

The Study Visit Experience at the University of Melbourne Library During 1 April – 15 May 2014

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During 1 April – 15 May 2014, I had a study visit to the University of Melbourne (UOM) Library through the assistance of the (UOM) International Relations Office under the 2014 Endeavour Executive Fellowship. It was my great opportunity and precious time to have the experience at the UOM Library, to meet with several key persons of the Library and to learn about the library system in Australia. The reputation of UOM as a research-intensive university, one of the eight leading universities (the Group of Eight) in Australia and one of the top universities in the world attracted me to visit the UOM Library. One of the study visit objectives was to learn about how the UOM Library contributed to the key success factors of UOM in being a research-intensive university.

The study visit programme arranged for me during 1 April – 15 May 2014 was really interesting and such a very impressive one. Besides visiting many of the UOM Discipline Libraries, I was also arranged to visit RMIT University Library, Monash University Library, La Trobe University Library and CAVAL Limited. The visits to these institutions revealed that leading universities have recognized the importance of investing in the libraries, people, and technology to support research as well as learning and teaching. Library cooperation through many forms of consortium has also contributed to the enhancement of the Australian Library System.

One important role in the leading university libraries is the liaison librarian. For me this word is not so familiar. After I have learned about this liaison role, I do agree with the concept. Although there are some barriers in building the relationships with the academics and it is still not clear on how to measure the performance efficiency and effectiveness of the liaison librarians, the direction is believed to be right to go on. One thing that I can think of now for liaison librarians to walk across the barriers is that liaison librarians should be encouraged to regularly develop themselves some expertise or knowledge that they do not have and is necessary for supporting academics and research students in doing research in particular discipline. Professional development plan for liaison librarians should also be in place. Apart, the exchange of experiences and ideas among liaison librarians within the university and among university libraries is recommended.

In my opinion, one of the UOM Library's key success factors in supporting the University to be a research-intensive university include its clear objective, vision, and strategy in scholarly information. The University Administrator has strongly supported and endorsed the scholarly literacy strategy. This strategy has been revealed in the organisational structure that Scholarly Information is one of the responsibilities of the University Librarian. A number of professional staff are structured to work under the Director

of Scholarly Information. Each discipline library has its own liaison librarian or liaison team. Besides, the UOM Library has clear principles and aspirations set forth in the Melbourne's Scholarly Information Future – a ten-year strategy. This caused the strategy to be able to continue, albeit the change in the University Librarian or key persons. This also reflects that the UOM and its library have moved together towards scholarly information.

Another key success factor is the quality of personnel. UOM's Discipline Libraries comprise high caliber personnel. One qualification that is preferable for a discipline liaison librarian is to have the degree in that discipline. This qualification can help the liaison librarian to understand and be able to support academics in learning and teaching as well as research. Apart from this qualification, many of the UOM Library professional staff have several years of experiences from overseas well-known university libraries. Besides Discipline Libraries, other roles, including Research & Collections, eScholarship Research Centre, Strategy and Planning, which are also important in contributing to research as well as learning and teaching, are performed by high quality staff as well.

High investment in technology is another key success factor for UOM Library in supporting UOM to be a research-intensive university. The UOM Library has invested in the library system, institutional repositories, the archives system, the software used for assessing and managing research such as Simplectic, automated book return machines, self-check machines, queue ticket machine, digitising machines and equipment, the system used for interlibrary loans including BONUS, Relais, etc. All these investments really help promote and support research activities.

In addition, library cooperation in many forms of consortium, such as CAVAL Limited, CAUL (Council of Australian University Librarians), CEIRC (CAUL Electronic Information Resources Consortium), BONUS, TROVE, ULANZ (University Libraries of Australia and New Zealand), the Group of Eight, EALRGA (East Asian Library Resources Group of Australia), ALIM (Asian Libraries in Melbourne), etc., is one of the key success factors. The UOM Library can manage its space more effectively through CAVAL's storage space facilities and urgently acquire the LOTE (Language Other Than English) resources through CAVAL's supply of shelf-ready LOTE resources or cataloguing service. Through the BONUS consortium, UOM students can easily get their required resources that UOM does not have. Meanwhile, through CEIRC, UOM can subscribe to some databases at the well-negotiated prices. CAUL's facilities include quality and assessment, CAUL statistics, etc., which can help UOM Library enhance its services and support its learning & teaching and research. Apart, other consortium such as EALRGA and ALIM help strengthen UOM in the area of Asian studies and East-Asian studies.

Besides the liaison model and library services, the UOM Library has paid attention to library redevelopments, professional development, and knowledge sharing. This should be another key success factor as it helps the UOM Library to be able to keep pace with the changing environment to better serve and support the new generation of students and academics. Library redevelopments can lead the Library to enhance its physical environment and infrastructure while professional development and knowledge sharing help develop the expertise for the library staff to effectively contribute to the scholarly communities, to be able to sustain its leadership in the industry.

All these factors have contributed to the success of the UOM Library in providing support to one of the top research-intensive university. However, the success does not stop the UOM Library from moving towards its scholarly information future. I believe its current strategies and teamwork will eventually help the Library to achieve its goal in contributing to UOM to be one of the world top research universities.