

Determining Equitable Liaison Librarian Workloads: An Investigation into the Conundrum

Susan Alison Bolton

In 2020 a University of Saskatchewan Library Working Group investigated liaison librarian workloads across disciplines to help develop a clearer understanding of variance in disciplinary needs, which would then help inform equitable annual liaison assignments. This article describes the process and data used to compare liaison workloads across the health sciences, fine arts, humanities, science, and social sciences disciplines. Although the Working Group was able to formulate some general recommendations, there was uncertainty around how the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the Library's shift to a functional organizational structure, might impact liaison librarian activities and annual assignments in the future.

Introduction

During the 2020–2021 academic year twenty librarians at the University of Saskatchewan Library (the Library) had liaison responsibilities as all, or part, of their assigned duties. These librarians were distributed across six library locations, with a small number embedded within the college buildings of their assigned discipline(s). Their liaison responsibilities included information literacy instruction, collection management, and consultation (reference) support for one or more colleges, schools, or departments. Although the Library has clusters that bring together librarians in four major broad disciplines — Arts & Humanities, Health Sciences, Sciences, and Social Sciences — most of the cluster work centres around collection management. There is some cross-population between clusters, but there is little opportunity for liaison librarians to develop deeper understanding of differing liaison demands and activity levels across the institution.

At the University of Saskatchewan librarians hold faculty status and the faculty collective agreement outlines the assignment of duties process. The agreement speaks to fairness of assignment of duties for the full range of academic responsibilities, but does not include any guidance around liaison librarian responsibilities, nor does it prescribe how faculty members should carry out any of their assigned duties.¹ Within the Library there have been long-standing perceptions of inequity in liaison librarian workloads. In June 2020 the Working Group on Equity Across Disciplines (Working Group) was formed, consisting of three librarians with liaison assignments in the health sciences, humanities, and social sciences respectively. The Working Group's proposed terms of reference were to:

* Susan Alison Bolton (nee Murphy) was Health Sciences and Acquisitions Librarian at the University of Saskatchewan, email: susan.bolton@usask.ca. ©2024 Susan Bolton, Attribution-NonCommercial (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>) CC BY-NC.

Investigate and provide recommendations on how disciplinary/cluster differences in levels of instruction, consultation, collections activity, undergrad and grad student support, etc. could help inform the development of the annual assignment of duties. This will also help all of us better understand disciplinary and cluster demands.²

The Working Group was tasked with completing its work by December 2020 so that the recommendations in the report could be considered for the 2021–2022 assignment of duties process.

In considering equity of liaison librarian workload, factors such as implicit bias, racism, sexism, etc. were not taken into consideration, nor was the workload impact of other non-liaison assigned duties for those with hybrid assignments that included leadership or function-based roles in addition to liaison responsibilities.

This article is based on the Working Group's final report³ and focuses on the process, the types of data used, the challenges and limitations of the data, and the key factors affecting liaison librarian workload regarding traditional and emerging duties. Data from the final report on liaison librarian activity for specific disciplines has been excluded from this article due to confidentiality concerns, as well as in recognition that there may be programmatic or curricular differences in disciplines from institution to institution. This research has been approved on ethical grounds by the University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board.

Literature Review

A literature search was conducted using EBSCOhost's Library Literature & Information Science (the Full-Text & Retrospective versions), and Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts databases; ProQuest's Library and Information Science Abstracts; the Library's discovery layer (USearch); and Google Scholar. No studies were found comparing or discussing the equity of workloads across disciplines. Instead, existing research related to disciplinary differences in libraries focuses almost entirely on either a single discipline, or on general groupings of disciplines—which most often compare the sciences, social sciences, and humanities. As existing studies do not typically differentiate the health sciences from the sciences in general, this limits, to some degree, the applicability of these studies' findings to the Library's situation where health sciences is a separate category. Also, the literature does not appear to compare academic library statistics for teaching or consultations by discipline grouping. However, there are clear patterns that emerge in the literature that offer some insights into how users in the respective discipline groups make use of, and access, academic libraries, as well as of the associated demands that these disciplinary differences put on librarians—especially related to collections work.

In an article published in 2020 in *College & Research Libraries (C&RL)*, Anderson and Garcia point out that different subjects have different relationships with the library.⁴ In their small-scale study, the authors created a library resource index and survey questions which explored the frequency of student use of library websites, library searches, article indexes and databases, electronic journals and articles, e-books, physical items, and special collections and archives.⁵ The results of their study and surveys showed that use was, "quite a bit higher for graduate students than for undergraduates...with Humanities highest in usage," the Social Sciences second, and the Sciences third.⁶

Two robust studies, which focused on faculty use more than on student use of the library by disciplinary groupings, were completed by Ithaka S + R in 2013, and by Thompson at the University of Missouri in 2014. As with the C&RL study, these works provide evidence—through surveys and statistics—that faculty in the humanities placed the most importance on the library, both as a source of teaching and research support, and as an archive of resources.⁷ These studies also found that the humanities, education, and the social sciences were more focused on library information seeking (in the catalogue, research guides, and in databases—though the latter had some variation by disciplines), while the sciences had a greater tendency to go further afield. This may be in part because open access resources are more prevalent in the sciences than in other discipline groupings.

The Ithaka study also found that, for teaching at all undergraduate levels, the heaviest reliance on textbooks was in the sciences; conversely, the humanities and, to a lesser degree, the social sciences, relied more on primary resources, monographs, and non-textual materials such as films. Journal articles were used in all disciplines though Ithaka again found “a strong disciplinary pattern” where fewer journal articles and more textbook readings were assigned by scientists to their students at the upper and lower undergraduate levels.⁸ One similarity that exists among all disciplinary groupings is that “the role of the library as a Buyer was rated as highly important across the board for all disciplines.”⁹

A review of the current and recent literature indicates, therefore, that the range of demands that faculty and students place upon collections work—in terms of diversity of acquisitions, knowledge of collections, and time commitment—can be significant depending upon the discipline, or group of disciplines, to which one is assigned.

Methods

In mid-July 2020 the Working Group met with the Library’s Assessment Analyst to discuss what statistical data might be helpful. Acknowledging that each year has idiosyncrasies, the decision was made to include data for the previous three academic years (2017/18 to 2019/20) to allow for a more balanced perspective. The Assessment Analyst provided a variety of statistical reports from the University’s statistical reporting site and the Library’s SharePoint statistics gathering tool. The most useful data were the academic year enrollment headcount by level of student in each college, school, or department; fiscal year full time equivalent (FTE) for faculty and instructional employees by college, administrative unit, or department; and instruction and consultation statistics summary by participant group within each college or department. She advised that participant data for instruction and consultation (reference) support is “tricky to interpret,” and “is sometimes double counted in cases where sessions were offered to more than one type of participant group;” in addition, she cautioned against “putting too much stock into the participant group data given its limitations.”¹⁰

To inform work around collections, data generated by the Library’s Collection Services unit was reviewed, together with related narrative information received from liaison librarians and cluster chairs. The current number of annually renewing library electronic resources was also identified by cluster. Individual liaison librarians’ assignments for the past three years were reviewed to identify liaison coverage for the various colleges, schools, and departments. This information identified consistencies, inconsistencies, shared responsibilities, and gaps.

Liaison librarians were emailed an invitation to submit narrative descriptions of collections, instruction, consultation (reference) support, synthesis review activity, and any other

liaison work for each of their liaison areas during the 2019–2020 year (Appendix A). The narratives included information such as: time of year that a particular activity was more intense; the amount of new instructional content (e.g. classes, workshops, guides, and videos) created; the nature of instructional content (e.g. customized or repeat classes and in-person or online modules); collection development and organization, including budget responsibilities, major acquisitions, guides, projects; activities that span multiple years, such as a major collection review; and committee work external to the Library (e.g. memberships on college, school, or departmental committees in one's liaison area(s)). Sixteen liaison librarians submitted narratives for the report; twelve of whom consented to have information from their narratives anonymously included in this article.

An email was also sent to cluster chairs asking them to provide information on how their clusters currently function, in particular how often the cluster meets and for what purpose(s), what they feel their role is as cluster chair, how much time they spend performing this role, and any other information they would like to share about their cluster's work (Appendix B). All four cluster chairs submitted narratives, three of whom consented to have information from their narratives anonymously included in this article.

Findings

Instruction

At the University of Saskatchewan Library, librarian instruction activity includes one-off sessions or workshops, synthesis reviews, asynchronous learning modules, as well as multi-session and credit courses. Several factors were explored in an attempt to determine the number of instruction sessions delivered annually for each subject. Factors included: new topic/course vs. content taught previously for the same course(s) annually; general sessions vs. assignment-specific ones; time spent instructing (in hours); form of delivery (in-person on or off campus, online asynchronous class modules or objects); and level of instruction (entry, upper undergraduate, graduate, faculty).

The data did not identify: which instruction sessions were repeated from one year to another; instruction sessions delivered to multiple sections of the same class; how many instruction sessions consisted of new content each year; or whether instruction sessions supported a class assignment. Some liaison librarian narratives independently included this information, with varying levels of detail.

Data for general or multidisciplinary instruction sessions—such as graduate research workshops on developing your research profile, or open access publishing—are delivered by librarian volunteers, and generally reflect an individual's expertise or interest. These, and other topic-based instruction sessions delivered to disciplines outside assigned liaison areas, were also not separated out in the data.

Format of delivery was not analyzed, as delivery time was considered more relevant for measuring workload. Preparation time and assignment development and marking are not being captured in the SharePoint statistics form, so it was not possible to assess the workload impact of these activities. Some liaison librarian narratives noted that additional time was needed to prepare for instruction sessions in unfamiliar disciplines, and to develop sessions in familiar disciplines for courses that are either new, or whose content has substantially changed.

Synthesis review activity that is part of professional practice is captured in the instruction data, but only for the past couple of years; synthesis review activity, such as being a

co-investigator/co-author, is considered research activity and is documented elsewhere as research output.

Liaison librarian narrative submissions identified the following impacts on their instruction workload:

- Developing content from scratch (including 'traditional' content)
- Choosing relevant examples with limited subject knowledge
- Range or variety of classes taught and levels of instruction
- Customized content (assignment based or specialized topic), (e.g. scholarly communication, synthesis reviews, research data management)
- Distance or distributed students
- Instruction outside assigned liaison area(s) (discipline or topic-based)
- Integrated, graded assignments
- Online modules/courses
- Formal teaching of a course listed in the course calendar
- Development of specialized LibGuides beyond subject guides
- Repeated vs. customized sessions
- Audience—graduate, undergraduate, faculty, or for specialized audiences such as First Year Research Experience (FYRE), Student Undergraduate Research Experience (SURE), and Dean's Projects
- Class size

Consultation (Reference)

Librarian consultation (reference) activity includes in-office consults, as well as unscheduled reference questions received via email, phone, drop-in, or through referrals from library service point employees. Some librarians also record collections consults, but this was not being done consistently. The number of reference questions answered by liaison librarians during scheduled shifts at an information service point were not included in the data reviewed, as only a small number of librarians participate in this activity and very few of the questions they answer are related to their assigned subject disciplines. While the creation and maintenance of research guides is recognized as a factor in liaison librarian workloads, time spent on this activity is not being recorded.

Consultation (reference) data was comprised of the number and duration of consultations. The number of participants in the consultation sessions were not considered for the reasons stated in the Methodology section.

In their narrative submissions, liaison librarians identified the following impacts on their consultation (reference) workload:

- Embeddedness / outreach activity
- Distance / distributed clients
- Research intensiveness of subject area / number of research chairs¹¹
- Follow-up consults from instruction sessions
- Percentage of international (graduate) students
- Undergraduate vs. graduates vs. faculty needs
- Number of synthesis review support requests
- Scheduled information service desk shifts
- Interpretation of reference vs. research

- Multidisciplinarity

Collections

Each year, liaison librarians are provided with monograph allocations for their assigned discipline(s). The amount of money fluctuates from year to year, and is determined by the Library's overall acquisitions budget allocation from the provincial government which takes into account previous years' allocations, price increases, and the exchange rate of the Canadian dollar. In addition to its annual acquisitions budget, the Library receives variable funding through donations, endowments, and similar arrangements. As most of these funds are used irregularly and with low activity, a three-year average was felt to be too insignificant to include in this investigation.

To represent the known yearly work for monograph selection, data was gathered on the number of new monograph orders per year. Allocations were not considered, although they may represent impact. However, due to variability in the price of monographs for different disciplines, the number of titles selected was considered more reflective of workload. Disciplines with the highest three-year average number of monograph selections per year were identified.

There was no way to quantify the ancillary work that comes with collection management. Selection methods—such as reviewing vendor-supplied title notifications/slips, consulting sources beyond the standard vendors and mainstream academic publishers, and using approval plans and standing orders—can vary between disciplines. The amount of time required to select titles does not directly correlate to number of titles selected, as some titles require more in-depth examination than others. Additionally, the time it takes to select fifty titles from one hundred slips is different from selecting fifty titles from 500 slips. An effort was made to gather data on the number of slips per subject to assess the amount of selection per fund, compared to the amount of publishing, but the data available did not allow for this analysis. The workload required to select and review an electronic resource—or a specific collection of resources in any format—is higher than the workload for selecting a single monograph, plus it can vary each year for any given discipline. The serials collection is not reviewed annually; however periodic reviews of subsets of serials are undertaken when reconsidering specific journal packages, or when cost cutting measures are needed. This work can be significant and is often unevenly distributed across clusters and disciplines. As reflected in the *Ithaka S + R Report* of 2013, disciplines in the humanities and—to a lesser degree—the social sciences, rely the most on primary resources, and on non-textual materials such as films, rare monographs, and microforms.¹² Acquiring specifically requested items or series, and building collections in these wide-ranging formats also often involves a major time commitment.

Some years liaison librarians may undertake additional work such as: major collection reviews for a program; projects (e.g., shared print archives projects or collection moves); and/or the acquisition or management of major collections (primary resource collections online, weeding, or handling major gifts). Because such work does not occur every year, the amount of it can vary significantly from year to year within a specific discipline.

Meetings with vendors about new products, consulting with departments about potential database collection purchases, responding to requests for specific resources from faculty and students, and reviewing electronic resources and serials for selection or cancellation are also factors in the collections management workload. Some of these decisions are discussed

within a cluster, between clusters, and others by one or two liaison librarians, depending on the nature of the resource and the source of the funding.

Liaison librarian and cluster narratives identified the following challenges that impact time spent on collections work:

- It takes time to develop sufficient disciplinary knowledge to select appropriately. Selection is more challenging if the liaison librarian does not have a background in the subject.
- Selection is also more challenging when a discipline has a high volume of publishing, or where the Library's fund allocation for the discipline is small in proportion to the amount of the discipline's publishing. In both cases, more time is involved in decision-making.
- Certain disciplines acquire unique or non-standard resources, or resources published outside of standard academic publishing. Others have esoteric subject areas within a discipline.
- Occasionally, a college, school, or department adds a new program. The liaison librarian needs to ensure collections support these needs as well.
- Requests for streaming video and other media are also received. Responding to requests for these materials is more time-consuming than standard monographs.
- The liaison librarian's role in acquiring gifts or donations, and the liaison librarian's role in processing these collections, requires significant subject expertise. They can also be very time-consuming and often get set aside due to capacity issues.

Cluster Work

Narratives from liaison librarians noted that collections work is a primary, and sometimes the only, focus of how clusters work together. In this context the clusters serve as a forum to discuss annual spending of discretionary funds, as well as acquisition, or cancellation, of electronic resources and/or serials subscriptions. Though not occurring every year, clusters can also hold discussions of year end spending opportunities. In addition, donation, endowment, and similar funds are often used to acquire resources relevant to multiple disciplines either within a cluster, or across clusters. These types of acquisitions require consultation with other liaison librarians, colleges, schools, or departments, as well as Collection Services employees, and are time-consuming to coordinate.

The nature and range of disciplines within the various colleges, schools, and departments vary within each cluster. The responsibilities assumed by each cluster chair can differ, as can the work each cluster engages in, ranging from collaborating to provide instruction and consultations to focusing primarily on collections work. Cluster meeting frequency, as well as membership in multiple clusters, can also impact the amount of work undertaken by each liaison librarian.

College, school, or department committee participation is sometimes required by liaison librarians working with certain disciplines, and can include attendance at regular faculty meetings, curriculum committee meetings, or membership on short-term working groups or task forces, etc. The liaison librarian's participation level is determined primarily by interest and capacity. Liaison librarians are also responsible for periodically preparing information for program and accreditation reviews for an assigned college, school, or department, as well as engaging in site visits. Additionally, liaison librarian support for, and co-applicant involvement in, grant applications with non-library faculty is increasing in frequency. Although there is no data currently being collected on this, it was noted in some of the liaison librarian narratives.

Discussion

Student enrollment and faculty and instructional staff FTEs in each college, school, and department were examined to inform how many people each liaison librarian is potentially responsible for supporting. Although no direct correlation can be made between these numbers and the number of instruction sessions, consultations (reference), or synthesis review consultations, nor the amount of collections activity, this data provided a window into the potential for activity.

A review of liaison librarian assignments over the specified time-period revealed that some colleges, schools, and departments had the same liaison librarian from year to year, whereas others had multiple liaison librarians over that time due to leaves, position vacancies, and re-assignments. Narrative information received from liaison librarians noted that it takes time to develop relationships with college, school, or department members, and that the requests for instruction, consultation (reference) support, and collections recommendations from faculty and students can increase over time as relationships become stronger.

Liaison librarian engagement with an assigned college, school, or department is driven by several factors, including faculty and student numbers, curriculum content, consultation (reference) support needs of faculty and graduate students, initiative on the part of the liaison librarian, and available human resources. Capacity to meet the needs of a college, school, or department may be influenced by the number of liaison librarians assigned to that college, school, or department, which in turn affects the data analysis. Although the liaison librarian narratives included anecdotal indicators of the above, their impact could not be quantitatively or qualitatively measured.

The impact of instruction related to student success is an important aspect of liaison work. In the absence of an assessment tool, or any survey data, it is impossible to measure impact beyond participant numbers and anecdotal evidence, such as a professor noting an improved quality of research papers.

The analysis of instruction, consultation reference, and collections data focused on the demands and requirements of the disciplines themselves, not on the current or previous liaison librarians for those disciplines. For example, interdisciplinary topics are reported by the college or department of the client rather than that of the liaison librarian.

There were also inconsistencies discovered with self-reported data. Liaison librarians are recording their reference statistics in different locations (e.g., LibAnswers, which is used by library employees at service points, versus SharePoint, which is used by librarians for 'in-office' reference questions for the Assessment Analyst's statistical reports). And questions not regarded as 'substantive enough' in the judgment of individual liaison librarians may not have been recorded at all. Not remembering to record instruction or consultation data also surfaced as a regular occurrence. These inconsistencies in statistics recording impacted the accuracy of self-reported instruction and consultation (reference) data. Revisions to the instruction and consultation (reference) statistics form over the past three years may also have contributed to inconsistencies in reporting. While the statistics could still demonstrate certain disciplines with a high demand for instruction or consultations (reference), it could not be definitively stated that only those disciplines make high demands.

There is a great deal of autonomy associated with liaison librarian work. One of the factors that is difficult to measure is how each liaison librarian approaches doing what they do. For example, the level of investigation prior to approving a resource purchase, refreshing

instruction sessions annually versus always delivering the same content, being proactive or reactive regarding engagement with a college, school, or department's faculty and graduate students, etc.

Conclusion

Although several recommendations were identified, they were relatively broad, rather than discipline or liaison activity specific. It was almost impossible to make recommendations at that level of granularity due to the wide variance in how liaison librarians approach their work, the irregular demands of some liaison activities, the time it takes to build relationships with assigned colleges, schools, or departments, etc. There were also a few internal data gathering process irregularities identified that once rectified or clarified will provide more comprehensive and more accurate data.

Recommendations

1. A clear and common understanding of how, what, and where to record data for liaison librarian instruction and consultation needs to be determined, including instruction and consultation in specialized areas such as Data and GIS. Accurate and more complete data should help ensure a more fair and equitable assignment of duties, improve the accuracy of our Library's status with the Canadian Association of Research Libraries and the Association of Research Libraries, as well as better demonstrate to the university the important role librarians play in supporting teaching, research, and learning on our campus.
2. Consideration should be given to the need for time to build subject knowledge when assigning duties, especially in the first year of tenure track appointments. A process for knowledge transfer when an assignment is transitioning should also be developed.
3. No liaison librarian should be assigned more than one discipline that requires significant instruction, consultation, and collections activity. Consideration should also be given to dividing disciplines that are extremely heavy in all three areas amongst two or more liaison librarians.
4. Consideration should be given to encouraging librarians who are currently without liaison assignments to accept a small liaison assignment. This would help distribute the liaison workload across a larger number of people, enhance connections to our teaching and learning mission, and better support areas of growth as well as disciplines that are currently under-resourced.
5. As part of individual Assignment of Duties conversations, liaison librarians should ensure that the Library Dean is aware of any changes or anticipated changes (e.g., to faculty, student numbers, curricula, research priorities, etc.) that impact liaison work in their currently assigned areas.
6. Opportunities need to be created to enhance knowledge sharing, communication, and collaboration between clusters and among liaison librarians.¹³

Substantive changes to the Library's delivery of services have occurred since March of 2020, both in the way liaison librarians conduct their instruction and consultation (reference) activities, and in how these activities are recorded. For example, there is now an option to record data on asynchronous learning object development, such as Panopto video creation. Once the COVID-19 pandemic has passed or subsided, it is anticipated that many of the

newer online instructional activities may, to varying degrees, blend with more traditional approaches where face-to-face sessions were the dominant method of delivery. Changes to remote academic course instruction and learning during the pandemic may also have a significant impact, either positive or negative, on future demands for library instruction and consultation (reference). Additionally, it is unknown how the Library's recent shift towards a functional organizational structure will impact liaison librarian activities.

One significant positive outcome of this investigation was a clearer picture—and a greater understanding amongst liaison librarians—of the volume of instruction, consultation (reference), and collections work that is being undertaken to support each school, college or department.

Acknowledgement

The author would like to thank Crystal Hampson and David Smith, co-authors of the Working Group interim and final reports, for their editorial contributions to this article.

Appendix A. Email to Liaison Librarians Requesting Narrative Description of Liaison Work for Internal Working Group Report

Hi Liaison Librarians,

The **Equity Across Disciplines Working Group** (Crystal Hampson, David Smith, and Susan Murphy) has begun gathering data and other information to inform its work. Our mandate is to *“investigate and provide recommendations on how disciplinary/cluster differences in levels of instruction, consultation, collections activity, undergraduate and graduate student support, etc. could help inform the development of the annual assignment of duties. This will also help all of us better understand disciplinary and cluster demands.”*

We are contacting you to ask you to describe for us what your work as a liaison librarian entails. We would like you to provide us with a narrative description of what collections, instruction, reference / research consultation, synthesis review activity, and any other liaison work looked like for each of your areas over the past year. This could include information such as time of year that a particular activity is more intense, the amount of new instructional content (classes, workshops, guides, etc.) that you created, the nature of instructional content (customized and/or repeat classes, in-person and/or online modules), collection development and organization (budget responsibilities, major acquisitions, guides, projects, etc.), activities that span multiple years, liaison committee work external to the library (e.g. departmental/college committees), etc. We do not need you to provide any statistics you have recorded in our Sharepoint Instructional Statistics site as Carisa will be providing that data for us.

The information you provide will complement the data that we are gathering for these activities and enable us to see a more complete picture of what liaison activity looks like for each discipline. We acknowledge that there is variance in liaison activity levels, which are driven by or reflect the needs of each discipline.

We are anticipating completing our work no later than December. If you could send your response to susan.murphy@usask.ca by **August 4**, we would be most appreciative.

Thank you,
Crystal, David, and Susan

Appendix B. Email to Cluster Chairs Requesting Narrative Description of Cluster Work for the Working Group Internal Report

Hi Cluster Chairs,

The **Equity Across Disciplines Working Group** (Crystal Hampson, David Smith, and Susan Murphy) has begun gathering data and other information to inform its work. Our mandate is to *“investigate and provide recommendations on how disciplinary/cluster differences in levels of instruction, consultation, collections activity, undergraduate and graduate student support, etc. could help inform the development of the annual assignment of duties. This will also help all of us better understand disciplinary and cluster demands.”*

We are reaching out to you, as Cluster Chairs, to ask how your clusters currently function. We will be contacting liaisons individually about their particular liaison work. We are interested in:

- how often does your cluster meet?
- for what purpose(s) does your cluster meet or work together? e.g. for collections discussions and decisions? for instruction? for research consultations?
- what do you feel your role is as cluster chair? How much time do you spend performing this role?
- any other information you would like to share with us about your cluster’s work.

We acknowledge that there is variance in application of the cluster model, which may be driven by the needs of the respective disciplines. Gathering narratives describing how each cluster functions is important to understanding the story that cannot be told by pure data alone.

We are anticipating completing our work no later than December. If you could send your responses to susan.murphy@usask.ca by **August 4**, we would be most appreciative. Feel free to engage other members of your cluster in crafting your response.

Thank you,
Crystal, David, and Susan

Notes

1. *Collective Agreement between the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Saskatchewan Faculty Association (USFA) July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2022*. University of Saskatchewan. <https://careers.usask.ca/agreements/usfa/usfa-table-of-contents.php>.
2. Charlene Sorensen, email message to University of Saskatchewan librarians, June 11, 2020.
3. Crystal Hampson, Susan Murphy and David Smith, *Equity Across Disciplines Working Group Final Report* (University of Saskatchewan Library, 2020).
4. Linda Anderson and Susan Vega Garcia, “Library Usage, Instruction, and Student Success across Disciplines: A Multilevel Approach,” *College & Research Libraries*, Vol. 81, No. 3 (2020): 461. <https://crl.acrl.org/index.php/crl/article/view/24370/32195>, 461.
5. Anderson, “Library Usage,” 462.
6. Anderson, “Library Usage,” 466–7.
7. Cynthia Thompson, “Disciplinary Differences Between Faculty: Library Use and Perceptions” (PhD diss.,

University of Missouri – Kansas City, 2014), 130, <https://www-proquest-com.cyber.usask.ca/docview/1563383463?accountid=14739>.

8. Roger Schonfeld and Ross Housewright, "US Faculty Survey 2012," *Ithaka S+R*, (April 8, 2013): 19, <https://sr.ithaka.org/publications/us-faculty-survey-2012>.

9. Thompson, "Disciplinary Differences," 126.

10. Carisa Polischuk, email message to Working Group authors, August 6, 2020.

11. Research chairs in Canada are commonly defined as world-class faculty whose positions are supported by targeted funding from a funding agency or benefactor.

12. Schonfeld, "US Faculty," 19.

13. Hampson, *Equity Across*, 1–2.