

# External Review of the Health Sciences Library

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McMaster University

Joan Leishman

November 2012

## **External Review of the Health Sciences Library**

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### **Executive Summary**

The Health Sciences Library (HSL) is an integral part of the Faculty of Health Sciences. It is a sound operation focused on meeting user needs in an environment characterized by rapid change, rising costs and fiscal restraint. It has been transformed by information technology and delivers most, but not all, of its resources electronically. It prides itself on its service delivery and is valued for the resources, physical space and personal service it provides. The professional expertise of the librarians and the experience and dedication of the staff are strengths of the Library.

In recent years, the HSL has introduced a number of changes to reorganize, improve services and better align the budget to meet current needs. The Library provides excellent service and valuable information resources to a large number of users but the diversity of programs, the distributed education and research environment, and the complexity of digital technology present challenges.

The recommendations summarized below, and explained in the sections that follow, are directed at helping the HSL identify priority service needs and future direction.

### **Recommendations**

1. Beginning in 2013 and continuing under the leadership of the new director, the Library undertake a wide-ranging, comprehensive strategic planning process to map out long term priorities and the steps that need to be taken over time to achieve these priorities.
2. As part of the strategic planning process, thought should be given to using a wider range of indicators including, but not limited to, traditional statistical rankings. User feedback, qualitative assessment and comparisons with best practices in other libraries, within and outside the health science community, might be considered as ways to communicate the value of the library and broadly market its services.
3. As part of strategic planning, consider how the relative importance of services should be evaluated on an ongoing basis and decide what mechanisms can be put in place to ensure that the HSL can allocate budget to appropriately meet new and emerging needs.
4. Development of an Academic Health Sciences Library Network should be a very high priority as an immediate need and future requirement. A newly defined Network is key to meeting the information needs of the Faculty's distributed programs and should be a central focus of a long range strategic plan.

5. Reconsider ways to support and sustain the librarian liaison program, recognizing it as a high service priority.
6. Continue to assess the “library as physical space” and consider all options for library hours and service levels as part of strategic planning and priority setting.
7. Escalate efforts at the highest Faculty level and across the University to upgrade the information technology environment at McMaster to meet expected standards and to maximize support for digital library service and distributed education.
8. The HSL should continue to refine its cost-centre budget model and collaborate within the Faculty to explore more opportunities for allocating costs and leveraging funds tied to user needs.
9. The HSL should continue its consortia involvement to license resources and work with the larger library community to explore solutions to the licencing cost issues. Open access should continue to be encouraged. The overall issue of scholarly communication and the high cost of licensing access to published research can't be addressed by libraries alone. The engagement of the Faculty of Health Sciences working with the University, peer institutions, granting agencies and research societies is needed.
10. If fundraising is to be a priority and successful, the Library should work with the Faculty's Advancement Officer to consider whether the HSL could share a part-time professional development position with another department (or departments), and if the salary costs could be covered as an overhead expense of successful development activity.
11. The Library's partnership with research should be strengthened and the HSL should be included on the FHS Research Council and on other research planning committees and discussion groups, as appropriate.
12. The HSL should participate in the selection process for the new director of the main University Library and as part of its strategic direction should map out a new path to work collaboratively with the University Library for the benefit of the health sciences community.

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### Mandate

*To assess the operations and management of the Health Sciences Library in terms of how it is furthering the goals and meeting the needs of the Faculty of Health Sciences and its members, as well as assessing its ability to adapt to changing circumstances. This will include examining its strengths and challenges; the scope and balance of its services and resources; its leadership and organizational structure; its staffing and budgetary models; and, importantly, advising on future directions and opportunities.*

### Introduction

Thank you to all who met with me on October 22, 23 and 24 and to the many individuals who provided input by email or by sharing documents. The comments I received were constructive, thoughtful and heartfelt. They were testament to the fact that the Health Sciences Library (HSL) is highly valued and an integral part of the Faculty of Health Sciences.

The first meeting I had on October 22 was with the Senior Leadership of the Faculty. The clear message from that meeting was that financial resources are tight and that budgets in both the academic and hospital sectors are severely restrained. The recommendations in this report will not be centred on asking the Faculty for increased funding for the HSL. A key recommendation of the previous external review of the HSL done in 2002 ( <http://hsl.mcmaster.ca/documents/HSL-External-Review-Ridley-August2002.pdf> ) was that the information resources budget of the Library be increased to a level comparable to peer institutions to allow the HSL to support the Faculty's expanding research and education programs. I will comment later on the success of this and the positive impact it has had for students and faculty. I will also comment on the new budget model and suggest ways that funding might be used differently and continue to be leveraged in non-traditional ways.

The renovated and expanded Health Sciences Library space on the McMaster campus is impressive and well used. The improvements made to the physical Library in the last decade go well beyond what was recommended in the 2002 review and the Faculty of Health Sciences and HSL should be proud of the space transformation which has occurred. The space is highly valued by students and for the most part works well. My recommendations having to do with Library space will focus on staying in tune with changing needs; viewing the space as fluid, not fixed, to meet user needs.

In preparation for this review, the HSL completed a Self-Study ([http://hsl.mcmaster.ca/about/review/HSL\\_Self\\_Study\\_October\\_2012.pdf](http://hsl.mcmaster.ca/about/review/HSL_Self_Study_October_2012.pdf)). This has been tremendously helpful to me in providing background information and an overview of what the Library has accomplished and what its immediate goals are. The Self-Study provides data and links to other documents which I studied and

took into account for this review. It is not my intention to repeat factual data that is already included in the Self-Study but I will refer to it in connection with some of the recommendations to follow.

The full mandate for this review

([http://hsl.mcmaster.ca/about/review/External\\_Review\\_HS\\_Library\\_Mandate\\_Sept\\_25\\_12.pdf](http://hsl.mcmaster.ca/about/review/External_Review_HS_Library_Mandate_Sept_25_12.pdf)) itemized eight specific areas of consideration: strategic directions; alignment with the institutional mission; meeting user needs; service and staffing models; innovation; fiscal responsibility; collaboration and succession planning. Specific questions were asked under each area and these have been helpful to me in focusing the review. I have chosen to organize this report and my recommendations and comments according to these areas.

As I explained in meeting with library staff and others, the purpose of an external review is to objectively stand back and to look at what is happening with the insight of an informed outsider. The intent is to provide constructive comments focused on moving forward. The value of an external review is that the consideration can be broad, take into account a number of different perspectives and focus long term without the everyday pressures of the daily work to be done. The comments and recommendations that follow acknowledge the extremely dedicated library staff and the important work that they do as front-line workers and valued information professionals. The value of the Library to faculty and students was reiterated over and over again in the meetings I held.

The Faculty of Health Sciences has grown significantly in the last ten years. Educational programs have been added and the geographic outreach of existing programs has increased to cover a large area of southern Ontario. The Faculty works with a growing number of hospitals, health care organizations and clinical practises. The students are dispersed. There is a new emphasis on electronic problem-based learning. Research programs have expanded both on the McMaster campus and at partner institutions. These recent realities affect library service and underlie most of the comments and recommendations that follow.

### **Strategic Directions**

The planning process outlined in the Self-Study acknowledges the Faculty of Health Sciences strategic plan and the University's priorities and "Forward with Integrity" plan. The HSL has developed a statement of Vision, Principles, Values, Mission and Goals. (see Appendix A of the Self-Study: [http://hsl.mcmaster.ca/about/review/HSL\\_Self\\_Study\\_October\\_2012.pdf](http://hsl.mcmaster.ca/about/review/HSL_Self_Study_October_2012.pdf) ). It adheres to an annual planning process involving management and staff retreats to review accomplishments and develop project goals for the next year. All of this is good but it is short-term focused and seemingly outside the context of a long-range plan to chart future direction and priorities.

The Library is stretched in what it does and there are serious gaps in areas that need significant resources. I received comments from students that the Library should be open longer hours. The liaison librarians are struggling to meet the expanding needs of their educational and research programs and are under a great deal of stress because they are not able to provide the turnaround time or level of service that is required. The liaison responsibilities of the librarians conflict with their staff management responsibilities and important staff initiatives such as training and professional development are often set aside or given low

priority. There are initiatives within the faculty in which the Library should be involved as a partner but they are not because of stretched resources. There are issues having to do with the growing programs and the distributed curriculum and geographic breadth of the Faculty's outreach which should be given highest priority and immediate attention but day to day demands make progress slow.

### **Recommendation # 1**

**Beginning in 2013 and continuing under the leadership of the new director, the Library undertake a wide-ranging, comprehensive strategic planning process to map out long term priorities and the steps that need to be taken over time to achieve these priorities.**

### **Alignment with the Institutional Mission**

It's my assessment that there is nothing that the Library does that isn't aligned with the Faculty of Health Sciences strategic plan and with McMasters "Forward with Integrity" vision. Through its liaison program the HSL reaches out to educational and research programs; it provides resources to support teaching and research; it provides physical space directed at students; it makes use of technology and stays current with advances in information science and scholarly communication.

So the question is not whether the Library is aligned, it's whether it is aligned in the most appropriate way for long-term success given finite resources and expanded needs. What is the Library not doing that it should be doing? Are the priorities it puts on various services, the right priorities? Can the Library sustain what it does now without overlooking key opportunities in the future? If the Library didn't exist and it were starting up today with its current budget, what would it look like? Where would staff resources be directed? What could be done differently? What shouldn't be done at all? How could more collaboration with other areas of the University improve efficiencies? What is the definition of service given the prevalence of technology and virtual delivery of information? Where should personal service, which relies on significant staff resources, be focused to provide maximum benefit?

The review mandate asks whether the HSL's "value to the institution is measured and reported appropriately"? This should be a question which is considered during the strategic planning process. The Library has chosen a number of indicators which it reports annually. These are mostly numeric and represent comparisons to other AAHSL medical school libraries and trends over time. Indicators specific to the health science library community are appropriate and useful but in today's digital environment it's important not to overlook best practices exemplified by other types of academic libraries involved in distributed education and research. I understand that the HSL is part of the LibQual library-wide survey and that the HSL conducts mini audits/surveys as needed. Many libraries now are using qualitative indicators and anecdotal evidence to augment numeric data and to measure service value and satisfaction levels. Perhaps some thought should be given to how these could be used more effectively to communicate the value of the Library and its resources and services. Although the indicators included in the self-study provided me with a snap shot of the library and were useful comparison rankings, it was the comments made by the people I met that provided convincing evidence of the value of the HSL.

## **Recommendation #2**

**As part of the strategic planning process, thought should be given to using a wider range of indicators including, but not limited to, traditional statistical rankings. User feedback, qualitative assessment and comparisons with best practices in other libraries, within and outside the health science community, might be considered as ways to communicate the value of the library and broadly market its services.**

## **Meeting User Needs**

The HSL serves different constituents with different (and sometimes conflicting) information needs. There are lots of examples of different needs that are being met in various ways by the HSL. The program directors and educators pointed out the importance of the Library's liaison program and the value of having specialized support from librarians with subject familiarity and advanced information expertise. The students at the McMaster campus emphasized the importance of the physical space for studying and as a social gathering place (they also had a lot to say about how these two functions compete with each other and that noise and lack of enough study spaces is a problem). None of the students I met said that they use the print collection but the Library has evidence to show that the reserve collection and a core collection of print texts are used regularly by some students. All of the students use the Library's web site to access electronic resources and help guides. Researchers value the Library highly for the electronic database and journal resources it provides; the physical library space is not important to them. Some use the interlibrary loan service. Graduate students also use the interlibrary loan service. The researchers pointed out that the range of resources available through the Library has greatly improved in the last several years and this improvement has made a positive difference to their research productivity.

The Library is juggling a lot of balls to meet the multiple needs of different users across all of the programs. For the most part, it does this well, especially on the McMaster campus. There are some gaps and these are mostly recognized. For example, the HSL isn't involved in supporting multi-media to the extent it should be, nor is it involved as a partner in supporting initiatives to deliver electronic curriculum. It's difficult to rank the importance of various services that compete for the same library dollars and benefit different groups of users. The HSL does this already in deciding how to spend its budget and will need to continue to do this on an ongoing basis and as part of long-range planning.

## **Recommendation #3**

**As part of strategic planning, consider how the relative importance of services should be evaluated on an ongoing basis and decide what mechanisms can be put in place to ensure that the HSL can allocate budget to appropriately meet new and emerging needs.**

The growth of the Faculty and geographic dispersion of the research and teaching programs adds to the issue of the Library being able to meet user needs. A huge challenge is created if the goal is to deliver equitable library services and resources across the spectrum of all programs and geographic locations. The old library network model of distributed library service, even if many of the hospital libraries hadn't closed or merged, is obsolete. When libraries were print based, the McMaster HSL was recognized nationally and internationally as a model library for its in-house services and in terms of the support it

provided to its hospital sites through the Library Network. The digital environment and the increase in the Library's budget over the past ten years have allowed the HSL to deliver a broader array of resources but the restrictions of digital copyright and licensing agreements have added new complexity to partnership agreements and information sharing.

The challenges of replacing the old library network with an Academic Health Sciences Library Network to reflect current realities are many. The HSL is not unaware of these challenges and has been grappling with them for the last several years. In 2010 there was a strategic planning retreat attended by representatives from the regional hospitals and health care organizations focused on re-visioning the network. For a number of reasons, the initiative did not move forward. In February 2012 a position paper was written and a new project with timelines attached is included as one of a number of annual plans for 2012/13. Part of this project includes a proposal jointly developed with MAC-CARE for library services in MECS. It's my opinion that the HSL is going in the right direction but I'm not sure if the importance of moving ahead with a new network has been given the priority it needs.

#### **Recommendation #4**

**Development of an Academic Health Sciences Library Network should be a very high priority as an immediate need and future requirement. A newly defined Network is key to meeting the information needs of the Faculty's distributed programs and should be a central focus of a long range strategic plan.**

Some of the issues involved in developing a viable network include:

- Definition of a model which recognizes different needs and collaborative responsibilities
- Provisions for managing a tiered network
- Licensing arrangements, cost recovery and cost sharing
- Technological issues to provide seamless access
- Training needs for preceptors and others
- Cost recovery arrangements for outreach and training support

Until the needs are articulated and the model defined, the other challenges cannot be addressed. The Network is necessarily a collaborative venture but ownership and direction of the project will be key to its successful development and sustainability. The HSL and others in the Faculty of Health Sciences need to provide leadership.

If the network isn't developed, the quality and scope of library service will vary greatly across the distributed teaching and research environment and the full value of the HSL will be limited mostly to the McMaster campus and a subset of students, faculty and affiliated clinicians/researchers.

#### **Service and Staffing Models**

The HSL carried out a major operational review in 2008-09 and put in place a new organizational structure. Position descriptions for all staff were reviewed and re-written and a new position of Supervisor–Circulation and Collections Maintenance was created. The new supervisor position has been well received by staff. The new organizational structure seems to be working reasonably well but the professional staff are still feeling

overburdened with their workload. All of the librarians have multiple responsibilities and most have management responsibilities. They find it difficult to find enough hours in the day to support the staff the way they would like to and attend to the demands of their liaison and functional responsibilities. Professional development and management training often falls by the wayside because of time constraints, or needs to be undertaken outside of normal working hours. Even under the new organization, staff and librarians struggle when they are short staffed due to illness, leaves and vacation. Because of a change in government funding, student helpers are no longer available to cover staffing needs on the service desks and the front line staff feel stretched. When librarians are away, there is no backup to cover liaison responsibilities and even at full complement the librarians find they have difficulty responding to consultation requests as quickly as needed. The Faculty's education program directors concurred that the turnaround time for student requests is often longer than ideal given the high volume of work directed at the liaison librarians and student deadlines.

All of the program directors that I spoke to put a high value on the liaison librarians assigned to their programs. The librarians develop and deliver customized group teaching sessions covering specialized information resources and they engage with both faculty and students in time-consuming consultation focused on complex research questions and systematic reviews. The Library has a challenge covering all the liaison areas and fairly distributing the workload. One librarian is liaison to the Waterloo and Niagara regional campuses. During a telephone meeting, the director of the Waterloo campus emphasized how important it is for the students to have a personal contact and to have the liaison librarian on-site to meet the student regularly during the academic session.

Sustaining the liaison program at a level consistent with the expansion of the Faculty's programs is proving to be a challenge.

#### **Recommendation #5**

**Reconsider ways to support and sustain the librarian liaison program, recognizing it as a high service priority.**

The HSL is open 97 hours per week and the students I spoke to would like to see it open longer hours. There was consensus among the students that the primary need is study space. In the students' view, staffing of service points outside of a core set of hours is not needed. The dedication of the front line staff and the high value the staff members put on providing personal service at all times is commendable but it may not be sustainable given competing service needs. Service desk staffing needs to be considered in the context of library service as a whole. Have all options for self-service or for staffing the Library differently at different times of the day/night been thoroughly explored? Most libraries that provide 24/7 service or open for extended hours rely on security staffing outside of core hours. This may or may not be an option for the HSL.

#### **Recommendation #6**

**Continue to assess the "library as physical space" and consider all options for library hours and service levels as part of strategic planning and priority setting.**

The 2002 review identified a service issue which significantly affects the HSL and its users and which has not been adequately addressed. The issue is IT infrastructure and support. I understand that the University has made some progress in this area and that the Faculty has reorganized and strengthened its CSU. Good intentions do not seem to have translated into solutions. In almost every one of the meetings I held, inconsistent and unreliable access to the Library's resources was cited as a major problem. The students said the wireless in the Library is "unreliable" and "unusable most of the time".

Because of the state of the wireless, they said that they waste too much time, can't use their own equipment and have to wait in line for the Library's limited number of desk-top computers. The front-line library staff said that many, if not most, of the service issues they deal with have to do with poor and unreliable wireless connections within the library and with printer problems. These are University issues and outside the Library's control. They affect service and use up valuable staff time. Problems with the proxy server and LibAccess came up in discussions with students, faculty and clinicians in all programs. Full value for the money the HSL is spending on expensive but necessary information resources to support teaching and research is being lost if the resources can't be accessed reliably. This is an issue which will negatively affect the success of the distributed learning network unless it is addressed. It is an issue which is outside the Library's control but it reflects on the HSL and its services negatively and requires too much library staff time to deal with.

#### **Recommendation #7**

**Escalate efforts at the highest Faculty level and across the University to upgrade the information technology environment at McMaster to meet expected standards and to maximize support for digital library service and distributed education.**

#### **Fiscal Responsibility**

As the Self-Study reports, in 2008 the HSL developed a cost-centre budget model and recommended that incremental costs it could not absorb within its budget envelope be allocated to academic departments. The cost allocation was based upon a blended formula that considered both research and education cost drivers.

I would like to commend the Director of the HSL on the way the budget has been handled. The cost-centre budget helps to align the operating budget with articulated needs. At present, five out of six librarians and the liaison assistant receive full or partial funding from the programs they support. The Library has also successfully sought donations to cover other operational costs.

The 2002 external review made a strong case for increasing the library's acquisition budget for electronic resources. The Faculty followed through with this recommendation and, although the costs of resources continue to increase, the increased budget has made a positive difference and is appropriate for a library whose role is to support the education and research information needs of an expanding Faculty of Health Sciences.

The reality of increasing resource costs is an issue. Restrictive licensing agreements make it impossible and illegal to generate additional revenue by opening access beyond McMaster students, faculty and affiliated

clinicians. All libraries and many major academic library organizations are enraged at the publishing monopoly and licensing model of the major publishers. Consortia arrangements for acquiring resources have helped lower individual library costs but the monopolistic hold of the publishers and database providers has not been broken. Open access initiatives such as PubMed and the PLOS are beginning to provide access alternatives but most researchers continue to publish in traditional journals.

The HSL has been an active participant in consortia licensing arrangements with other health science libraries provincially and nationally. It is involved in license agreements through the Consortium of Ontario Academic Health Libraries (COAHL) and it has supported the federal initiative to create a National Network of Libraries of Health. Other consortia arrangements originate with the main university library through the Ontario Council of University Libraries (OCUL) and the Canada Research Knowledge Network (CKRN). There is documented evidence that these arrangements reduce what costs would otherwise be; the fact remains that costs are high and continue to increase.

The HSL has listed fundraising as a priority and is committed to working with the Faculty of Health Sciences Director of Advancement to prepare funding proposals. This is commendable but the reality is that successful fundraising requires a large investment of time and staff resources. Under the current library staffing model, without anyone in the HSL dedicated to fund raising and with the Director wearing many hats including that of liaison librarian, the potential for meaningful fundraising seems very limited. Traditionally libraries have been most successful at acquiring gifts-in-kind (donations of older books and journals) or monetary gifts to support one-time-only projects such as renovation. Most libraries are not able to provide on-going support for operational budgets through external fundraising.

#### **Recommendation #8**

**The HSL should continue to refine its cost-centre budget model and collaborate within the Faculty to explore more opportunities for allocating costs and leveraging funds tied to user needs.**

#### **Recommendation # 9**

**The HSL should continue its consortia involvement to license resources and work with the larger library community to explore solutions to the licencing cost issues. Open access should continue to be encouraged. The overall issue of scholarly communication and the high cost of licensing access to published research can't be addressed by libraries alone. The engagement of the Faculty of Health Sciences working with the University, peer institutions, granting agencies and research societies is needed.**

#### **Recommendation # 10**

**If fundraising is to be a priority and successful, the Library should work with the Faculty's Advancement Officer to consider whether the HSL could share a part-time professional development position with another department (or departments), and if the salary costs could be covered as an overhead expense of successful development activity.**

## Collaboration

The HSL collaborates well with the education programs and is represented on the Health Sciences Education Council. During my meeting with the FHS research representatives and with the Associate Dean (Research) the value of the electronic information resources provided through the Library was acknowledged and the importance of having access to needed resources was emphasized. There was some discussion of the role of the Library in projects such as measuring research output. During the short discussion that ensued, different ways of gathering research metrics were discussed, including the possibility of using unique PubMed identifiers. It was noted during the meeting that the HSL isn't a member of the Health Sciences Research Council and there was general agreement that including a representative from the Library would be a good way to strengthen links and promote joint consultation and discussions on topical issues such as research metrics.

### **Recommendation #11**

**The Library's partnership with research should be strengthened and the HSL should be included on the FHS Research Council and on other research planning committees and discussion groups, as appropriate.**

The recent history, change in leadership and disruption that the McMaster University Library has experienced and continues to experience is unfortunate and appears to have had a negative effect on the morale of the HSL staff and librarians. The situation makes it very difficult for the HSL to engage in meaningful collaboration and both the University Library and the HSL are missing out on opportunities to increase efficiencies and better meet user needs. The 2002 review recommended the need for more collaboration with the Thode Library to coordinate collection policies to support the basic sciences. This hasn't happened. The main library has put in place a number of initiatives over the past few years which in most academic settings would have involved joint library planning and a University-wide focus regardless of the reporting structure of the libraries. Two examples are the digital commons and state-of-the-art multi-media centre. Although the HSL operates separately from the main library the magnitude, complexity and expense of new digital, data and multi-media initiatives make collaboration in these areas mandatory. The HSL has fallen behind other health science libraries in these areas and it will be very difficult to catch up without more collaboration with, and more support from, the University Library. Although the situation of the University Library is right now a negative for the HSL, it presents opportunities for starting anew and working towards an optimal collaborative relationship in the future, based on needs and efficiencies for both libraries.

### **Recommendation #12**

**The HSL should participate in the selection process for the director of the main University Library and as part of its strategic direction should map out a new path to work collaboratively with the University Library for the benefit of the health sciences community.**

The need for a new Academic Health Sciences Library Network is discussed under the section on *Meeting User Needs* above. The new network is central to collaboration locally with other health libraries and across the breadth of the Faculty's distributed research and teaching programs.

The HSL's connections provincially, nationally and internationally are strong within the health science library community. The HSL provides leadership to this community and benefits from collaborative and consortia relationships. This is not an area that needs to be strengthened but there may be advantage to broadening the scope of involvement beyond just the health science library sector. Innovation is occurring in all types of libraries and a broader focus could be useful.

### **Succession Planning**

The HSL rests on a firm foundation. Much has been accomplished over the past ten years. The library staff and librarians are valued for their service and expertise and the Library has a central role within the Faculty.

The current Director who is retiring in 2013 has a wealth of experience and well established relationships within the Faculty and with the library staff. Valuable expertise and knowledge will be lost when she leaves. It's important that her successor bring a level of commitment that will allow him/her to learn from others, to grow in the job and be dedicated to the long-term success of the Library.

The ideal candidate will be a visionary who is a "big-picture" thinker and who embraces a strong service philosophy. They will need to have the ability to lead, to plan and to prioritize beyond short term projects and day-to-day pressures. They will need to engage staff and make difficult decisions. Success in the position will depend on an ability to appreciate and respect the unique history of the HSL and the Faculty of Health Sciences and to embrace change, not for the sake of change, but to meet changing user needs. The goal of a new director should be to fully integrate the Library as a service provider and as a partner in innovation as the Faculty continues to grow and evolve.

The new director's previous experience will ideally include a proven track record of success as a front-line librarian, as a manager, as a collaborator and as someone who can effectively organize, delegate and lead people. The person needs to be a good listener and they need to be open to new ideas. Their personal attributes will allow them to inspire, to instil confidence, to interact at all levels within the Faculty and the University, and to direct others in a way that is consultative and supportive.

Even if forethought has been given to development and succession planning from within, I would recommend that the position be advertised to invite both internal and external candidates. If an internal candidate is promoted, the search process will have ensured that that person is the best qualified person for the job. The HSL is a respected member of the academic health science library community and posting the director position will affirm its importance within the Faculty and its status as a national and international library leader.

### **Summary**

It was an honour to be asked to do this review. During the course of my academic library career, I have looked to the HSL with professional admiration. In the past I have called on the HSL for advice and looked to it as a gold-standard model in many areas of information service and resource delivery. The issues the HSL faces are not a negative reflection on the Library in any way. All good libraries, health sciences and

otherwise, are searching for the best way to move into the future to meet changing needs and to retain their relevance and importance.

The HSL is busier now and serves more students than it did in the past; it has expanded its personal services and the user community is demanding and appreciative. These are positive reflections on the Library and on the Faculty of Health Sciences. Fiscal realities, the rapidly changing digital environment and the growth of the Faculty of Health Sciences have added a new dimension of challenge to what the HSL has always done well. Service and support to the Faculty of Health Sciences is its underlying purpose and this should not change.

Joan Leishman  
November 2012