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## **External Communications and Promotions: The University of Regina Library Experience**

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### **Abstract**

This case study documents how a structured group of library staff coordinates external communications and promotions activities at the University of Regina, a mid-sized liberal arts, publicly funded, post-secondary institution in Western Canada. The paper discusses the value of having promotions activities tied to objectives in a library's strategic plan. There is a discussion about promotions strategies undertaken within the library, with other academic and administrative units on campus, and with organizations off campus. Implementing an undergraduate library award has been the most ambitious project and, along with purchasing branded promotions items, has required the most funding. The author illustrates how library staff, having little or no promotions experience but possessing creativity and a desire to inform and collaborate, can run a successful external communications and promotions program.

In the last few years, the University of Regina Library has implemented a strategy to more effectively communicate and promote its programs and initiatives to the university community. This case study looks at the accomplishments of the University of Regina Library/Archives External Communications and Promotions Team (LAECPT) since 2011. New activities were undertaken and communication channels established with administrative units such as Student Awards and Financial Aid (SAFA), Donor Relations, Student Recruitment and Enrolment Services, and Human Resources. Even if academic libraries do not directly generate revenue for their institution, they should not be complacent or hesitant to explore working closely with targeted units to promote activities and programs. This author believes that revenue generating units, or those that employ people with marketing backgrounds, are likely more adept in promotional activities. While it is advantageous for library staff to have promotions experience, many academic institutions will have a marketing department that can assist with promotions.

### **Literature Review**

Much has been written about academic library marketing strategies; therefore this literature review is limited to research published in the past five years. For clarifying terminology, Duke and Tucker (2007) write:

Marketing library services is another term for communicating with users about what the library has to offer the community. Historically library marketing practices in academia was viewed by many as beneath the profession. It was easy to become complacent about this activity because libraries were the primary information providers to their institution's users. (p. 52-53)

However, Dempsey (2009) states that the basic rules and terminology of marketing can be easily misunderstood and jeopardize marketing campaigns and that true marketing is comprised of different actions: publicity; promotion; advertising; and public relations.

Cronin and O'Brien (2009) write that while marketing resources and services in public libraries and the non-profit sector has taken place since the 1970s, it is a recent phenomenon in academic libraries. Aire (2007) also states that academic libraries have historically been well behind public libraries in the area of marketing library services to their patrons. Despite many academic libraries having long lost their monopoly of being the exclusive source for providing research, marketing campaigns have not been practiced for very long. It is arguable that academic libraries still expect students will use their specialized resources, particularly online databases, rather than sources like Google, to complete assignments.

Cronin and O'Brien's (2009) case study of the Waterford Institute of Technology Libraries in Ireland illustrates that despite little or no marketing expertise and even less of a budget, practical low-cost marketing measures enhanced services, raised their profile, visibility, and goodwill and could be of benefit to any academic library. Jennings and Tvaruzka (2010) describe quick and dirty promotional strategies to increase

discussion of the library and change students' perceptions of it and library staff. A somewhat radical example was a contest to submit a "how I met my valentine" story to coincide with Valentine's Day.

Karle (2008) writes that academic library directors must recognize the need for increased programming as a logical and effective step to reconstruct the library experience for students and in turn give their full support to library staff to create innovative outreach opportunities. Stimson (2007) comments that one output of a successful marketing and advertising campaign geared towards students is creating a library brand which defines a majority of expectations students have when they hear the word *library* and how librarians wish them to perceive your institution. In terms of library partnerships, Mathews (2009) states that many other campus units offer valuable collaborative potential and that we're only limited by our own time, imagination, and persistence.

## Background

### University of Regina

The University of Regina began as Regina College in 1911. It was a small residential high school that was established by the Methodist Church. The college later became a satellite campus of the University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon. The University of Regina was established as an autonomous university in 1974 (<http://www.uregina.ca/profile>). Located in the capital city of Regina in the Western Canadian province of Saskatchewan, the university is a mid-sized comprehensive liberal arts university that works closely with its three federated colleges: Campion College; First Nations University of Canada; and Luther College. All degrees are issued by the University of Regina. It has 10 faculties and 25 academic departments with programs leading to bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees. The University has approximately 2,200 faculty and teaching staff. In Fall 2012, total enrollment was 13,115 full-time and part-time undergraduate and graduate students.<sup>1</sup>

### University of Regina Library

The University of Regina Library is the main library on the University of Regina campus. The library is an anchor unit among five others (University of Regina Archives, University Copyright Program, Centre for Teaching and Learning, President's Advisory Council, and University Records and Information Management Program) that forms an umbrella of a large soon-to-be named super faculty. All six components have individual mandates, but the University of Regina Library administers the budgets and staffing for all units. The library is also gaining responsibility for liaising with the university's Information Services Department to manage university-wide licenses for enterprise academic software such as IBM SPSS and Turnitin. There is a large staff skill set and synergy within the six units to accomplish a variety of diverse projects. Many staff also liaise with academic and administrative units on campus.

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<sup>1</sup> See: [http://www.uregina.ca/orp/regstats/201230\\_r08\\_Oct3\\_Fall\\_RegStats\\_Summary.pdf](http://www.uregina.ca/orp/regstats/201230_r08_Oct3_Fall_RegStats_Summary.pdf)

The University of Regina Library has a fairly flat organizational structure. It is headed by a University Librarian and Associate University Librarians. They, along with heads of departments, comprise the Library Leadership Team (LLT). This entity meets regularly to discuss and implement major policies, set and approve budgets, and develop collaborative groups for staff to join. As of March 2013 there were 21 librarians (individuals with a Masters degree or higher) and over 40 support staff in the library. The library staff works collaboratively through teams. Team members have complementary skills and rely on achieving consensus (rather than vote taking) as the preferred way to make decisions and recommendations and complete projects.

### **Establishing a Promotions Team**

Since 2009, the University of Regina Library has had a group to coordinate its external communications and promotions strategy. Its original name was the Library Promotions Committee and its mandate was to better promote some of the library's activities to the university community and the general public. In 2011, the committee's name was changed to the Library/Archives External Communications and Promotions Team (LAECPT). The team's mandate was expanded to coordinate broadcasting items of interest from the library and archives to stakeholders on and off campus and establish communication channels with academic and administrative units and community organizations. The current chair, the Collection Development Librarian, was appointed in 2011. The chair's responsibilities include calling meetings about once a month, setting agendas, ordering promotional material, organizing library sponsored lectures, and communicating with other academic units about promotional activities. As of March 2013, there were seven members (two librarians and five support staff) on the team. Figure 1 illustrates highlights from the revised 2012 LAECPT Terms of Reference.

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#### **Mandate:**

The LAECPT will promote to the university community new service and program initiatives, collections, and accomplishments of the library and University Archives.

#### **Functions:**

The main functions of the LAECPT will be to:

- Coordinate the production of external communications, except in the case of individual reports delivered by librarians to external bodies.
- Explore and implement innovative and effective means for promoting and communicating Library programs and initiatives.
- Identify appropriate individuals and groups within the university and library with whom to partner in promoting Library services and accomplishments.
- Collaborate as needed with External Relations and the Centre for Teaching and Learning.

### **Operating Principles:**

The operating principles of the LAECPT are to:

- Meet regularly and manage agendas to address library issues.
- Ensure regular communication to all library departments and staff through established team/committee structures, or through specially convened meetings of library staff.
- Invite other library or university staff to attend meetings as necessary.

### **Budget:**

- The LAECPT is normally allocated a yearly budget to carry out its work, which includes printing, advertisements, and promotional supplies. Capital requests are funded by the library centrally, as far as possible, subject to the review of the LLT.

### **Staff Support:**

- The LAECPT may occasionally need the assistance of other library staff (either individuals or working groups) to carry out specific programs or objectives. Such assistance will be coordinated in consultation with the LLT, department heads, or staff supervisors.

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### **Figure 1. LAECPT Terms of Reference**

Maslany, MacDonald, Resch, Sgrazzutti and Snow (2010) defined the mandate of the new promotions committee in the University of Regina's Library Strategic Plan:

The work of the Library Promotions Committee continues to receive positive feedback from the university community. Initiatives such as the "Beyond the Book" lecture series provide the opportunity for the Library and university community to partner in new ways and to reach out to the broader community. This initiative is in keeping with the University's strategic priority to *raise the profile and increase the presence of the University regionally, nationally, and internationally and promote community involvement of University personnel by redoubling our efforts to showcase the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, and administration.* ( p. 4)

## Activities

### Beyond the Book Lecture Series

The Beyond the Book Lecture Series (BTBLS) debuted during the university's 2009-2010 academic year. All sessions are free of charge and its purpose is to promote current events, research and scholarly activities to the university community and the general public in a relaxed, intellectual atmosphere. The LAECPT solicits lecture topics from team members and all library staff. Promotional planning includes confirming the lecture title and abstract with the speaker, scheduling the event, selecting a venue, drafting a poster, drafting text for distribution to various email lists, and arranging catering and campus parking. Procedures for organizing sessions are drafted in order to streamline the workload for team members. The LAECPT's goal is to host six lectures in an academic year.

The LAECPT chair received comments from a few library staff that lectures have been very interesting, but that attendance has been low. There is much competition at the university with many academic units offering several public lectures. Between November 2009 and March 2013, the BTBLS sponsored 16 sessions. Since 2011, the average attendance per lecture has been about 10 people. One lecture that had more than twenty people was "Art and music at the University of Regina: The centennial legacy", by Dr. Jim Pitsula, a professor in the Department of History. Another popular lecture was "Titanic: Science, the arts and the microbes", by Dr. Roy Cullimore, former University of Regina professor and founder of Droycon Bioconcepts, Inc.

Costs of hosting the BTBLS are minimized partially due to reasonably priced on-campus catering and providing only light refreshments for lecture receptions. No presenters have requested a speaker's fee and the majority of lectures have taken place in the library's elegant Archives and Special Collections Reading Room. Larger theatre style classrooms have been reserved at no cost for lectures that were expected to have a larger audience. Anecdotal comments from lecture attendees have been positive. One faculty member who was a speaker in the BTBLS stated that a public lecture is deemed a success even if only one person is in attendance and asks meaningful questions. A majority of presentations are being archived as podcasts and video recordings in the University of Regina's institutional repository<sup>2</sup> by staff in the Archives Department and the Systems and Information Technology Department.

### Collaboration With Library and Academic Units

Maslany et al. (2010) wrote that LAECPT should establish contacts with various groups on campus to promote and highlight some library activities:

The library will continue to actively participate in campus initiatives and committees that promote library awareness and provide the opportunity to connect with students early in their U[niversity] of R[egina] experience.

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<sup>2</sup> See <http://ourspace.uregina.ca/handle/10294/3416>

The Library Promotions Committee will continue to take a leadership role in this area. (p. 5-6)

The University Librarian introduced LAECPT's chair to the university's Director of Communications and Marketing in External Relations, who chairs a university-wide group called Communications Plus. Representatives from academic and administrative units that have marketing and outreach mandates or programs are brought together in this group. Communications Plus meets regularly so that members and guest speakers can discuss unit activities.

Another collaborative example was that LAECPT replied to a campus-wide email call for participation from the university's Aboriginal Student Centre to help celebrate Canada's National Aboriginal Day in 2012. The centre coordinated a day-long outdoor event on the summer solstice (June 21) by providing food, music, and activities on campus. There was also a fair where academic and administrative units could staff a booth to showcase their resources and services that supported First Nations and Métis culture. Students, faculty, and staff attendance was strong, anecdotal feedback was positive and there are plans to make it an annual event. The LAECPT staffed a booth and the library was one of about twelve units that participated in the fair.

### **Library website and social media.**

LAECPT has partnered with the library's Systems and Information Technology Department on several projects, including the creation of a mobile-friendly version of the library's website. The idea for this project grew out of the library's strategic plan and the mobile site debuted in the fall of 2011 (<http://www.uregina.ca/library/mobile/index.php>). The library had the distinction of being the first academic or administrative unit at the University of Regina to have a mobile-friendly website. Google Analytics is the primary source LAECPT is using for obtaining quantitative data. Unique user page views help measure the success of promotions activities. A unique user page visit excludes multiple visits to pages by the same user (e.g., webpage testing by library systems staff). From September 2011 to March 2013 there were 24,582 unique user page visits to the library's mobile site. The average length of time spent on a page within the mobile site was one minute and twenty-five seconds. There have not been many comments, positive or negative, about the site but the usage statistics indicate that it was a successful project.

LAECPT has coordinated social media initiatives for the library such as a Facebook page (<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Dr-John-Archer-Library/133559023380822>), a Twitter feed (<http://twitter.com/ArcherLibrary>), and a Pinterest account (<http://pinterest.com/archerlibrary>). Gunton and Davis (2012) write that as a communication tool for libraries, Twitter offers so much more potential than the basic marketing and promotional activities for which is it commonly used. They highlight three roles for Twitter in the academic library environment: service delivery and service recovery channel; community builder; and a site for information experience. Besides broadcasting library information items, LAECPT members often post articles about

social media, information seeking and reading habits of individuals, and eBooks. However, one social media library project was not successful. A Foursquare account that allowed people to check into the library, post comments, and win specials, did not generate much traffic and is no longer actively managed.

Members of LAECPT have attended meetings by a group called the University of Regina Social Media Users Group (URSMUG). It is a forum for academic and administrative units to share their experiences in creating and managing a social media presence. The LAECPT drafted a library social media strategy after attending a presentation by the URSMUG. The document's purpose is to set targets and measures for interactive two-way communication between the library, fans, and followers in the aforementioned online communities and engage users to help create posts with meaningful content (see Appendix A). Examples include sending a survey or soliciting an opinion about a topic or article. The number of questions, comments, re-tweets, and re-pins posted by followers and fans is an indicator that the library's postings are generating responses that include meaningful content. Offering prizes is an incentive to obtain feedback and start a discussion thread.

### **Enhancing the online catalog.**

The free social media resource, Pinterest, was utilized for showcasing newly acquired books. Pinterest is a social networking site that allows registered users to add (pin) and share photos to theme-based online boards. Additional themed boards were added to the library's Pinterest account to showcase, on a weekly basis, new hardcopy and electronic book acquisitions in 28 subject areas. Collaboration took place with the library's Collections and Assessment Team to devise subject headings. The Pinterest site provides a visual listing of book jackets and titles with each image hot linked to their online catalog (Voyager) records. A LAECPT member assists with adding new titles and staff in the library's Systems and Information Technology Department created an alternate drop-down menu by subject to access the books from the library's website (<http://www.uregina.ca/library/services/collections/new-books.html>).

### **Information monitors.**

LAECPT and the library's Systems and Information Technology Department collaborate in the management of the informational MS PowerPoint slides on the library's wall monitors. LAECPT investigated interactive digital signage to possibly enhance patrons' information experience with content viewed on the monitors. The timing was serendipitous because *The Carillon*, the University of Regina Students' Union newspaper, had recently published an article about information monitors on campus. Members of LAECPT met with the university's Supply Services Management Department to draft a tiered wish list of requirements. The department subsequently issued a request for information to which four vendors replied. A report of findings and recommendations was presented to the Library Leadership Team which identified new hardware and software for managing interactive display-based information monitors. The library's current system of running PowerPoint slides on its three monitors was

deemed adequate, but the library will monitor interest expressed by other academic and administrative units participating in a campus-wide information monitor system.

### **Informational social events.**

During academic year 2011-12, the library underwent major renovations to the study and leisure areas on the main floor, third, fourth and fifth floors. This included technological enhancements for computer work, the construction of two new classroom labs, additional study rooms, and lounge areas. A space allocation committee made recommendations to establish a sense of community in the library by having a more inviting and flexible use environment. In spring 2012, LAECPT organized an informational social for the university community to celebrate the end of this project. LAECPT members staffed a table with balloons and large signage outside the library's main entrance and distributed free cake and brochures about the building's new enhancements and space allocations.

Based upon positive comments from passers-by and library staff during the aforementioned spring event, a larger informational social was held in September 2012. It was called Patron Appreciation Day and the purpose was to welcome new and returning students, offer free refreshments, and hold a contest with prizes. Tables were set up near the library's main entrance and LAECPT members and library staff served free cake and popcorn. A contest called the "Six Word Library Story" was also promoted. The idea was based upon an article by Robert Miller about a library life in six-word memoir assignment at the University of Maryland University College. Miller (2011) wrote that that he had students in an online one-credit library skills course write a six-word memoir about their library, reading, and research experiences. During the four hour period, over 200 contest submissions were received and three winners were chosen

([http://www.uregina.ca/library/about\\_contact/library\\_information/announcements\\_content/2012/265.html](http://www.uregina.ca/library/about_contact/library_information/announcements_content/2012/265.html)). The event was deemed a success by the high turnout of students who visited the table in a relatively short period of time. LAECPT plans to make the patron appreciation day an annual fall event.

### **Newsletters.**

A member of LAECPT spearheaded a project to develop a monthly online newsletter. The targeted audience was University of Regina faculty and the intent was to showcase activities and accomplishments by staff in the library, archives, and the Centre for Teaching and Learning. LAECPT organized a newsletter name contest. The @Archer newsletter debuted in September 2011 and the editor sends monthly calls to all library staff for article submissions. To help streamline the process of writing newsletter content, all library units have a section in their meeting agenda titled Communications. Unit chairs submit comments to the newsletter editor for inclusion in the publication. All issues are archived in *oURspace* (<http://ourspace.uregina.ca/@Archer>). The length of the @Archer newsletter has averaged about two double sided pages and approximately 30 glossy issues per publication month have been printed and made available at library

service points. Quantitative assessment measures for the publication include the number of RSS feed subscribers. Numbers are low but anecdotal comments have been positive and the newsletter is one of the few regularly published newsletters by an academic or administrative unit on campus.

The Faculty of Kinesiology & Health Studies asked the LAECPT's chair to regularly submit promotional text about the library for a student-run electronic newsletter called Student Health 101 (<http://read101.ca/uregina.html>). The chair submitted a short paragraph of promotional text for placement in the virtual newsletter. LAECPT will investigate if there are other similar student-run newsletters to provide with promotional material.

### **Improving access to resources and services.**

The library's strategic plan includes a service efficiency objective to investigate improving signage (Maslany et al., 2010, p. 14). A member of LAECPT drafted a project to name the library's 12 study rooms and three public computer labs. The purpose was for patrons and library staff to more easily find and remember the numbered rooms on all five floors of the library building. Anecdotal comments from students are that many do not realize that the library has more than one floor. Room names were chosen to reflect natural features of the Saskatchewan landscape.<sup>3</sup> Feedback was solicited from selected university staff before the names were finalized. Anecdotal comments have been positive since the completion of the project

Another project to improve the experience of patrons using the library building occurred when a member of LAECPT initiated a pilot project to establish acceptable volume zones throughout the library. Three noise zones were designed to be conducive to single and group study and leisure.<sup>4</sup> Green zones were identified for group study and normal volume conversations, yellow for quiet study and minimal volume conversation, and red for silent study. Colorful tent signs on tables and floor plan signs were created by a graphic designer in the Centre for Teaching and Learning. Anecdotal feedback about the zones from a few students and faculty has been positive.

A visual enhancement within the library has been using a large glass display case to promote upcoming Beyond the Book Lecture Series sessions, new library resources, university events, and to celebrate prominent historical regional, national, and international events. Ideas for displays are discussed in team meetings and suggestions are added to a shared calendar in the university's email system. Displays usually change every few months. The case is located near the high traffic area Circulation Desk at the library's entrance.

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<sup>3</sup>[http://www.uregina.ca/library/about\\_contact/library\\_information/announcements\\_content/2012/261.html](http://www.uregina.ca/library/about_contact/library_information/announcements_content/2012/261.html)

<sup>4</sup>[http://www.uregina.ca/library/about\\_contact/library\\_information/announcements\\_content/2012/245.html](http://www.uregina.ca/library/about_contact/library_information/announcements_content/2012/245.html)

## **Student orientations and recruitment.**

LAECPT has helped promote the library across campus by working with the university's Student Recruitment and Enrolment Services Department. It has a program called UR Connected that invites academic and administrative units to offer orientations and staff booths for scheduled campus-wide events. Student Recruitment and Enrolment Services manages an Orientation Working Group that is comprised of members from various units, including the chair of LAECPT. They participate in a university-wide open house that is held every spring and fall for recruiting prospective high school students. Activities for attendees include visiting booths in a student fair and attending orientations and tours of academic and administrative units. The two-day event attracts hundreds of students and their parents.

The chair of LAECPT and the library's User Services Support Staff Coordinator schedule library tours and staff a library booth during university-wide open houses and new student orientations. Reference assistants also staff the booth and lead library orientations. Approximately 30 units on campus participate in fairs. There is friendly competition among them to attract the attention of students and parents in a relatively short period of time. The library's carnival-designed popcorn maker is a popular draw; free give-aways and promotional material are handed out and a large banner is erected by the booth. A member of LAECPT designed a promotional Prezi<sup>5</sup> presentation to run on a laptop during these events<sup>6</sup>.

Library promotional items (library branded hand sanitizers, small notebooks, pens, etc.) are sent to the university's Student Recruitment and Enrolment Services Department annually. They are included in an orientation package that is given to all new undergraduate students. Tablets have been purchased for top prizes in library-run student contests. In 2009, two 7-foot high retractable banners were designed to be used for promotional events. The designs are currently being refreshed to reflect changes in library services and resources and building enhancements. The chair of LAECPT is also responsible for coordinating updates to the library's resources and services brochure.<sup>7</sup>

## **Outreach to university employees.**

The University of Regina Human Resources Department contacted the chair of the LAECPT to coordinate with the library to host new university employee orientation sessions throughout the year. Sessions are primarily for staff, but faculty are also invited to attend short presentations from various academic and administration units on campus. The LAECPT chair schedules the library's two new state-of-the-art lab classrooms for the morning-long sessions. The chair also coordinates key representatives from the library (an Associate University Librarian, Centre for Teaching

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<sup>5</sup> Prezi (<http://www.prezi.com>) is cloud-based presentation software that has a canvas board to create content. Navigation within a presentation takes place by being able to zoom in and out within smaller informational sections. Prezi has a more dynamic feel than a Microsoft PowerPoint presentation.

<sup>6</sup> See <http://prezi.com/s97vmqohpxy5/open-house-slideshow-students>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.uregina.ca/library/assets/docs/pdf/resources-services.pdf>

and Learning, Archives, and Records Management, and Copyright) to make brief presentations. New employees are also provided with library promotional materials. The library's participation has been a beneficial experience because it can showcase its facility on a regular basis and also be a committed partner with a key administrative unit on campus.

The library also participates in annual new faculty orientation sessions. The university's President's Office schedules and organizes these day-long events with key academic and administrative units, including the library, providing brief orientations. The LAECPT chair ensures that library branded flash drives contain up-to-date PDF handouts about copyright, information literacy, library liaison program, and the library's resources and services brochure. They are given to the University Librarian prior to the orientation presentation.

### **Library Award**

A major undertaking by LAECPT in 2011 was to promote the library's resources and services to undergraduate students. The idea originated from meetings that took place in 2009 between the University Librarian and academic and administrative units to establish a library award to support undergraduate student research. In 2011 the new chair of the LAECPT met with the new University Librarian to jump-start the initiative. The chair of the LAECPT subsequently held discussions with the university's Donor Relations Department and Student Awards and Financial Aid (SAFA). The proposed award required students to write a compelling 500 word reflective essay that showed evidence of significant inquiry using the library's resources and services. Undergraduate students would also document their learning about the research and information-gathering process required to complete their major research project. It was deemed an opportunity that could generate interest among the undergraduate student population for utilizing the library by rewarding them for their work.

The University of Regina Library committed \$10,000 to have a \$1,000 Dr. John Archer Library Award given annually to one undergraduate student over a ten-year period starting in 2012. A letter of intent that explained the award's funding stream was drafted by the university's Donor Relations Department and co-signed by the University Librarian. The next step in establishing the new library award involved the chair of the LAECPT meeting with SAFA, drafting the terms of reference, and having it signed by the University Librarian and SAFA. The application submission process was eased by the fact that SAFA recently introduced a common award application form and a central collection point for students to submit applications. Submitting a reflective essay was a key component in the award's application. A graded research project could be from any completed undergraduate level course taken within the last year. It also needed to be included in the application and vetted by the professor who did the grading.

The chair of the LAECPT drafted terms of reference for the award's judging panel. It was initially comprised of at least two librarians and one external faculty member advisor for a two-year term. The chair was a standing member on the panel, liaised

between SAFA and the judging panel, and forwarded completed applications from SAFA to the panel members. A marking rubric for the award's essay was also created. The terms of reference also stated that the chair did not grade reflective essays and only helped select a recipient if there was a tie. It was important to have an impartial member on the judging panel and the chair filled this role. The LAECPT chair then informed SAFA and all library staff of the recipient's name. SAFA subsequently contacted the recipient, ensured the funds were transferred to their bank account, and that the award's name would appear on the student's transcript. A bibliographic record for the award that includes the recipient's reflective essay and a copy of their research project are archived in oURspace (<http://ourspace.uregina.ca/handle/10294/3500>).

### **Statistics for the award.**

Webpage traffic for the library award increased in 2013 compared to 2012. In 2013, there were 114 unique user page views and the average length of time spent by a patron was three minutes during SAFA's application submission period (January to February). In 2012, the library award's information page had 34 unique user page views and the average length of time patrons spent on the page was just under five minutes.

There was a decrease in the number of award application submissions in 2013 compared to 2012. In the first year, Winter 2012 Semester, 24 submissions were received by SAFA and 13 were correctly completed. In the Winter 2013 semester 20 submissions were received and eight were correctly completed. One reason for the decline in successfully completed applications was that the LAECPT chair implemented a mandatory faculty reference letter to be included with the submission to ensure that the graded research assignment submitted with the library award application was legitimate. Many students did not include a letter in the application so the LAECPT will investigate strategies to possibly simplify this process.

### **Promotion of the award.**

Promoting the library award since its inception has been rewarding and challenging. Strategies have included designing a poster for advertisement on campus, writing short articles in the @Archer newsletter, messaging on social media, and sending an announcement to the deans and directors email list. A webpage was created that posted a FAQ and a libguide about the award:  
[http://www.uregina.ca/library/about\\_contact/library\\_information/library-award.html](http://www.uregina.ca/library/about_contact/library_information/library-award.html).

All library staff were informed about the new award and were encouraged to promote it at appropriate points of contact. LAECPT paid for a full page advertisement about the award and a half page advertisement in the student union handbook promoting the numerous ways in which the library can offer research assistance. New strategies that will be pursued or investigated include

- housing a semi-permanent poster display in the library showcasing the award and past recipients' work;
- creating an award slide for the library's three information monitors;

- designing promotional bookmarks for distribution at service points and for inserting in checked-out material;
- adding promotional text on a new library tote bag;
- re-designing the award's promotional poster;
- having the University Librarian present an award certificate to the recipient in a photo opportunity;
- contacting the award recipient's faculty or department as an information item;
- visiting student department and faculty lounges;
- giving a presentation during student union council meetings;
- writing short announcements about the award and annual recipients for placement in the university's alumni newsletter;
- encouraging subject liaison librarians to promote the award to groups (e.g., faculty/department meetings, library instruction, and other appropriate points of contact) and submit statistics (date and occasion) to LAECPT;
- updating a spreadsheet for collecting aforementioned quantitative data;
- utilizing library's Facebook page to advertise the award.

## **Community Involvement**

LAECPT keeps the general public informed about select library activities. For example, information about upcoming Beyond the Book Lecture Series (BTBLS) sessions are emailed to a library donors list. The university's External Relations Department is informed of upcoming library lectures for placement in its alumni newsletter. Lectures will also be advertised in two free community newspapers.

LAECPT has been involved in outreach initiatives with individuals outside the university to draw larger audiences. The Saskatchewan Science Centre is sent paper and electronic copies of promotional posters for science-based library lectures. The Science Centre, in turn, forwards the announcements to its members list. The head curator of Regina's largest art gallery, the MacKenzie Art Gallery, accepted an invitation by the University Archivist to do a BTBLS presentation. It is envisioned that the art gallery can be involved with future fine arts themed lectures. The BTBLS hosted lectures on the topic of open access during the global Open Access Week in 2012. Speakers were from other academic units at the university, an academic institution from another Canadian province, and the City of Regina. LAECPT is planning to invite more speakers from outside the university to draw potentially larger audiences.

## **Provincial Library and Literacy Office.**

An objective in the library's strategic plan's partnership section states "Develop collaborative project with Provincial Library to circulate their heritage language collections through Voyager to increase their circulation and serve multilingual clients" (Maslany et al., 2010, p. 11). Saskatchewan's Provincial Library and Literacy Office (PLLO) has a unit called Multilingual Services that holds the province's largest collection of materials in various languages. Materials in the collection, called the Provincial Heritage Collection, can be loaned to Saskatchewan residents who hold a local public

library card. PLLO wanted to promote its Provincial Heritage Collection more creatively and thus approached the University of Regina Library.

Under the agreement with the PLLO, the University of Regina Library can download mutually agreed MARC records in the Provincial Heritage Collection. The first targeted language was Spanish, due to the large number of records (approximately 6,000) and their ease with importing into the University of Regina Library's Voyager system. University patrons request titles online and books are delivered by a PLLO courier within a few days. In addition, about 100 books were sent to the library for display and to provide a browsing collection. Staff from the Multilingual Services unit chose titles for this collection from four areas: fiction, non-fiction, juvenile, and easy. Titles are replaced with new ones in the shared collection every semester. The chair of the LAECPT and University of Regina Library's Supervisor of Circulation have managed this project with assistance from Multilingual Services.

Implementation of the project provided seamless access for the University of Regina community to borrow books from the Provincial Heritage Collection. However, usage statistics were low during the first year of the project and factors included the low number of Spanish speaking students on campus and limited promotional activities. Chinese will be the next targeted language in the shared collection. The reason is that students from China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan represent the largest number of English as a Second Language (ESL) students at the University of Regina. A 2012 report from the University of Regina's Office of Resource Planning, *Fall 2012 (201230) Fall Census Count*, calculated that this cohort represents 5% of the total number of undergraduate and graduate students. It is assumed that a majority of these students speak the same language. The second largest group of ESL students at the university that likely speak the same language are from the Middle East and North Africa. The aforementioned report by the Office of Resource Planning (2012) calculated that this cohort represents 1.1% of the total undergraduate and graduate students. It is assumed that a majority of these students speak Arabic. This language will also be targeted as a future shared collection.

The Collection Development Librarian was appointed to be the University of Regina's representative on the PLLO's Multilingual Services Committee. It meets semi-annually and membership is open to institutions across the province that provide resources and services to ESL patrons or who wish to better promote themselves.

It has been beneficial to see presentations by non-library organizations in the province and see opportunities for strengthening communication with this group of patrons. Promotional strategies, such as an improved displays and an informational social event, will be planned and promoted by word-of-mouth, postings to email lists, social media, and the @Archer newsletter. LAECPT will also communicate with the university's International Office which provides resources and services to foreign students.

## Measuring Success

For many of its activities, the LAECPT has relied on what Mathews (2009) describes as response-based advertising or a call to action where patrons are asked to respond to a marketing message. Initiatives by LAECPT include inviting undergraduate students to apply for the library award and for the university community to attend library sponsored lectures and information socials. Another method of marketing activities has been through word-of-mouth. Mathews (2009) writes that libraries need to factor in some level of accountability and test the impact of these efforts. However, he states that measuring the impact of advertising requires a triangulation of metrics while admitting that success is subjective and can be difficult to pinpoint:

Communication should be approached more philosophically by viewing our marketing as a chance to elevate the role of the library in our students' mind. We should smash their preconceptions of what a library is and instead demonstrate what it can become. (p.140-141)

Measuring the effectiveness of LAECPT projects has proved to be challenging. The LAECPT has relied primarily on quantitative data to track usage and evaluate its activities. Webpages to add analytics to, in addition to those the LAECPT already analyzes, include pages for individual BTBLS session announcements and new books by subject in the library's Pinterest account. LAECPT would like to investigate employing qualitative methods to help gauge the success of its activities.

LAECPT participation in university open houses for prospective students and their parents is an opportunity to promote the library and have a positive impact on student recruitment efforts. Student Recruitment and Enrolment Services surveys families who attend open houses. One question asks for feedback from department or faculty orientations they attended. There were 14 replies about the library and 11 rated that its orientation was excellent or good at the University of Regina (University of Regina, Student Recruitment, Enrolment Services, 2012). Approximately 1200 people attended one of the two open houses in 2012 and 105 replied for a survey response rate of 8.8%. One of the questions asked the respondent to rate the impact the open house had on their post-secondary plans. A vast majority responded that they would most likely or definitely attend the university because of the open house. This survey data is useful, helping the LAECPT to measure the impact the library has on those that participate in open houses.

## Recommendations

It is common for universities and colleges to host several public lectures on and off campus throughout the year. A library can investigate hosting a specialized discussion topic or pursue co-sponsorship with another academic unit. LAECPT will investigate hosting more student-focused events in conjunction with BTBLS. One example is partnering with the Faculty of Fine Arts and holding a small music ensemble or string

quartet in conjunction with a lecture. Also, short lectures can be tied to screenings of student-produced films.

It is advantageous for a library to have services such as graphic design, media/audio visual, computing services, and a copyright office freely available, or at a reduced cost, for a promotions team to pursue and manage projects. The University of Regina Library is one of the few academic and administrative units that has resources to design high-end promotional material, with the ability to record and archive audio and video recordings of presentations. Much time and money has been saved by having in-house access to these resources. The university's Copyright Officer has an office in the library. This individual has been consulted for copyright compliance of images, music, and video clips in promotional materials and lecture recordings.

A library promotions team can investigate writing a column or one-off articles in their institution's student union newspaper or student-run department publications. Advertisements could be put in student-run print and online publications. Student associations can also be approached for posting library promotional material in their lounges. Many students tend to use personal email accounts rather than their university issued ones, so libraries should not expect large response rates for surveys and announcements sent to institutional email accounts. To offset costs it is recommended to print limited quantities of signs, posters, and brochures and post them in strategic locations on campus. QR codes are useful to include in literature. Investigate free advertising in local newspapers and other media outlets.

Documenting promotional tasks and procedures for managing activities and identifying individuals for the work is advisable. It is important for a promotions team chair to understand that individuals on a promotions team are volunteering their time. Consideration should be made when assigning work or creating new projects. The chair should be open minded to new ideas and accept constructive criticism. The individual may be responsible for ensuring that all projects are completed and may need to take on additional work on short notice to complete outstanding tasks. Strong communication channels should also be maintained with all individuals involved in an event and it is important that their recognition is acknowledged.

Another recommendation is to establish a time frame for developing a new event or resource and how its success can be measured. Do not despair if statistics (webpage counts, event attendance statistics, etc.) are low. It will likely take time for a new event or resource to gain traction. Scheduling public lectures strategically during the academic year will give time for organizing and promoting the event.

When selecting give-aways (e.g., glue sticks, packages of Kleenex, tote bags), it is suggested you purchase more than one kind of product to see what will be popular. Working with a local supplier who has connections with vendors nationwide may be easier for communicating with and returning defective items. Confirming the price per unit, bulk discounts, cost for artwork (branding and mock-ups), and shipping time are important before confirming an order. In addition, a chair should solicit ideas from team

members and library staff at service points for new promotional items to order. It is prudent to keep track of the team's budget balance and, depending upon the institution, ensure all funds are spent by the end of the fiscal year.

### **Conclusion**

Creating a library promotions team, setting goals, a budget, and developing an assessment strategy requires the support of an administration office, university library or director. Implementing activities that are tied to objectives in a strategic plan and subsequently recording them in a library's quarterly or annual report are also beneficial for a team's long-term success. The LAECPT wants to ensure that it continues to reach out to students and as many relevant units and agencies as possible on and off campus while keeping cognizant of staff time and the resources that are needed. Its role may evolve over time, but LAECPT's mandate will ensure that future changes reflect the continuity of the team's planning and activities.

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## Appendix A

### Social Media Strategy Document for the University of Regina Library

#### Objective

The University of Regina Library is making increased use of social media in its operations. The purpose of this strategy document is to set aims and measures for our use of social media. The Library wishes to interact with a community of engaged users who create meaningful online content. Social media tools assist our ultimate aim in reaching our students, faculty, and staff and sharing our resources and services with them.

Purpose	Social Media Tool
Share upcoming sessions, services, new and featured resources, photographs, promote events, connect with other departments on campus, answer questions, etc.	Facebook
Share upcoming sessions, services, new and featured resources, photographs, promote events, connect with other departments on campus, answer questions, etc.	Twitter
Promote new collections, displays, events, library spaces, etc.	Pinterest

#### Promotion and monitoring

The library will utilize university communications tools to promote its specific social media tools. Promotion of these social media tools is also done through brochures, information monitor slides, library sessions, library website, and @Archer newsletter. The administrators of these social media sites will monitor and be responsible for responding to comments on our specific social media tools. Other library staff may provide assistance and/or advice.

#### Assessment and review

This Social Media Strategy will be reviewed at the end of each semester (Fall, Winter, Spring/Summer) to ensure that objectives are being met and that the

strategy, as a whole, remains responsive. Key success measures that will be used to assess the strategy are listed below.

<b>Desired outcome</b>	<b>Social Media Tool</b>
Discussion, comments, questions on posts, images, videos. Increased fan base.	Facebook
Increased followers, retweets, mentions, questions.	Twitter
Increased friends, repins, comments, favourite photos.	Pinterest

An increase in numbers within the categories below will be a major statistical measurement for the success of the Library's social media strategy.

#### **Statistics for May 2012 to March 2013**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Facebook</b>
Fans	Start 248 – Current 337
Questions	1
Likes	139
Comments	23
Shares	30 (other academic units)

<b>Category</b>	<b>Twitter</b>
Followers	Start 200 – Current 266
Questions	4
Retweets	28
Mentions	62
Tweets	Start 642 – Current 882

Category	Pinterest
Fans	Start 11 – Current 253
Comments	23
Repins	222
Likes	104
“What are you Reading”	83

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