

# 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.

The logistics of this effort have been more complex than originally anticipated. In a meeting with Waters on November 7, 2014, Kenney and Neal reviewed progress on the project as well as challenges involving cultural differences at the university level, union restrictions, limits on access to each other's financial systems, and deferred purchase of a shared library management system. These obstacles have made deep collaboration as originally envisioned and creation of a new cross-institutional organizational structure impossible. For this reason, the two libraries have redirected staff effort from focusing on integration (TSI) to actionable initiatives in the two Library Technical Services units.

### 2. Deliverables

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

- A formal alliance of technical services operations to expand expertise and generate cost savings through select shared workflows, collaborative projects, and a robust consultative culture. Qualitative improvements in service and support for the collections, as well as savings and cost avoidance will be assessed at the conclusion of the project.
- Staff support for 2CUL as an important component of technical services for both libraries, as measured by tangible and intangible gains and losses, attitude and perception changes.
- Presentations and publications to keep the research library community informed.

### 3. Accomplishments

The following summarizes the progress made in meeting the goals for TSI during the second year of the project, January 1, 2014 – December 31, 2014, which we are calling TSI Phase 2.

*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.*

As indicated above, significant obstacles to operational integration led the libraries to re-imagine TSI as a Technical Services “Initiative” in mid-2014. To this end, the project’s first goal has been modified to reconceive library operations at each campus to undertake investigations, projects, and other collaborative assignments based on four driving factors that have guided 2CUL since its inception: quality, productivity, improvement, and innovation.

Among the most significant accomplishments in 2014 was that the middle-level managers involved in TSI felt empowered to recommend and were able to execute this pivot fairly smoothly. With strong support from the 2CUL Project Directors, the TSI Joint Senior Managers Network (or JSMIN, a planning team made up of the technical services departmental directors from both institutions, plus members of the original TSI Steering Committee) turned its attention from the increasingly difficult task of integrating the two divisions to developing an action plan and rationale for what they felt the divisions *could* do.

In addition, the TSI E-Resources Working Group completed a migration of Cornell’s electronic resource management (ERM) data to ProQuest’s 360 Resource Manager system in late summer, a product that Columbia had been using for quite some time. The two libraries now use the same ERM system, as well as the same link resolver (ProQuest 360 Link), an operational agreement that opens the way to potentially productive collaboration, such as: joint troubleshooting of e-resource access problems; joint management of shared data and contacts; integrated workflows for account management, including work on renewals; and coordination of renewal cycles to allow more opportunities to eliminate redundant work. The two libraries had already initiated joint negotiations, as 2CUL, for certain e-resource packages and had begun to realize savings in their collections budget, even before their decision to coordinate ERM activities. Thus, the original intention to integrate the two divisions, although in retrospect overly ambitious, led to broad-scale planning in the first year of the project – planning that involved representatives from every functional unit in 2CUL technical services. This work consequently prepared staff for the kind of smaller-scale, though nonetheless strategically motivated reconception of TSI that characterized the second year of the initiative.

Although the progress towards more integrated e-resource management represents the most noteworthy advance in the second year of TSI, the lower impact approach that some of the other working groups have adopted, in the absence of shared systems, is reaping smaller, but still meaningful benefits for the two institutions as well. The Batch Processing Working Group meets regularly by phone to investigate ways to diminish IT workloads and to share data and expertise. The TSI Cataloging Working Group is coordinating joint 2CUL participation in national initiatives – such as the use of the Faceted Application of Subject Terminology (FAST), BIBFRAME training and testing (for which 2CUL cooperation led to a 67% reduction in training costs), and contributions to the Contemporary Composers Web Archive – as well as sharing expertise in such languages as Georgian and Thai. The TSI Non-MARC Metadata Working Group now coordinates metadata forums at the two institutions and invites 2CUL participation from both libraries in most sessions via WebEx. The group also invites individuals from the partnering institution to participate in person in select local forums such as open staff sessions for 2CUL progress reports. Finally, as a first step in examining more deeply the differences in 2CUL institutional culture and practices, and the reasons for them, the TSI Managers are working with the leads of the Print Serials Working Group to conduct in-depth reviews of print serials management workflows at both institutions. TSI planners hope that this study will not only reveal the roots and ramifications of what

seem to be significant differences in practice at Columbia (where print serials processing is chiefly decentralized) and at Cornell (where processing is mostly centralized) but will also lead to recommended improvements and establish a methodology for further such investigations, within 2CUL technical services and beyond.

*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.*

Solicitation of staff input and buy-in for the 2CUL model continues to take place chiefly in conjunction with the “middle-out” approach to the project – that is, the charging of mid-level staff (chiefly managers, supervisors, and coordinators) to recommend and carry out the most promising investigations, projects, and collaborative assignments to support the overall goal of the initiative. With support from JSMIN, it is they who have initiated most of the work associated with Goal 1.

Additionally, with guidance from the directors for Library Human Resources and the assessment leads from both institutions, TSI planners distributed a survey to technical services staff in the spring of 2014 to assess readiness, preparedness, and attitudes towards the project. While the survey was distributed to all technical services staff at Cornell, union issues limited its distribution at Columbia to non-union staff. The goal of the survey was to establish a baseline of staff’s perception of 2CUL’s viability and usefulness against which progress can be measured at the end of the project. On average, respondents believed that integration of technical services would have a negative impact in all areas surveyed, but especially on efficiency, communication, and decision-making. These results were hardly surprising, given the aforementioned cultural and institutional barriers that have impeded integration efforts.

Surprisingly, however, the mood among members of the TSI JSMIN group began to change with the project’s reconception in June. With the de-prioritization of operational integration, activities associated with TSI began to feel more natural, not as forced. Project participants had begun to think beyond their own libraries, to see each other as a sounding board. This perspective was affirmed a short time later in a discussion with TSI working group leads, who maintained that the project had begun to feel “organic” in several functional areas and that this increasingly comfortable interpersonal climate would serve the two libraries well when we reach the point of implementing a shared library management system.

Communication beyond those formally involved in the planning process continues to take multiple forms. The Integration Managers posted six “Occasional Progress Reports” (see <https://confluence.cornell.edu/x/pgNRD>) in 2014, focusing exclusively on TSI, to supplement the more general 2CUL progress reports issued by the 2CUL Project Directors to staff in both institutions. Project planners also continue to use a listserv to communicate with all 2CUL technical services staff and a project wiki for sharing and archiving project information. In addition, eight representatives from the TSI functional working groups participated in a round table during Cornell’s annual Career Development Week called “2CUL Technical Services Integration: Making It Real.” This event took place in the spring, with interactive participation at Columbia via Polycom videoconferencing. Columbia and Cornell staff also continued to work together in national forums, leading a hands-on workshop on the collaborative evaluation of vendor e-resource interfaces at the Electronic Resources and Libraries Conference in Austin, Texas in March, and delivering a joint presentation on managing streaming media in library collections at the Charleston Conference on Book and Serial Acquisitions in November.

Both institutions now routinely include language addressing the possibility and appropriateness of performing work for “partner institutions” in most new and updated technical services job descriptions.

#### **4. Challenges**

As an enabling strategy for Technical Services Integration and other aspects of 2CUL, the two libraries, working with their respective university counsels, developed a formal governance agreement for the partnership. During that process and through discussion of specific existing and planned initiatives the partners encountered significant obstacles to creating a new cross-institutional organizational structure. These barriers are:

- Columbia and Cornell staff may not supervise staff at the partner institution. Overhead for supporting two administratively separate, broadly-scoped operations will significantly erode any ongoing savings generated by the project.
- Neither library may authorize spending of the other's money.

With an understanding of these limitations, two libraries have developed a set of 2CUL Guiding Principles (Appendix 1) and (again in conjunction with university counsels) developed an addendum to the governance agreement setting forth specific terms and conditions governing cross-institutional work. Although these developments require a reconception of the project's goals, the resulting formal agreements establish a framework that ensures continuing support for the project among university administrators and enables the libraries to pursue joint initiatives that – although more modest than originally conceived – will yield long-term benefits for the two separate technical services operations.

Throughout the first half of 2014, Columbia and Cornell pursued joint negotiations for the testing, licensing and use of Ex Libris' Alma software as a shared library management system (LMS) that would support integrated technical services operations. While the analysis and planning that informed this effort remain valid and strategically important to 2CUL, the libraries decided in late summer to suspend negotiations for one year principally due to Alma's inability to support our needs. Given this uncertainty, 2CUL is taking time to review other options and to pursue more fully the initiatives currently underway. Finally, the retirement of James G. Neal was an additional factor. The two libraries intend to resume joint negotiations for a new LMS in 2015.

#### **5. Project Personnel**

There has been one significant change in the staffing plan of the project. James G. Neal, Columbia's Principal Investigator for the project and co-chair of the 2CUL Steering Committee, retired in December 2014. He has been replaced by Damon E. Jaggars, Interim Vice Provost and University Librarian at Columbia. Another member of the 2CUL Steering Committee from Cornell, John Saylor, Associate University Librarian for Scholarly Resources and Special Collections, also retired. His responsibilities have been absorbed by Oya Rieger and Xin Li on the Cornell Senior Management Team.

#### **6. Publications and Presentations**

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. "From Integration to the 2CUL Technical Services Initiative (TSI) – June 2014,"

<https://confluence.cornell.edu/display/2cullts/From+Integration+to+the+2CUL+Technical+Services+Initiative+%28TSI%29+---+June+2014>.

Harcourt, Kate and Jim LeBlanc. "Planning from the Middle Out: Phase 1 of 2CUL Technical Services Integration." *Collaborative Librarianship* 6:1 (2014), 36-41.

Harcourt, Kate and Jim LeBlanc. "The Pivot: Phase 2 of 2CUL Technical Services Integration"

<http://www.collaborativelibrarianship.org/>.

Major-Pincus, Colleen. "Too Cool." Presentation at the New York Technical Services Librarians Spring 2014 Event, The Changing Faces of Technical Services, held at the New York Public Library, May 20, 2014.

## **7. Intellectual Property**

There are no intellectual property agreements associated with this project.

## **8. Future Plans**

*Goal 1 (Revised): Reconceive library operations at each campus to achieve a formal alliance of technical services operations in which staff undertake investigations, projects, and other collaborative assignments based on four driving factors: quality, productivity, improvement, and innovation.*

Although eschewing formal administrative integration of their two separate operations, 2CUL technical services staff will achieve the following in the third and final year of the project:

- Implement a shared workflow for those aspects of e-resource management that can be addressed collaboratively in separate, but similar ERM systems, including joint troubleshooting of access problems and joint management of shared data and contacts.
- Working with collection development staff, develop and implement guidelines for negotiating, as 2CUL, with material vendors to ensure maximum leverage from the collaboration.
- Participate together in the development, testing, and implementation of the BIBFRAME model for bibliographic data exchange, as well as related linked data initiatives, to leverage the expertise and capacity of the 2CUL technical services alliance.
- Expand collaborative support for non-MARC metadata projects and initiatives, including web archiving.
- Complete and publish, either internally or in a national forum, a study of the disparate workflows for print serials processing at the two institutions. Establish a methodology for future research of this type within 2CUL or beyond.
- Work together on the technical services aspects of the evaluation and implementation of a next-generation LMS, should this work begin in earnest in 2015.

- Measure the success of the foregoing aims, based on the degree to which they demonstrate the four driving principles of quality, productivity, improvement, and innovation in technical services in support of the 2CUL collections.

*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 the alliance evolves, the libraries will necessarily involve more and more staff in the collaborative investigations and discrete projects that will come to characterize TSI. The foundation that the TSI planning team has already laid, especially in the creation of multiple functional working groups and support for the middle-out approach to TSI, will support this evolution well. The collaborative work in other areas of our libraries, such as collection development and shared access to resources, inevitably impact the workflow and mindset of staff. With the help of our respective assessment leads, we also plan to conduct another assessment in which we will benchmark changes of staff perceptions and attitudes towards the project. The results will also help the two libraries to assess staff's preparedness for further collaboration.

## **9. Financial Narrative**

There are no significant variances between proposed spending and actual spending.

Submitted,



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## 2CUL Guiding Principles

### What is 2CUL?

2CUL is a mindset, a lightweight framework, and specific arrangements that bind the libraries of Columbia and Cornell together. 2CUL is a commitment to a distinctive partnership that advances our collective interests in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. 2CUL is an alignment of interests that recognizes our differences and separate commitments shaped by our distinctive missions and needs. We work independently and jointly within those constructs and the broader academic environment. We view this relationship as non-exclusive but critical to our abilities to address challenges and opportunities beyond the purview either one could address alone.

### Why 2CUL in the Age of Large Scale Collaboration?

Both Columbia and Cornell appreciate they are nodes in a global knowledge network. We recognize the necessity of large scale collaborations to address large scale problems, and actively participate in ARL, the Ivy Plus group, and HathiTrust, among others. Yet we believe there are distinct advantages to be gained through bilateral arrangements. The 2CUL partnership strengthens our roles within the broader collective environment while allowing for greater flexibility, rapid response to new opportunities, experimentation, and risk taking. The partners serve as trusted and respected sounding boards for issues we individually and collectively face. The breadth of the partnership is also distinctive: we can pool resources and expertise across a wide range of functions and programs that would not be possible in a large scale collaboration. Similarly, we can work in small ways that may or may not eventually scale. 2CUL is a voluntary, mutually beneficial arrangement that works across cultural, geographical, and organizational distinctions. 2CUL will be self-sustaining through generating value that outweighs the effort doing the job alone. Specifically, 2CUL operates under a set of guiding principles.

### Guiding Principles in the 2CUL Partnership:

1. *2CUL maximizes and expedites reciprocal and shared access to collections and facilities.* We have established direct access to collections, facilities, and services for faculty and students at each other's campus. This program has expanded to all the Ivy Plus institutions. 2CUL focuses on expanding digital access, including obtaining digital content and joint licenses, expanding resource sharing (e.g., ebooks), preserving digital content, and negotiating digital use rights.
2. *2CUL takes shared leadership positions on strategic and policy issues important to the research library community.* The partners represent the interests of 2CUL in venues that are determined to be strategically important to both libraries. They undertake collective approaches, investigations, and action on behalf of 2CUL. Examples include the joint work on e-journal preservation, assessing the needs of PhD students in the humanities, and the joint 2CUL-University of Toronto symposium on library liaisons.

3. *2CUL evaluates new initiatives and projects at the outset to determine if collective action is desirable.* 2CUL influences strategic planning at both libraries. The parties jointly investigate issues and routinely share knowledge/approaches with each other when one institution is taking the lead. Examples include web archiving, BIBFRAME, and linked data.
4. *2CUL develops deep collective expertise that can be of advantage to the research library community.* 2CUL partners seek out and exploit opportunities to pool staff expertise. Examples include shared subject experts, the use of scarce language skills in metadata creation, and the application of programming skills for process automation.
5. *2CUL seeks out arrangements and relationships that reduce the costs, expand capacity, and improve the efficiencies of operations.* In technical services, 2CUL partners engage in collaborative projects and alliances that respond to four driving factors: quality, productivity, improvement, and innovation. These initiatives include joint use and evaluation of vendor services and acquisitions tools, joint management of e-resources, joint involvement in the development of metadata standards, and shared language expertise. Beyond Technical Services, 2CUL is committed to creating a common IT infrastructure that works on both campuses, e.g., BlackLight, Vivo, Symplectic Elements, Hydra framework, Fedora, and Linked Data for Libraries.