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This will likely be my final report to Library Council as interim University Librarian, and I wished to take this opportunity to extend sincere thanks to all members of Council for their work through the 2025-2026 academic year to date. As someone who has been involved with Council literally since its inception nearly 25 years' ago (!), I have especially appreciated the contributions of our student representatives in proactively gathering and sharing feedback on Library resources and services from undergraduate and graduate students on an ongoing basis. Extra thanks are also due to Council Secretary Melissa Belvadi, not only for taking on the additional work that goes with the Secretary's role, but also for her initiative in collaborating with myself and the rest of Council to improve our reporting and record-keeping practices.

#### Administration, Outreach and Access Services Unit

I would also like to acknowledge the continuing contributions of the team in the [AOAS unit](#). As a blending of the Administration office (effectively Alysha Aitken and myself), the Library's core “Circ” / Service Desk team (Sarah Fisher, Brooke Saunders, David Kaminski, Shawne Holcomb, and Stacey Meenink), and Central Printing (E.M. Yang), this has always been something of a hybrid, *ad hoc* group, but I have greatly appreciated the ways in which all members have nevertheless managed to effectively communicate with and support myself, each other, and their Library colleagues (and, of course, our user communities). In addition to the great effort that goes into keeping the Service Desk operating (including responsibility for our student assistants), members of this team [gather statistics](#), manage our programming and social media activities, and provide all manner of administrative support, not just to the UL but to the Library team as a whole; and, of course, the contribution of Central Printing, to the work of the Library and the campus at large, is invaluable.

In January, I belatedly put into practice my suggestion from last year to merge the formerly separate “Circ” and “Admin” meetings, to reduce the net number of meetings in the UL's very full calendar and, as importantly, to hopefully offer more opportunities for AOAS to connect with each other as part of a unit; further thanks to all concerned in their support for this new arrangement.

Herewith an overview of my work as interim University Librarian since our last Library Council meeting (January 22, 2026).

#### Library Sustainability – Staff Team (Strategic Plan – Goal C-4)

- Preparations continue for the arrival of Dr. Svetlana Kochkina as our new University Librarian, effective March 1, 2026. Svetlana has completed her move from Montreal and is settling in to her new home on PEI. We have continued to meet regularly via Teams, and she plans to come to the Library in-person this Friday, February 27th, to begin getting (re)oriented and settled in. I'll be touring her around the Library and (weather permitting) campus in the morning, and she will be getting moved in and set up in the University Librarian's office (291) in the afternoon. An informal welcome get-together is planned for Svetlana and the Library team is planned for March 10<sup>th</sup>.
- Due to a storm closure, the all-staff meeting planned for February 12 was rescheduled to February 18. Thanks to all who attended, in-person or online, for their engagement and interest through a very full agenda, which included updates on: the UPEI budget; the QA Action Plan; renovation plans; forthcoming ILL changes, and; new UL transition updates. Thanks also to Alysha Aitken for her work in organizing and (re)scheduling the meeting, and to Sarah Leyenaar for bringing goodies.
- Many thanks to Sarah Fisher for organizing the recent Library Olympics, and congratulations to the medallists Keri McCaffrey, Brooke Saunders, and Shawne Holcomb.

#### “Conduct a holistic quality assurance assessment of the Library, which includes a self-study.” (Strategic Plan – Goal C-5)

- Svetlana has also been meeting with the Vice-President Academic and Research, and has discussed the QA Action Plan with him: the VPAR has agreed to her suggestion that the Action Plan could usefully be merged with an updating of the Library's Strategic Plan. Further updates on this Action Plan / Strategic Plan exercise will be forthcoming soon.

#### “Reinvigorate the Library's physical ... infrastructure to create inspiring and inclusive spaces.” (Strategic Plan – Goal C-4)

- The contract for the Library lobby renovation was awarded in mid-January to Wilmac Construction. On February 20, UPEI Facilities Management (Capital Projects) convened a “kickoff” Teams meeting of the contractor, subcontractors, and design architects to discuss renovation plans and timelines, with myself and Svetlana in attendance. The

agreed-upon start date is May 4, with completion targeted for the third week of August. Although some disruption to Library operations is inevitable, every effort will be made to keep downtime to a minimum; classroom 235, at the north end of the Library breezeway, has been booked from May – August to house a temporary service desk and a number of staff workstations for those who may be dislocated by work in the lobby area.

- It is expected the University Archives and Special Collections' expansion element of the renovation will go to tender in March. Here, too, the hope is to begin work in May. Juanita Rossiter and I met with UPEI Capital Projects on Feb. 4 to discuss plans for UASC expansion, and budget provisions for specialized equipment, including oversized and movable shelving.
- On January 23, a water main break in the centre of campus caused a sizeable flood along the north side of the building, with water reaching a height of several inches under the windows of the lobby, Keltie MacPhail's office, and Central Printing. Luckily, no water entered the building at ground level, but there was significant leaking through the ceilings of Basement storerooms 106 and 110: thanks to quick intervention by Library team members (and particular credit is due here to Chris MacLauchlan, Keltie, and Kim Mears) and Facilities Management, major damage to materials shelved in these rooms was averted; the earlier initiative of Donald Moses, Sarah Fisher, and Alysha Aitken in preparing a flooding response kit proved providential, with plastic sheeting, hazard tape, etc. readily to hand. In room 106, several boxes containing UPEI Student Services' records sustained some water damage, but these were removed from harms' way quickly enough that their contents were not affected (due to the highly confidential nature of these records, I worked directly with Student Services' Counselling office to facilitate their inspection and re-boxing). Water service was restored by January 24, but the water was not confirmed as safe for drinking until the following week, and I worked with Alysha to keep the Library staff lounge fridge stocked with bottled water during this period.

#### Library Sustainability – Budget (Strategic Plan – Goal A-1)

- Nothing will be finalized on the University budget until Board of Governors' approval in March, but the VPAR has spoken to myself and Svetlana about options to mitigate some of the impacts of possible core budget cuts in FY 2026-2027 by finding revenues from other sources. There will hopefully be more information to share on this in the coming weeks.
- As previously noted, the librarians continue to discuss plans for possible subscription cuts, should budget reductions make these necessary. Their willingness to engage proactively on this difficult and disagreeable task, in the interest of preserving the best possible access to the widest range of content for our users, is acknowledged with appreciation.

## Library Partnerships, UPEI (Strategic Plan – Goals B-1, B-4)

- The VPAR and the Vice-President Administration and Finance, Tim Walker, convened a meeting with myself and the Librarians on January 26. Agenda items were: UPEI Budget; the Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) Plan, and; the draft UPEI Academic Plan. Unsurprisingly, a good part of the discussion focused on the budget, and I appreciated the librarians' candour and conviction in clearly articulating to the Vice-Presidents the critical importance of Library resources and services to the University mission, and the need to preserve these, even in times of budgetary constraint.
- Coincidentally, UPEI President Rodgers visited me for a scheduled one-on-one meeting later that same day. The opportunity to speak directly with the President was appreciated, and I feel the discussion was cordial and constructive: I especially appreciated the President's interest in the role played by the Library – and notably the University Archives and Special Collections – in the Province's network of culture and heritage “memory institutions.”
- Ensuring that the Library remains actively engaged in UPEI's academic planning and governance is a key element of the UL portfolio. Since my last report, I have participated in meetings of the following bodies:
  - LM Montgomery Institute Committee | Meetings – Jan.23; Feb. 20
  - Academic Planning and Curriculum C'ttee (APCC) | Meetings -- Jan. 27; Feb. 10
  - University Review Committee [Promotion] | Meeting – Jan. 30
  - Senate | Meeting – Jan. 30
  - Research Advisory Committee | Meeting – Feb. 2
  - Institutional Rankings Working Group | Meeting – Feb. 5

*This is a new initiative, coordinated by the VPAR. While all rankings' exercise have limitations and caveats, there is a recognition that they do have implications for institutional reputation and recruitment. The initial focus will be the Macleans' rankings, and I took the opportunity to (again) highlight that UPEI consistently scores highly in the ranking of percentage of library budget spent on acquisitions and consistently poorly on the ranking of institutional spending on the library overall.*
  - Deans Council | Meeting – Feb. 3; Feb. 17

*At the Feb. 17 meeting, appreciation was expressed for the contributions from liaison librarian Keltie MacPhail at the recent McDougall Faculty of Business Council meeting, notably in discussion of options to improve students' "AI literacy"; the Dean of Business even suggested that the Library might be considered "the lead" for UPEI on AI issues (I thanked him for his support, but highlighted that institutional AI considerations should involve many campus partners, including the Library). Thanks were also offered for my service as interim UL, and I have been invited as a guest to the next Council meeting (Mar. 3) to introduce Svetlana as our new UL.*

#### Library Partnerships, External (Strategic Plan – Goal B-1)

- The order agreement with Clarivate / Ex Libris for Rapido Starter Implementation was signed on January 30. As part of this agreement, the Library is asked to designate a project coordinator and project team; at a meeting of the Library's Interlibrary Loan Working Group Feb. 9, it was agreed that Kim Mears would be project coordinator supported by team members Chris MacLauchlan, Paul Pound, and Courtney Matthews (and calling on other Library colleagues as required).
- At the invitation of the Department of Development, I was a UPEI guest at a Feb. 5 reception for groups benefitting from the Gray Group's 2025 52 Weeks of Giving, for which the Library was the [designated recipient of a \\$10,000 donation](#).
- With renovation preparations gathering pace, Svetlana and myself are currently in discussions with the Department of Development on plans for donor recognition (communications, signage, etc.)