

## **Learning Commons Meeting**

Jan 12<sup>th</sup>, 2.00-3.30 p.m.

Room 503, Scott Library



### **Agenda**

1. Update on Learning Commons Project Coordinator Position  
(see attachment)
2. Learning Commons Hub Matters – Update
3. LC Revisioning;
  - a. Spring Retreat (April or May 2017)
  - b. LC Sustainability Plan (documents for discussion will be provided at the meeting)

# Learning Commons Meeting

Jan 12<sup>th</sup>, 2.00-3.30 p.m.

Room 503, Scott Library



## Notes

### Present:

Sophie Bury [Chair, Libraries], Joy Kirchner [Libraries], Celia Popovic [Teaching Commons], Julie Rahmer [Career Centre], Catherine Salole [Student Success Centre], Ron Sheese [Writing Dept], Kathleen Winningham [YUExperience Hub]

### 1. Learning Commons Project Coordinator Position

Sophie thanked group members for their input on the LC Project Coordinator position, which has helped make it stronger. She also explained that a meeting with Will Gage's office in December also led to several additional enhancements to the job description to reflect the strategic priorities identified for this position, which is being funded jointly by his office and the Libraries. The position will continue to support LC reconceptualization, while also having a strong role with both e-learning and experiential education. Sophie shared with the group a proposed final version of the job description.

This was accepted with some small revisions. This included a recommendation that the introductory description of the position include a clear description of what Learning Commons is, as this may not be immediately obvious to interested applicants. It was also recommended that it be spelled out that this role is designed to help with fostering *students'* competencies in the area of academic literacies, digital literacies, experiential learning and e-learning. It was also recommended that it would be helpful to make it clear that the successful applicant would come at an exciting time and be able to play a key role in advancing the future and emergent directions for LC.

There was some discussion of whether peer coordination tasks should be taken out of this position or put in. It was quickly agreed that it should be a component of the job description, given the growing role of peers at York, the current role they play in LC, and the strong potential that they will have a presence in the reimagined LC model.

Under qualifications it was recommended that a university degree in a field related to education should appear as a preferred rather than a required qualification. It was also pointed out that excellent oral and written communication skills should be added to the list of qualifications, as well as excellent presentation skills.

It was recommended that the job summary and questionnaire prepared for the recently posted Student Success Strategies Project Coordinator position also be considered in finalizing this job summary. Catherine has shared this with Sophie.

**Action items:** Sophie will make edits based on group input and review documents sent on by Catherine. She will work with Joy and Library HR to ensure that this moves quickly and that we prepare a final job summary and job evaluation summary. The goal is to have someone in the position by summer at latest.

## 2. Learning Commons Hub Matters – Update

Sophie informed the group about a couple of upcoming meetings/events which are planned relating to Learning Commons as follows:

- **A meeting of reps from all units will take place on January 16<sup>th</sup>** and agenda items will include a review and discussion of new and current services in the LC Hub, and an update on LC strategic planning including informing the group about the above YUSA position, and plans for LC reconceptualization including a retreat. Other items for the agenda include hub services promotion and signage, and review of methods used to assess service currently including usage statistics and student experience.
- **A meet and greet/training session for LC peers** is planned on **January 31<sup>st</sup>**. The goal is to learn about peers' experience in the LC hub and to respond to suggestions they have, as well as to give peers a refresher on the services of all key partners, as the peers are playing an important triage role in the hub. A rep from each partner unit will be invited to attend.

## 3. LC Revisioning

- **Learning Commons Retreat**

The group continued discussions regarding the timing, format and content of an LC retreat which will be designed to formulate goals and outcomes for a reconceptualised LC model. It was decided:

- The retreat should take place on **May 10<sup>th</sup> with May 8<sup>th</sup> as a backup date** if needed. Julie Rahmer said that the Career Centre could offer a nice room for the event in McLaughlin College which could host up to 80 people.
- **A Retreat Working Group** should be struck with representatives from all key partner units. It was decided that Kathleen Winningham will represent the YUExperience Hub, while Natasha May will represent the Teaching Commons.  
**Action Item:** Sophie will follow up with Julie, Catherine, Ron and Geoff about representation from the Career Centre, Student Success Centre, the Writing Dept., and ESL OLC. She will also work with Joy to have at least one other Libraries' representative other than herself.
- It was recommended that **Susan Killick's unit (Talent Acquisition and Development)** could be approached to facilitate the event as they have much

experience in this area.

**Action item:** Sophie will work with Joy to pursue this.

- An important element of the retreat will be an **external scan** to include a literature review of Learning Commons best practices and models and other academic libraries or university trends which are of relevance to future planning. It was agreed that the Libraries could take the lead with this type of work.

**Action item:** Sophie will make sure this is integral to the work that is done to prepare for the retreat

- **Available data on usage of LC services and on the user experience** could also be shared at the Retreat.

**Action item:** Sophie will work with Janet to review data available and see if more user experience data can be gathered in Winter term 2017.

- Sophie also referenced the **LC retreat of 2014** which happened under Mark Robertson's leadership. It was agreed it'd be useful to go back to outcomes and recommendations from that day and this will be shared with the LC Retreat Working Group.

**Action item:** Sophie will share this material with the group, and will ensure it is a point of reference in Retreat planning.

- There was some discussion of who should be on the **guest list for the day**. It was recommended that this should expand beyond existing units to include other relevant stakeholders on campus including student representatives (reaching out to YFS could be worthwhile), managers involved with student retention on campus, and a representative from UIT.

**Action item:** The guest list should be diverse and aim to support goals set out for the Retreat. The working group will make sure that invitations are sent well in advance to relevant parties.

- **Learning Commons Sustainability Plan**

Sophie shared a proposal for the creation of a budget to help strengthen LC. This included a document outlining a background and rationale, as well as a description of expense types relating to ongoing operational/programming needs and forecasted costs envisaged as forming part of an LC reconceptualization project. She also shared a spreadsheet with elements covering items such as facilities upkeep, promotion/marketing, signage, e-learning support, and research and professional development costs. The spreadsheet lists expenses incurred during 2016/17 and projected expenses for the upcoming budget year.

A discussion of the merits or demerits of a shared LC budget was discussed. There is uncertainty regarding how an entity such as LC would be handled in a SHARP budget model. This should be brought on to the radar of the university administration. In addition, there was some concern that finalizing an LC budget at the current time could be putting the cart before the horse. Only once a clear framework and plan for a future LC model is in place, will it be possible to project expenses fully and propose a budget. The point was raised that costs associated with running LC programming have been

modest to date. While it was agreed that thinking about LC budget is important to guarantee LC sustainability, no firm conclusions were reached on how this should be approached.

Meeting adjourned at 3.30 pm