

3-26-2015

Western Libraries casting a wide net for new plan

Western University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/wlevents>



Part of the [Archival Science Commons](#)

Citation of this paper:

Western University, "Western Libraries casting a wide net for new plan" (2015). *Western Libraries Events*. 11.
<https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/wlevents/11>

Western Libraries casting a wide net for new plan

MARCH 26, 2015 BY ADELA TALBOT



Melanie Mills // Special to Western News

As part of FLIP: Future Library In Progress, a process to shape the Western Libraries strategic plan, flip charts were positioned in libraries asking students to provide input and answer the question of the day, such as, "What can the library do to inspire you?"

The makeover is just beginning for Western Libraries.

When Catherine Steeves took up the post of vice provost and chief librarian last fall, she knew a strategic-planning process was on the horizon.



STEEVES

“My vision is to position Western Libraries as a catalyst for success in research and higher education, and the (strategic) plan will answer ‘The How,’” she said. “What does that look like? Where do we need to invest to get there? What more can we be doing, and how do we achieve that?”

Launched in 2010, the library system’s current strategic plan expired this year. And the timing, Steeves said, couldn’t be better.

Last January, Western rolled out its latest strategic plan, *Achieving Excellence on the World Stage*. At its core, the plan charts a four-year course based on four strategic priorities that will drive the university’s academic planning and activity during this period:

- *Raising Our Expectations*: Create a world-class research and scholarship culture;
- *Leading in Learning*: Provide Canada’s best education for tomorrow’s global leaders;
- *Reaching Beyond Campus*: Engage alumni, community, institutional and international partners; and
- *Taking Charge of Our Destiny*: Generate and invest new resources in support of excellence.

“We need to answer the call that’s in the university’s new strategic plan. If we’re going to do our best to support research excellence and student success, we need everybody, together, deciding on the future direction,” she added.

Earlier this term, Steeves announced the launch of *FLIP: Future Library In Progress*, a process to shape the strategic plan.

A steering committee was formed, representing the diverse voices, needs and opinions of some 165 library staff. Consultations, focus groups and surveys were completed this month, asking Western students, staff and faculty members for input on what campus libraries need to do, and what they can do to help facilitate studying, research and teaching.

The response has been great, with 4,000 responses from undergraduate students alone, Steeves noted.

Library staff has been engaged in a ‘book club’ of their own, piggy-backing onto Western Reads and reading articles and newsletters related to issues facing libraries today. Flip charts were displayed in libraries, asking students to write down an answer to, “What can the library do to inspire you?”

Steeves has, likewise, spoken with representatives from the London Public Library, Fanshawe College and other community partners, looking at ways services intersect and ways they could be enhanced.

“People are excited about this; I can’t wait to see how it goes,” Steeves said.

Melanie Mills, FLIP project manager and research and instructional services librarian, said the inclusive planning process has been great.

“This is very much a marked departure for Western Libraries,” she said. “(The strategic planning process) was always something the library executive took on, and the wider staff wasn’t very much involved in information-gathering and in drafting the thing. Many of us are very excited about this change and about having a role in the future of our organization and having a say in what that looks like.”

So far, student responses have asked for facility enhancements and some creature comforts (more study space, more outlets). Staff and faculty have asked for help measuring research impact and teaching outcomes, among other suggestions.

It’s all about defining the role of the academic library and what role it can play in the future success of the university, Steeves explained.

“You need to work together to develop your vision and set your directions,” she said.

March has been a month for gathering information. April will focus on analysis.

Steeves hopes to launch the new strategic plan in early May.

“Our campus is changing. Expectations about how not only information and resources are delivered, but what we do with space, are being discussed. There isn’t going to be one solution that meets everyone’s needs and expectations, so it’s doing our best to find the balance in that,” Mills added.

“But this is also about what can academic libraries bring to this campus. What are our future roles? What are our possibilities? Everyone’s voice needs to come through.”

* * *

HAVE YOUR SAY. One final *FLIP: Future Library In Progress* focus group is scheduled for faculty, graduate students and campus partners at 9:30 a.m. Thursday, April 9 in The D.B. Weldon Library’s Teaching Support Centre, Room 120. Register at wisp-input@uwo.ca by April 6.