(3), 23-41
- Macquarie University. (2005). *Macquarie University Annual Report*. Retrieved June 23, 2006 from <http://www.reg.mq.edu.au/Sections/Publications/Homepage/2005PDF/5elearning.pdf>
- Office of Government Commerce. (2004). *Information Technology Infrastructure Library*. Retrieved June 20, 2006 from <http://www.itil.co.uk>
- Kaplan, R.S. and Norton, D.P. (2001). *The Strategy Focused Organization*. Boston, Harvard Business School Press.

Riedel, Tom. (2004). Ahead of the game: using communications software and push technology to raise student awareness of library resources. *Journal of Library Administration*, 41(3-4), 375-390.