The Role of Next Generation Libraries in Enhancing Multidisciplinary Research

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UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
Libraries and Cultural Resources
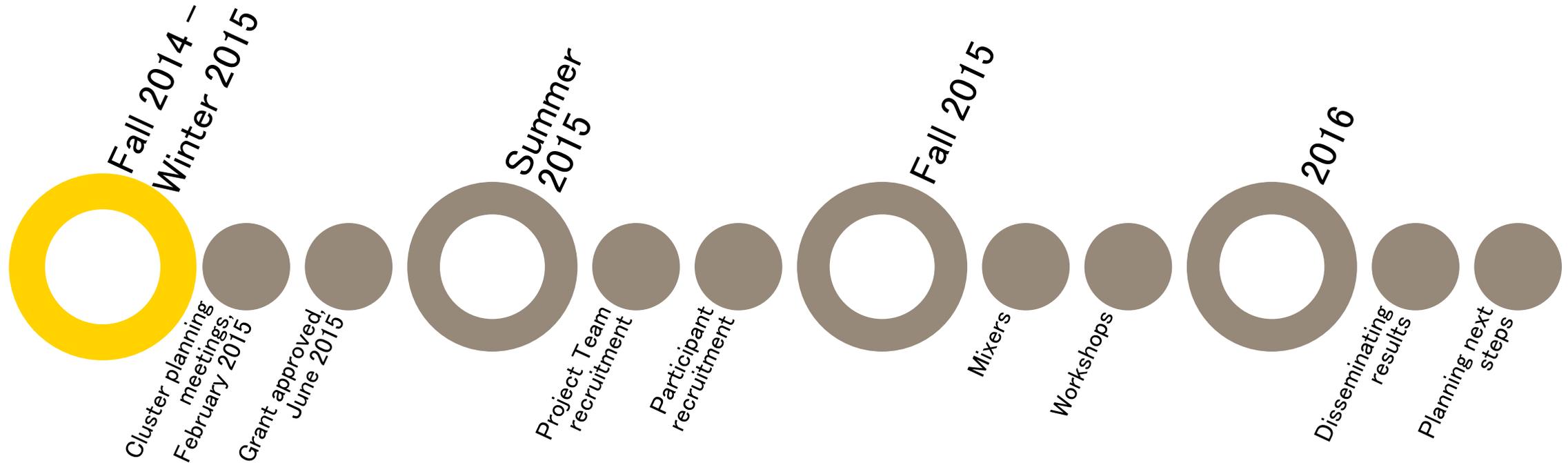
Presentation Outline

- Project Overview
- Timeline of Events
- Outcomes
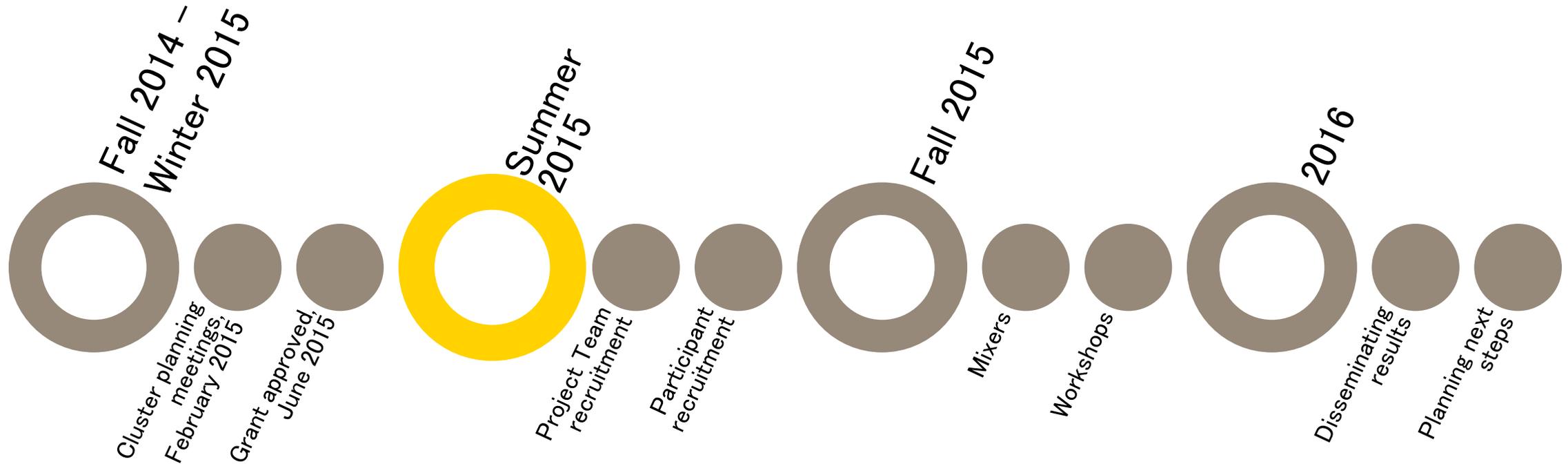- Facilitators Perspectives
- Implications

Project Overview

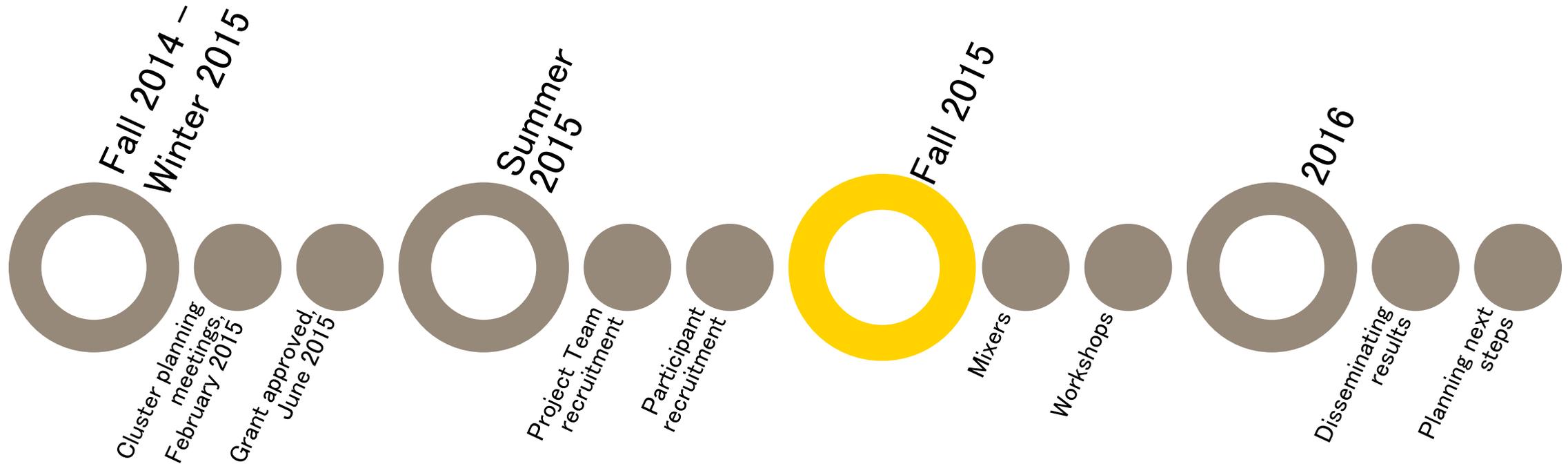- Background
- Study Objectives
- Scope

Timeline of Events: Fall 2014 – Winter 2015
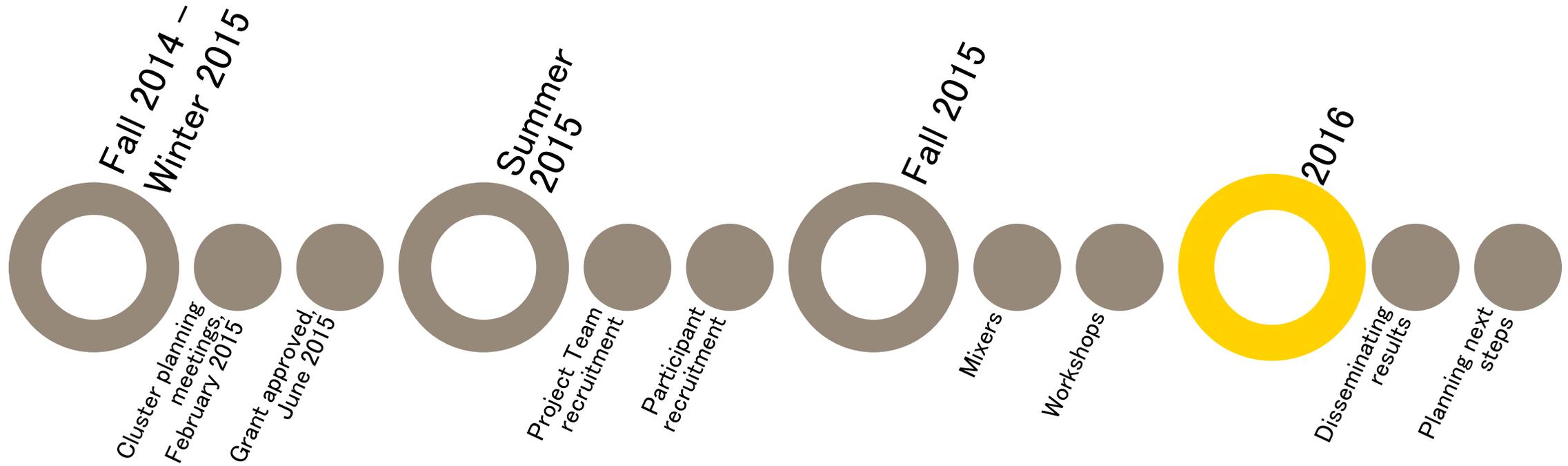

Fall 2014 – Winter 2015

Summer 2015

Fall 2015

2016

Cluster planning meetings, February 2015

Grant approved, June 2015

Project Team recruitment

Participant recruitment

Mixers

Workshops

Disseminating results

Planning next steps

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Outcomes: The Workshop Format

Strengths

- Collegial atmosphere
- External experts
- External facilitators
- Flexible scheduling

Challenges

- Recruitment
- Focus on process vs. outcomes

Outcomes: Common Research Support Needs

Data and Data Repositories
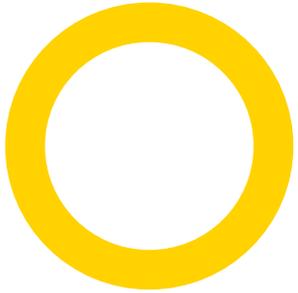
Digitization

Expertise

Space

Skills Training

Funding for Collaborations

Facilitators Perspectives

Preparation
- Helpful to have list of participants ahead of time
- Participants came prepared and ready to contribute

Agenda Structure and Flexibility
- It was helpful to have a structured agendas
- All facilitators were flexible with the agendas to enable strong outcomes

Supplies
- Each facilitator had abundant supplies to enable thoughtful and creative discussions which contributed to the success of the workshop

Overall
- Despite their differences, there was surprising commonality of need for greater expertise and tools to support digital data throughout the research lifecycle.

Facilitators Perspectives: Smart Cities Cluster

Lesson Learned

1. Conduct the workshop in one day

2. Two Facilitators: Process and Domain

- Tremendous participation, but not a lot of group continuity between the days
- The outside expert was a consistent participant and was absolutely critical because of his domain expertise.
- He became a co-facilitator after the first session.
- Establishing group identity would have enabled stronger discussions

Facilitators Perspectives:
# Visual Analytics Cluster

Lesson Learned:

1. Actively identify priorities of participant feedback

Finding: Final list of priorities surprised us. Topics that had majority of discussion were prioritized low. Which means we did not spend our time on the high priority topics.

Exercise:

1. Listed topics discussed by the group on individual posters taped to the wall
2. Asked researchers to rank them as high/medium/low priority
3. The topic posters were then re-arranged in high/medium/low groupings
4. The researchers were then asked to prioritize the topics within each grouping

Facilitators Perspectives: Lead Facilitator
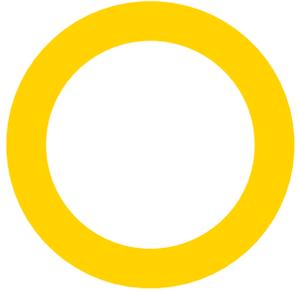
Planning

- Clearly communicate purpose/goals to participants
- Schedule workshop (days, amount of time) in way to maximize participation
- Think about incentives for participants (offer to invite guest experts)
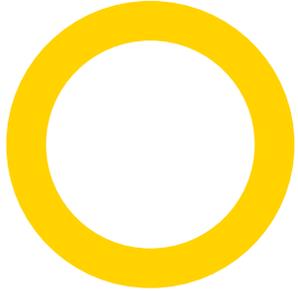- Have confidence that you will be able to address the outcomes of the workshop

Facilitators Perspectives: Lead Facilitator
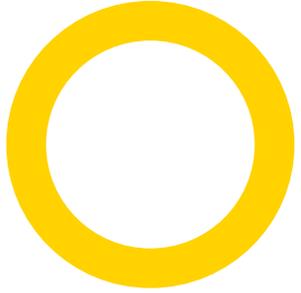
Successes

- Enthusiastic participation by faculty
- Many commonalities between individuals and groups
- Role of external experts
- Use of outside facilitators

Facilitators Perspectives: Lead Facilitator

Implications for other institutions hosting similar events

- How can this event address the interests of university administration (Provost, VP for Research, CIO)
- Which departments/programs/schools will you involve?
- What is the readiness of your library to develop and offer new technologies/services/spaces?

Project Implications for Libraries and Their Universities

"21ˢᵗ Century Libraries: Why Do They Matter"
Preconference Title from Designing Libraries 4 at North Carolina State
September 2015

Library approaches to research support are largely based on the way in which research was conducted twenty years ago, as developed since the arrival of the Web

"But we don't do it that way anymore."

Brian Moorman, Geographer and Associate Dean Research, Faculty of Arts, University of Calgary

Functional not Disciplinary

- Generalized across Multiple Disciplines and Fields of Research
- Creating Capacity to be Employed by a Diverse Range of Researchers
- Capabilities Not Created for Single Projects

Infrastructure that Scales:
Research Platforms for the Social Sciences, Arts, Humanities, Environmental Sciences and Urban Design

In STEM, we already have such platforms, e.g. at University of Calgary:

- Research Platforms in the Brain and Mental Health Research Theme
- Supporting Research Ranging from Brain and Behavior Research to Neural Injury and Repair to Healthy Brain Aging
- Creating NeuroTechnologies Platforms Encompassing NeuroImaging, NeuroStimulation and NeuroInformatics
- "Importantly, the NeuroTechnologies Platforms will incorporate a long-term plan for maintenance and operation ⋯."

Why the Library

Trust

- General Level of Trust in the Library
- A Sense that the Library Is Developing the Kind of New Capabilities Needed
- Unique Resources and Knowledge in Spatial and Numeric Data

Neutrality

- The Library Will Provide a Level Playing Field for all Disciplines – Rich or Poor

Commitment to Universality

- Libraries Participate Effectively in National and International Networks and Employ Common Standards and a Commitment to Sharing

But a Repositioned Library

Understanding Research as It Is Practiced Today and a Willingness and Capacity to Invest in New Models

- "…library services will be organized around research, not around search."
  A Day in the Life of a (Serious) Researcher: Envisioning the Future of the Research Library, Ithaka S+R, March 2016

Libraries Must Act as Partners With and Within their Universities

- Central in the Sense of "Essential," but not in the Sense of "Centralized"
- Ubiquity through a Network, Not Necessarily as the "Hub"

Must be Partners Organizationally and Functionally

- Must Have More Legs on the Stool
- Must Have a Seat at the Table but Embrace Shared Decision-Making
- Fully Incorporate the Services of Others as Integral Parts of the Solution

Possible Models

Institute / Center
- Providing a Locus for Shared Planning, Expertise and Capacity
- Mutual Ownership of a Common Mission
- Exploits Full Potential of External Partnerships

Joint Governance and Appointments
- e.g., University Librarian Also Serving as Associate VP Research

Many Other Models Are Possible
- e.g., Consolidating Research Platform Support Across Unit Lines in the Library

But What is Critical, Is Being Positioned to Exercise Campus-Wide Perspective —— "A Whole of the Elephant" View

While Focusing Today on Platforms for Research, Increasingly This Functional Infrastructure Will Also Become a Feature of Undergraduate Instruction

Questions?

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Resources: http://prism.ucalgary.ca/handle/1880/51086