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Herewith an overview of my work as interim University Librarian since our last Library Council meeting (November 27, 2025).

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 (the 1st is a Sunday, so I’m assuming March 2nd will be her first actual day in-office). Thanks to Alysha Aitken for handling a range of tasks connected with the new appointment (UPEI IT account setup, workstation ordering, etc.). I have had a couple of in-depth transition planning Teams meetings with Dr. Kochkina this month, and look forward to continuing these through February: she is clearly excited and energized at the prospect of being our UL.
- Several staff term appointments that had been set to expire by the end of last semester were extended until April 30, 2026. Thank you to Alysha for all the help with processes and paperwork, and to the Vice-President Academic and Research for his support of the extensions.
- Many thanks to everyone who helped to make the Season bright in the runup to the holidays, notably Alysha, Stacey Meenink, Sarah Fisher, and Shawne Holcombe for organizing festive decorating and social/de-stressing events, including the end-of-classes pizza party (and goody bags) for the student assistants, exam-time Pop-Up Surprises, group reservations for the campus Festivus luncheon, and our “last day” soup-and-crafts get-together.
- The Library team collectively received kudos for our engagement and effort on two important University Health, Safety, and Environment (HSE) initiatives:
 - The building evacuation “fire” drill on November 28 was praised for its efficiency; particular thanks to the volunteer Wardens and Guardians for their contributions here.

- On December 22, representatives of the UPEI Main Campus Health and Safety Committee conducted a building inspection; I accompanied them on a comprehensive walking tour of all parts of the building (mechanical rooms and janitors' closets excepted), and they were enthusiastic in their praise for the effort tidying and otherwise making safer several Library locations flagged as areas of concern in the last inspection (2023).
- A "team thanks" is also due to everyone for the adaptability shown during the building shutdown through the week of January 5th. I feel the closure was generally well-planned and well-communicated, greatly reducing the potential stress and inconvenience for our users; I posted my cell phone number and email for users to contact me with any questions / concerns through the week, and all the communications thus received were calm, courteous, and appreciative of the Library's flexibility (ex. loan extensions). Thanks also to those who covered VRef during the shutdown.
- I have called a full Library team meeting for February 12 (thank you to Alysha for her assistance). I was arguably remiss in not doing this last semester, but there were so many extra meetings, especially with the UL search, QA review, etc., as well as the Vice-President's and President's listening tours, that I shied away from doing more. I will commit to having a full agenda ready not less than a week prior to the meeting, but key items will be: UPEI budget; QA Action Plan; renovation update, and; new UL transition updates.

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

- The Library was originally scheduled to present its response to the QA reviewers' report – in the form of an Action Plan on the review's recommendations -- to the VPAR and the University's Academic Planning and Curriculum Committee (APCC) this coming week, but I have arranged an extension of this submission, so that a draft of the Action Plan can be shared with Dr. Kochkina for her review and comment. My thanks to the librarians, and especially Kim Mears and Rosie Le Favie, for their work on the Action Plan draft to date.

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

- Facilities Management advises that the asbestos remediation during the week of January 5 proceeded largely as planned. Daily air quality testing during and after the remediation was consistently negative for asbestos fibers. There is one section where asbestos is being left undisturbed until renovation work begins, but the closure did allow for a great "head start" to be made on this essential work.

- Three study pods have been ordered, but unfortunately, it may be 2 – 3 months before they are received and installed.
- At last report (January 9), Facilities Management was indicating that, “everything is on schedule,” for work on both the Library lobby and/ student spaces renovations and upgrades and the UASC expansion to begin during the 2026 “summer construction window.” Assuming this holds, we will need to firm up plans and contingencies for full or partial building closures during parts of this work; I will work with Facilities and the Library team to get these in place, once we have a clearer sense of likely timelines and the scale of any closures that may be required.

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

- Given the prevailing uncertainty and unease around the University's budgetary challenges for the coming year, I appreciated the UPEI President Rodgers' willingness to discuss this with the Library team – to the extent that she was able -- when she visited us December 4 as part of her campus-wide Listening Tour. Those present did credit to the Library with their courteous attention and thoughtful questions.
- Nothing will be finalized on the University budget until Board approval in March, but the Vice-Presidents have indicated that they will have some further information to share by the end of this month. I will make best efforts to keep Library team members informed, but there are limitations on what details can be shared, and when.
- Since some subscription cuts may be required due to institutional budget constraints, the librarians are working on a decision-making framework for possible cuts now.
- I have also been discussing plans with the VPAR, the Comptroller's Office, and the Development Office to allow the Library more access to endowment income and other “soft” money that will provide some additional revenue to at least partially offset the impact of any “core” funding reduction.

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

- The VPAR convened the UPEI Senate Library Committee meeting for the Fall 2025 semester on November 27, 2025. I spent much of the meeting sharing updates in my capacity as interim University Librarian, but the questions and comments, notably from the Arts faculty members on the Committee, reflected a sincere appreciation for, and interest in, the Library and its work. My thanks to the librarian representative on the Committee, Keri McCaffrey, for taking notes and supporting me in fielding questions and facilitating discussion.

- My thanks to the student representatives on Library Council, Deanelle Sotiar and Melanie Leblanc MacIsaac, for taking the time to meet with me on December 22 to discuss plans for promoting the Library surveys to graduate and undergraduate students, and for providing students reasonable assurances that their feedback on Library services and spaces is heard and valued, even if we are not always able to act on it immediately.
- Further thanks to Deanelle for inviting me to highlight the Library in the UPEISU's ongoing "Campus Compass" on Instagram Reels, introducing student services and supports at UPEI; we recorded the Library profile on January 15.
- Dr. Donna Hardy-Cox, the University's new Associate Vice-President, Students visited the Library January 20. I was pleased to offer her an extensive tour of the building, highlighting student services and spaces currently offered, and future plans for improvements to student spaces to be funded by the Love Our Library campaign. Dr. Hardy-Cox expressed great appreciation for the importance of the Library in student well-being and success, and I will be sure to connect her with Dr. Kochkina, to encourage continued strong ties between the Library the AVPS portfolio (notably Student Services).
- 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:
 - Academic Planning and Curriculum Committee (APCC)
 - Meetings -- December 2; January 13
 - Research Advisory Committee
 - Meeting -- December 4
 - Deans Council
 - Meetings -- December 4; December 9; January 6 [sent regrets – cough/cold]; January 20
 - VPAR Advisory Group
 - Meeting – December 19
 - UPEI Senate
 - *At the final Senate meeting of 2025 (December 19) the VPAR highlighted the collaboration between the Library and ITSS in offering the new student ITSS Help Desk in the Library as excellent example of cross-unit collaboration.*
 - Graduate Studies Advisory Committee
 - Meeting – January 12

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

- The report from the Library Working Group on a RelaisILL replacement was submitted to the VPAR on December 11; the VPAR gave his appreciative support to the Working Group's recommendation to pursue a development partnership with Clarivate [ExLibris] in implementing the Rapido/RapidILL platform at UPEI. Approaching this as a development partnership will likely entail more work for the Library team, but Clarivate is offering substantial discounts from its subscription list prices in return. Obtaining final approval from the UPEI Contracts and Insurance Office for this arrangement is proving time-consuming, but we hope to be able to proceed by the end of January.