

2CUL

The Columbia University Libraries/Information Services Cornell University Library

1. Objectives

In January 2013, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation awarded a grant of \$350,000 to the Cornell University Library, for use over a three-year period to support two key objectives of the next phase of the Columbia/Cornell initiative (2CUL) associated with integrating technical services operations across the two library systems. The terms of this initiative are outlined in detail in the proposal submitted by Anne R. Kenney and James G. Neal in their letter of September 12, 2012 and Thomas H. Frank's letter on the same date, both addressed to Donald J. Waters.

With Mellon's support, the two key goals of this project are:

1. Reconceive separate library operations at each campus to achieve integration across both campuses by realigning staff responsibilities, workflows, and reporting lines to reflect an integrated operation; and
2. Ensure that all technical services staff on both campuses understand and embrace 2CUL as an institutional goal and view inter-institutional collaboration as part of normal library operations.

2. Deliverables

By project's end, December 2015, we expect the following deliverables:

- An integrated technical services operation supporting both institutions and enabling staff to support specialized services and address new needs, e.g., metadata creation, web cataloging, digital preservation, and e-resource management. Savings, cost avoidance, and reinvestments resulting from the integration will be measured using the financial model developed in Phase 1.
- Staff support for 2CUL as an integral part of technical services for both libraries, evaluated by the range of collaborative activities, staff surveys assessing readiness, preparedness, and attitudes, and the inclusion of 2CUL participation in job descriptions and performance reviews.
- Presentations and publications to keep the research library community informed.

3. Accomplishments

The following summarizes the progress made in meeting the goals for TSI and related work during the first year of the project, January 1, 2013 – December 31, 2013, which we called TSI Phase 1.

Goal 1: Reconceive separate library operations at each campus to achieve integration across both campuses by realigning staff responsibilities, workflows, and reporting lines to reflect an integrated operation.

To lead the Technical Services Integration (TSI) initiative, the libraries set up the following team structure:

- Two Technical Services Integration Managers (one from each institution) to lead the project
- A TSI Steering Committee (three participants from each institution, including the TSI Managers) to help plan and guide the project
- A Joint Senior Managers Integration Network, or JSMIN (made up of the technical services departmental directors from both institutions, plus the TSI Steering Committee) to initiate the incremental integration of the two divisions, with particular focus on staffing and resource issues
- A TSI Administrative Team (composed of the 2CUL Project Directors, the TSI Managers, and liaisons for assessment and human resources from both institutions) to deal with those aspects of TSI that exceed the scope of the TSI Steering Committee and the JSMIN group
- Several functional working groups and other teams (made up of supervisors, coordinators, and other key staff from both institutions) to examine existing policies, practices, and workflows and recommend and test potentially productive integration strategies

The most critical component in this structure has been the functional working groups, covering the myriad areas of these two large library divisions: batch processing, copy cataloging, database maintenance, electronic resources, electronic resource troubleshooting, monograph ordering and receiving, non-MARC metadata, original cataloging, and print serials. In addition, teams were created to review and monitor e-resource platforms jointly and to provide shared support for remote desktop computing between institutions. By appointing mid-level staff to conduct their own inventories and hands-on investigations of current policies, practices, and workflows, and to envision which tasks will be most mutually beneficial to integrate, we can draw on the collective wisdom of those who know the functions best and are in an optimal position to analyze and critique their findings.

Although the TSI Phase 1 charges for each of the working groups varied somewhat, the fundamental aspects of every charge included: the compilation of inventories of each unit's staff, expertise, policies, practices, and workflows; the exchange of information regarding reporting and decision-making structures, as well as dependencies for and limitations on the scope of each unit; and the sharing of baseline numbers, when available. The TSI Steering Committee also asked each group to submit recommendations, ideas, and suggestions for moving the project forward beyond the initial phase of information gathering.

The results of this initial planning phase were gratifying and impressive in that they provided concrete near-term opportunities to act upon and future areas to explore. The ten working groups produced a rich array of insightful and thorough reports. While some teams expressed reservations about the potential for productive integration within their areas (Print Serials, for example), others were expansive and clearly eager to get started (including the E-Resources and Non-MARC Metadata Working Groups). In all cases, the documents spoke reams, explicitly and implicitly, about

the groups' levels of integration-readiness, as well as supplying a useful overview of the individual libraries' technical services operations. In fact, these reports represent one of the most thorough comparative studies of research library technical services ever conducted. After distilling and discussing the most salient features from the working group reports, the TSI Steering Committee – with significant input from the JSMIN group – reviewed, prioritized, and provided initial support and approval for those recommendations, ideas, and suggestions that seemed most profitable to pursue. The working groups have since been recharged to begin the incremental integration of technical services workflows, practices, policies, and projects.

Goal 2: Ensure that all technical services staff on both campuses understand and embrace 2CUL as an institutional goal and view inter-institutional collaboration as part of normal library operations.

Although the directors for Library Human Resources and assessment leads from both institutions have been serving on the TSI Administrative Team, solicitation of staff input and buy-in to the 2CUL model has so far been conducted in conjunction with the “middle-out” approach described above under Goal 1. Involving supervisors, coordinators, and other key staff from the various functional areas in 2CUL technical services means that mid-level staff (with input, as appropriate, from those they represent) share in TSI planning and take ownership of the investigations, testing, and eventual integration of their respective functional areas from the project's inception. With the assistance of assigned liaisons from the TSI Steering Committee, leads from the working groups help to create a well-supported conduit for information flowing both to and out from their teams. While the TSI Steering Committee has overall responsibility for organization of the TSI planning effort, the plan itself will ultimately be designed by the working groups.

We originally planned to conduct an all technical services staff survey to assess readiness, preparedness, and attitudes, and the inclusion of 2CUL participation in job descriptions and performance reviews. This would help us convene discussions and reviews to assess organizational cultures, build trust, and engage staff in managing change and organizational alignment. We also planned to use the findings to conduct a before and after comparison later in the project. This proved to be a much more challenging task, because it requires extensive negotiation before such a survey could be administered to unionized staff at Columbia. The libraries are advised to put it off indefinitely. Because such an assessment is still essential, we decided to survey two different groups in the libraries: all technical services staff at Cornell and only the non-union staff at Columbia. The result will not be as representative as we wished and the data analysis will be a challenge. Still, having some baseline data will be invaluable. The survey will be administered in early 2014.

Communication beyond those formally involved in the planning process has taken multiple forms. The Integration Managers have posted ten “Occasional Progress Reports” (see <https://confluence.cornell.edu/x/pgNRD>) since November 2012, focusing exclusively on TSI, to supplement the more general, monthly 2CUL progress reports issued by the 2CUL Project Directors to staff in both institutions. They have also established a listserv for all 2CUL technical services staff and have each held informational meetings at their separate institutions, sometimes in conjunction with broader 2CUL information sessions. TSI Steering Committee members have also participated, in person, in TSI “open houses” at both Columbia and Cornell. In addition, four TSI Steering Committee members participated in a round table during Cornell's annual Career Development Week in Spring 2013 called “2CUL Technical Services Integration: Comparing Notes,” an event held

at Cornell with interactive participation at Columbia via Polycom videoconferencing. Most importantly, the Integration Managers established an active, public wiki for sharing and archiving project information.

Although we have not yet created any explicitly joint, ongoing job assignments, the two institutions have drafted language (with input from our respective Library Human Resources Directors) for new and updated job descriptions to indicate the possibility and appropriateness of performing work for “partner institutions.” In addition, staff from the partner institutions have begun to serve on each other’s search committees, including those for key leadership positions in 2CUL technical services. These include the search for a new Director of Cataloging and Metadata Services at Cornell, a new Director of Monographs Processing Services at Columbia, and a new Chinese Cataloger at Columbia. 2CUL technical services staff have also been presenting together, as 2CUL colleagues, at national meetings – most notably at the 2013 Electronic Resources & Libraries Conference in Austin, where staff from Columbia and Cornell University Libraries served on panels devoted to managing emerging e-resource user needs, ongoing development of best practices for the management of streaming video collections at the 2CUL libraries, and e-resource troubleshooting in a unified 2CUL context.

4. Challenges

Beyond the formidable challenge of integrating two large library processing units located over 200 miles apart, there are two other significant obstacles to an ideal operational integration that emerged in 2013.

First, Columbia and Cornell will not implement a shared library management system (LMS) before June 2016. In our opinion, the Ex Libris Alma system is not yet robust enough to meet our joint functional needs, nor do their competitors have anything better to offer at this time. Moreover, developing a formal 2CUL MOU and pushing it through the university legal review took much longer than anticipated, thus delaying negotiations with Ex Libris and making the implementation by the original date, June 2015, unfeasible. While not essential for many aspects of TSI, a shared LMS will ultimately provide us with an effective platform for integrated workflows. This delay may be a blessing in disguise, however, in that it will allow us to make greater progress towards integration over the next two years without the serious demands of implementing a new and still-developing LMS at the same time.

Second, university limitations related to reporting, directing, and accountability within the proposed virtually integrated structure (e.g. Columbia staff cannot report to supervisors at Cornell and vice versa) have just recently become clear, and additional work must be done to define these relationships that will undoubtedly require some rethinking about TSI. We believe these obstacles can be overcome, but the savings is likely to be smaller than if both operation and management were integrated.

5. Project Personnel

There have been no significant changes in the staffing plan of the project. However, two members of the Steering Committee from Cornell, Lee Cartmill and Janet McCue, retired. They have been

replaced by Ezra Delaney, Associate University Librarian for Administrative Services, and Kornelia Tancheva, Associate University Librarian for Research and Learning Services.

6. Publications

Columbia University Libraries and Cornell University Library. "2CUL Phase 2 – Technical Services Integration [project wiki], <https://confluence.cornell.edu/display/2cullts/2CUL+Phase+2+--+Technical+Services+Integration>.

Columbia University Libraries and Cornell University Library. "Project Reports, Milestones and Other Planning Details," <https://confluence.cornell.edu/display/2cullts/Project+Reports%2C+Milestones%2C+and+Other+Planning+Details>.

Columbia University Libraries and Cornell University Library. "TSI Phase 1 Working Group Reports – Recommendations, Ideas, and Suggestions," <https://confluence.cornell.edu/display/2cullts/TSI+Phase+1+Working+Group+Reports+--+Recommendations%2C+Ideas%2C+and+Suggestions>.

Harcourt, Kate and Jim LeBlanc. "Planning from the Middle Out: Phase 1 of 2CUL Technical Services Integration" (article forthcoming in *Collaborative Librarianship*).

Harlow, Christina. "2CUL: An Example of Collaboration for the 21st Century." Unpublished student paper, Graduate School of Library and Information Science, Queens College, City University of New York, Spring 2013.

Wolven, Robert. "Assessing Cataloging, An Administrator's Perspective: Cross-Institutional Assessment within 2CUL." Presentation to the Association for Library Collections & Technical Services' Heads of Cataloging Discussion Group at the 2013 ALA Annual Conference, Chicago IL, July 1, 2013.

Li, Xin. "哥伦比亚和康奈尔大学图书馆合作项目 2CUL 的进展介绍" (Translation: Progresses of the Columbia and Cornell University Libraries' 2CUL Project) Presentation at the 10th Advanced Digital Seminar, Shenzhen, China, June 6, 2013.

7. Intellectual Property

There are no intellectual property agreements associated with this project.

8. Future Plans

Goal 1: Reconceive separate library operations at each campus to achieve integration across both campuses by realigning staff responsibilities, workflows, and reporting lines to reflect an integrated operation.

In the next phase of the project, the functional working groups will leverage their knowledge and understanding of each other's operations, gleaned in TSI Phase 1. Their goals will be to: (1) evaluate and test options for streamlining or improving workflows, individually or jointly, to maximize effectiveness and improve service to users, (2) investigate ways to expand the collective scope of 2CUL technical services in cost-effective ways, and (3) work with TSI Steering, JSMIN, and other stakeholders to extend TSI models, innovations, insights, and cultural synergy to other library operations and divisions.

Goal 2: Ensure that all technical services staff on both campuses understand and embrace 2CUL as an institutional goal and view inter-institutional collaboration as part of normal library operations.

As examination and testing of specific shared functions progresses, we will necessarily bring more and more staff into the planning and evaluative process. The TSI Steering Committee and its working groups will mount pilot projects in multiple functional areas that will test not only the feasibility and limits of merging specific activities but options for managing and leading operations in what will be a "virtual" organization – that is, an integrated library operation with dedicated staff who will technically remain employees of and report to their respective home institutions, but who are directed as an integrated group with its own organizational structure, accountability, and cultural identity. In order to assist with this latter task, the two institutions plan to adopt and co-sign a 2CUL memorandum of understanding (MOU) in 2014 that will both guide the 2CUL partnership as a whole and inform the MOUs and other, more specific agreements required to support TSI. With the help of our respective Library Human Resources Directors and assessment leads, we also plan to measure more formally, through a broad-based survey, technical services staff reception and buy-in for the project, as well as establishing structures and guidelines for leadership, performance, and goal-setting in the 2CUL Technical Services environment.

9. Financial Narrative

Please refer to the Financial Report from Cornell's Sponsored Financial Services Office appended to this report.

- Personnel, Benefits: No significant variance.
- Subcontracts
 - Salary and Benefits: The variance is due to subaward invoicing procedures. Subcontract (Columbia) salary and benefits covers 01/01/2013 to 09/30/2013 only. Invoices covering 10/01/2013-12/31/2013 processed after 12/31/2013 result in no significant variance for the period 01/01/2013 to 12/31/2013.
- Travel: The combined \$4,825 variance in travel is caused by several factors. In Phase I of the project, which was exploratory in the nature of the work, Cornell and Columbia spent significant time reviewing organizational charts, workflow, and procedures that did not require as much travel as originally planned. In addition, some travelers have stayed with friends and family rather than in a hotel, which was an unexpected savings. As we move into Phase 2 of the project, we are more actively engaged in joint workflow and anticipate travel accordingly. Cornell and Columbia will monitor this expense area, and if needed, request a budget modification to direct the funds to another area of expense that will enhance project success.