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Herewith an overview of my work as interim University Librarian since our last Library Council meeting (October 30).

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

- The most notable development of the past month was the November 6 announcement of Dr. Svetlana Kochkina’s appointment as our new University Librarian, effective March 1, 2026. I have been in touch with Dr. Kochkina to welcome her on behalf of the Library team, and she has replied that she is looking forward to beginning her work here: she remains very busy with her duties at McGill, but we have tentatively agreed to begin transition planning meetings in January.
- My appointment as interim UL has been officially extended until February 28. Accordingly, paperwork has been submitted to also extend Juanita’s appointment as interim UASC Librarian and Sarah Leyenaar as term UASC technician.
- Katelyn Browne, our Instructional Services Librarian since 2022, has recently received word that their application for permanent appointment [tenure] was successful. Warmest congratulations and thanks to Katelyn for all they bring to the Library.
- The term appointment of Eun-Mee (Em) Yang, Central Printing technician, has been extended until the end of May, 2025. Many thanks to EM for her continued hard work supporting a service valued by many in our campus community.
- I note with appreciation the willingness of Library team members in Administration, Access and Outreach Services and Central Printing to engage with the idea of joining the formerly separate “Admin” and “Circ” monthly meetings going forward. The first joint Admin/Circ meeting was held on November 18, and I plan to continue with these on a monthly cycle. Items discussed at the meeting included December – January Service Desk hours and a planned Library fire drill (now set for November 28).

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(Strategic Plan – Goal C-4)

- Study pods. As a trial, three study pods -- a "6 seat", an individual pod, and a wheelchair accessible pod — are being ordered and will likely be installed in January-February. More information about the planned placement of the pods will follow in a separate message.
- Lobby renovation. The planning architects (A4) have presented their "99% Submission." With final approval anticipated at the end of this month, the tender for carrying out the construction and other contracting will hopefully be issued in early December, which would put us well on track for the "hammer swinging" to begin in late winter/early spring; in practice, however, much of the heavy work will likely have to wait until May, since a partial or even full Library shutdown will be required while the renovations in the lobby and central stairway are done. There is also a possibility that an earlier, shorter-term shutdown may be needed to allow some pre-renovation prep work to be done on existing building systems in the lobby area.
- UASC expansion. The planning architects for this project element (EastPoint) have presented their "50% submission" — this will incorporate both a renovation (and modest expansion) of the existing UASC stacks room (RL 272) and the construction of a single-storey addition, offering more storage, at the southeast corner of the Library building. The nature of these submissions is that, unlike earlier "concept" plans, they contain detailed engineering specs and other technical information, and the main feedback is provided by UPEI Facilities (Capital Projects), but a copy was shared with Juanita Rossiter and I, and our general impressions are positive. EastPoint will be on-campus next Wednesday-Thursday (December 3-4), and Juanita and I should have a chance to speak with them further at that time.

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

- All members of Deans Council gave slideshow presentations to the Vice-President, Academic and Research on November 21 and November 25, outlining 2026-2027 budget proposals (my Library presentation was on the 21st). Preparing this submission proved to be a difficult exercise, as all academic units reporting to the VPAR, including the Library, were tasked with identifying cuts amounting to 10% of each of our current, core unit budgets over the next three fiscal years. A written submission in support of the budget proposal is due December 1. I wish to thank the librarians for their advice and support through this process; I will share more details about the proposal with the full Library team in early December.
- Thanks to the diligent and proactive efforts of the ILL Working Group, I was able to include a realistic estimate of the dramatically-increased ILL costs we are facing (as a result of the June, 2026 sunset of RelaisILL) in last week's budget presentation to Deans Council and

the VPAR. A written recommendation from the Working Group on a RelaisILL replacement will be forthcoming shortly.

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

- Ensuring that the Library remains actively engaged in UPEI's academic planning and governance is a key priority of the UL portfolio. Since my last report, I have participated in meetings of the following bodies:
 - UPEI Senate
 - *At the November 21 meeting, the proposal to remove the requirement for all UPEI undergraduate students to take UPEI [English] 1010, UPEI 1020, or UPEI 1030 was approved. Partnerships with the coordinators and instructors in these courses have been critical to the planning and delivery of Library instructional sessions for decades, as they provided an important avenue to connect with virtually all UPEI students, and their curricula were generally complementary to the goals of our Library instructional offerings. It remains to be seen what impact the removal of the global 1010/1020/1030 requirement will have, although there are early suggestions that many faculties still plan to retain them as prerequisites in their respective programs; this, in turn, offers the prospect that the 1010/1020/1030 may remain a viable option for Library instructional programming that reaches a very substantial percentage of UPEI undergraduates.*
 - Graduate Studies Advisory Committee
 - *A "Library highlight" at the November 20 meeting was the report by Graduate Programs Officer Kendra Mellish on the success of Graduate Student Orientation programming this past semester, including several offerings from Keri McCaffrey. And, as a general indicator of high regard for the Library's work, when discussion turned to the need for a cross-faculty research methods/skills course offered to all graduate students, there was a suggestion that this could be developed and delivered in partnership with the Library (which suggestion I acknowledged with thanks, while politely pointing out resourcing and capacity constraints).*
 - Academic Planning and Curriculum Committee (APCC)
 - Dean's Council
 - *Participated in the November 26 "Rise and Shine" event with UPEI President Rodgers. Thanks to Keri McCaffrey, Rosie Le Faive, and Juanita Rossiter for joining me to represent the Library. Topics discussed included ideas for improved recruitment, especially of Island students, and the current*

budgetary challenges. There were several appreciative comments from UPEI faculty members on the value of the Library's resources and services, especially for graduate students.

- *Participated in the November 24 Leadership Cafe, one of a series of planning and leadership development workshops for UPEI academic administrators, managers, and directors, led by President Rogers (although Vice-President Ngobia coordinated this session in the President's absence).*
 - *The most notable feature of this Cafe was a detailed and engaging presentation by Vice-President Administration and Finance Tim Walker: although it was generally not a "good news" report, focusing as it did on the forecast \$5.4 million shortfall in UPEI funding next year (with further challenges thereafter) the insight provided into budgetary planning and discussions with the Province was illuminating.*
 - *There was also a presentation on UPEI fundraising priorities, past, present, and future. The "Love Our Library" campaign was described as 41% complete, with \$6.4 million raised (the continued commitment to the original \$15 million target is notable). Although there was some disappointment expressed at slow renovation progress to date, I took the opportunity to thank UPEI Development for their efforts, as well as all those who have contributed to the campaign, and to reassure the group that there will be more progress this coming year (see below).*
- Vice-President Walker, Vice-President Administration and Finance, joined me for his scheduled visit to the Library October 29. Our top-to-bottom tour of the building was something of a whirlwind, but I think I gave him a reasonable appreciation of the facility and its needs. Vice-President Walker is naturally very upbeat, but I take him at his word in the enthusiastic appreciation he repeatedly expressed for the great work being done in the Library, and all our efforts over the years to do the very best we can with the spaces (and funding) available.

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

- During Donald Moses' term in the University Librarian portfolio, the UL became UPEI's *ex officio* representative on the PEI Seniors College Board. I attended the College's 2025 AGM and monthly Board meeting on November 23. It is an energetic and engaged group, committed to lifelong learning, and very supportive of the work of UPEI and the Library.

- At the invitation of the UPEI Department of Development, I presented at the annual luncheon of the Halifax UPEI Friends and Alumni Chapter on November 20, highlighting Library plans and priorities, notably the Love Our Library campaign.
- The November 6 presentation and exhibit by Reverend Edward Rix on his twenty-plus years amassing one of the largest private collections of rare PEI books and printed ephemera was well-received, and [drew positive media attention](#). A surprise highlight of the presentation was Father Rix's announcement that he plans to gift his collection to the Robertson in future, although he is continuing to build and enjoy it as a home library for the present.
- I participated in the Fall 2025 Board meeting of the Council of Atlantic Academic Libraries (CAAL) on October 31. It was mostly routine "housekeeping" business, but there was considerable discussion about resource sharing / ILL options with the pending sunset of RelaisILL, and endorsement for the idea of a shared / cooperative approach to addressing the challenges of a "post-Relais" environment.