

The re-imagining of the Nelson Mandela University Library and Information Services (LIS) for the 21st century: the journey



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Overview:

- Fit for purpose
- Departure
- The journey
- Changing role of librarians
- Librarians competency index/ skills set
- Challenges
- The detour
- Conclusion
- References

Fit for purpose:

- Constant changes within the LIS sector require creation of new operating strategies and design changes to the organisational structure
- Technology has changed ~ information services have changed
- Constantly monitor business environment and operations to ensure relevance and competitiveness
- Work activities must function in line with the organisations strategy
- Provided in timely and efficient manner, (Unagha 2009:196)
- Organisations need to be fit for purpose.
- NMU LIS strategic aspect was to reimagine itself into becoming a dynamic 21st century library.

Departure:

- The journey that the NMMU LIS is taking towards re-imagining itself
- The main idea is to remain relevant to the university community
- Remaining in line with national development imperatives
- Environmental scan dates back to 2005
- Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University
- Commenced with a self-review whose purpose was to determine fit for purpose

Departure Continued:

- Flexibility to respond to new opportunities both national and international
- Are current LIS structures and modes of operation optimal and adequate for the next thirteen years
- NMU moratorium on LIS vacant posts
- Changing role of libraries
- User expectations
- Technological advancements

The journey:

- Requested organograms from other academic libraries, 2016
- Benchmarking and comparison
- Strategic session, team leaders, 13 & 14 February 2017
- Feedback to teams
- First term meetings mostly about the reimagining process
- 10 March presentation by LIS Director to relevant stakeholders
- Formation of the Revitalisation task team
- 23 March 2017 – Special Meeting LIS managers with team leaders
- Revisit existing organogram, job descriptions, posts, titles, levels, relevance, work flows, roles and responsibilities, volumes of work, reporting lines
- Received restructuring guidelines 20 June 2017

Continued:

- Brainstorming sessions between team leaders and staff
- Feedback to team and input received from team
- Temporary drafts of organogram and structures from teams
- First drafts cross pollinated, discussed and analysed.
- Sub directorate drafts served at LIS Management
- Facilitator appointed by DVC R&E
- Meeting 04 August 2017 to pave the way forward

Changing roles of Librarians:

- The new role of librarians will have a positive impact on delivery of library and information services and in meeting the LIS user needs.
- Technology continues to change, so must the skills required by librarians.
- Library management - review and revisit core competencies needed by future librarians.
- The information world is in a state of rapid change. New technologies are central in shaping the form content and practise of libraries.
- e.g. Librarians assume role of educator, teach IT skills
- Instructional needs together with models used at universities changed, (Shupe & Stephanie 2011: 409).

Librarians competency index / skills set:

- Need new skills sets that did not exist in the 20th century
- Identify the necessary knowledge and skills to navigate the new roles of librarians.
- What qualities, skills and behaviours are needed in order to deliver excellent service?
- How can one make the most of existing skills sets?
- How can one identify possible skills gaps?
- How can staff be developed and empowered to fulfil their potential?
- How might staff manage their own continual personal and professional development?
- How can managers better understand and support their staff, utilise their strengths and identify opportunities for development? (Parkes 2013: 37)
- Need to become librarian 2.0

Challenges:

- Staff reservations on the process, job insecurities
- Clarity seeking questions, more questions than answers
- Fear of hidden agenda, mistrust
- Change management- resistance to change
- Increased expectations
- Need for further training
- Budget cuts
- Staff burnout
- Moratorium on non academic posts
- LRA risks, contract staff

The detour:

- Staff resignations
- Staff retirement, early pension
- 14 vacancies
- After hour contract staff declared permanent
- Moratorium on LIS vacant posts lifted
- Advertisements for all vacant posts
- One post declared redundant to create X2 5/8 positions

Conclusion:

- In transit
- Skills audit
- Train the trainer
- Library hour training
- Skills transfer
- Staff development
- Acting / secondments
- Restructuring?

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Thank you

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