THE MANAGEMENT OF CHANGE IN LIBRARIES FOR ACHIEVING QUALITY SERVICES

Helen Hayes

The University of Melbourne Library is one of the largest units within the University of Melbourne. Structurally, it operates in a fairly autonomous fashion reporting to the Office of the Vice-Chancellor for policy and planning matters and to the registrar for the day to day management of the Library. The Library has approximately 300 permanent and 200 casual staff situated in 23 locations. It has a collection of 2.5 million volumes serving the University community and the Library also provides a much broader role in supporting regional, national and international research.

One of the problems with the University of Melbourne library as it was viewed in 1989 was that it had not changed to meet the needs of its users. This does not mean that it was not doing certain things very well. There was a highly dedicated and skilled staff in place, but the organisation was out of touch with its user groups.

Quality is generally known as the ability of our organisation to meet its customer needs through continuous improvement. In 1991 following three reviews in recent years and culminating in a comprehensive review of the Library's services the Library commenced a process of considerable organisational and cultural change. A change management programme was conceived, developed and has gone through a process of continuous implementation, development and refinement in terms of services to users, collection management along with staff programmes, information technology and management systems to support this programme which we call "the Library of Excellence" programme.

Our aims through the Library of Excellence programme were:

- That the Library is in touch with user needs and involves staff and users in the ongoing process of planning. Communication channels are open and the goals are understood generally and agreed overall;
- There will be quality services to support the academic function. This will be achieved by staff who are confident in their ability to deliver those services and through a process of continual review which is achieved through the strategic planning process;
- Systems development is there to support the aims of the library to deliver services;
- Collections are relevant to the needs of users whether these are held locally or are available through networks;
- The Library is seen as integral to the teaching programme and has a high profile in the University.

The Need for Change

In order to meet these aims we need to recognise the need for change. Any organisation goes through a process of continual evolution as it seeks to work more efficiently and adjust to market forces. Some of the other influences in our situation were:

- A more demanding economic environment which meant that we had to achieve more/or better with fewer resources. Lack of staff mobility in this environment meant that we had to look at new ways of creating an interesting and challenging work environment;
- Mergers and affiliations;
- Huge technological changes;
- Award restructure with related job redesign, multi-skilling and increased staff development activity;
- An extensive review of Library services;
- A new University Librarian;
- A new senior staff structure;
- A change in the University's culture to a more service and quality oriented environment;
- New challenges in the tertiary education sector, fee-paying students, competition for quality funds, etc.

The Process of Change

Our immediate challenge was to capitalise on the things that were going well in the library, address those areas that clearly needed immediate attention and develop the management processes to enable continuous improvement to occur.

We needed good public relations programs to improve communication between the library and its user groups; revitalised staff programmes which better met the needs of staff; services which were much more user-oriented, and we needed to develop a planning culture in consultation with library staff and users to ensure that organisational change for improvement would be ongoing and accepted by all groups.

Our "Library of Excellence" programme draws together all of these elements under the major domains of staff, collections, services, administration and public relations. These are also the major domains in our strategic plan which is our tool underpinning the entire Library of Excellence programme. The Strategic Plan reflects the views of staff and users for the development of library programmes under each of these headings.

Staff

I plan to discuss our staff programmes first and this reflects the importance that we placed on these programmes for the achievement of quality outcomes.

The success of the Library is dependent on the skills and attitudes of the staff themselves. This meant that the primary focus for the management of change began with the Library's staffing policies. No great achievements are possible without the goodwill and the ability of staff to achieve them. Staff need an environment where they believe that their contribution is important, that the Library has a clear direction which is well articulated and that the Library is respected by the community it supports. The Library must be seen to be changing, moving forward, letting go old ways that are no longer efficient, taking risks and actively listening to staff and users. Here I would like to spend a little time talking about the staff programmes that have been introduced during this period.

Staff Development and Training Programmes

These programmes have changed and developed during the last three years. In particular they take into account staff training needs which are identified in the performance appraisal process, an annual staff development survey and an annual staff perception survey. In addition, areas of development need from the Strategic Plan are targeted for special attention. For example, there is a current need for greater effort to be placed on AARNET and INTERNET training. In 1991 we identified a major need for staff to undertake basic PC training which led to more than 200 attendances at appropriate IT courses which were conducted by the computer centre.

Another example was that in 1992 Information Services staff were given time away from normal duties to improve their subject skills. The 1993 staff development survey indicated that many staff wanted more training in service management and assertiveness skills which have greatly improved the handling of customer enquiries. Feedback is provided to staff on how their staff development needs were addressed through the surveys and appraisal process. A Staff Development Committee is responsible for driving the staff development part of the Strategic Plan and for ensuring that programmes are focussed on the real needs of library staff and that each programme is appraised for its usefulness.

The Staff Development Programme aims to target specific rather than general needs and has required a strong commitment by all managers as staff need to be given time away from duties to increase their skills. Staff development activities also provide opportunities for team building across sections of the Library and with other groups in the University as staff interact over common issues.

Resource constraints mean that we not only seek good external programmes, but we look for skilled staff within the University and amongst our colleagues to enhance our programmes at a cost which can be achieved in our budget. Library staff who show good training skills are also given opportunities to train other library staff.

Performance Appraisal

Introduced in mid 1991 for staff using a process which was developed in consultation with all staff. The process allows feedback to management concerning

constraints on effective work performance and implies a commitment by management to staff development programmes which help to improve performance and provide for better career fulfilment for staff. Each year following the process, staff are invited to comment and the process is reviewed. Position descriptions have been rewritten to reflect quality outcomes expected from each position.

Letter of Appreciation

In recognition that a great deal of individual effort is made towards achieving excellence, the Library introduced a "Letter of Appreciation" which is in a format like a certificate. This letter recognises the extraordinary contribution that is made by individual staff members to new or improved work practices for the benefit of users. Only a few such awards are given each year. The presentation is accompanied by a morning tea which is attended by all staff and the University Librarian speaks about the individuals work which has led to the award. In addition to the certificate of appreciation, corrective effort to achieve excellence is acknowledged through appropriate letters to personal files and acknowledged in relevant library publications.

Structural Efficiency Principle

The Structural Efficiency Principle (known as SEP) is part of a range of workplace reforms which has been published by government, unions and employees in the last decade. The Structural Efficiency Principle is closely aligned with the award restructuring process. The aims of these reforms has been to increase efficiency and productivity, with appropriate rewards (financial and other) to workers. The Structural Efficiency Principle was embodied in the 1988 National Wage Case. The Principle includes:
- Career paths based on acquiring and developing new skills (requires a new focus on appropriate training);
- Multi-skilling and broadening task ranges (reduces demarcation);
- Appropriate pay relativities between different categories of workers (negotiated awards);
- Ensuring that work practices are flexible and competitive (for example, removing unnecessary tasks, simplifying tasks).

SEP has been introduced at the University of Melbourne at the enterprise level and the unit level through a series of individual SEP projects. The emphasis of these projects has been to increase efficiency, productivity and job satisfaction by examining work practices and job design.

Staff involved in the project consider:
- The principles of job redesign;
- Examine constraints under which the work group operates;
- Visit other libraries to look at other workflows and practices;
- Develop recommendations which meet SEP goals. Recommendations included such things as broader responsibilities for staff, training to gain an expanded range

of skills and a greater investment in technology.

The outcome has been a vast improvement in work practices, especially in relation to eliminating duplication of effort and inefficiencies and achieving greater throughput of work. In original cataloguing and copy cataloguing there was more than a 12% increase in productivity in the first year followed by a similar percentage increase in the second year on top of these gains. At the same time, staff spent an increasing amount of their time working in other areas of the Library with no compensation for this time given. Morale has improved and the Technical Services staff are seen as high profile, service oriented staff working flexibly and efficiently to improve service to users.

SEP is fundamentally a process of change, initiating and effectively managing change by acknowledging work inefficiencies, constraints on performance and areas of dissatisfaction. It is also an effective means of team building as staff share ideas, concerns and thoughts on how to achieve change.

Staff Perception Survey

As part of our ongoing need to find out about the concerns of staff, an annual staff perception survey is conducted to seek the views of staff about the Library as a place to work. This survey allows staff to respond anonymously to a range of questions relating to their level of satisfaction and involvement in the workplace. Information obtained is fed into the libraries' planning process for further action.

An Exit Interview

This was introduced on a voluntary basis for all staff leaving the Library. This has received a high level of acceptance and shows an increasing level of satisfaction with the Library as a place to work.

Staff Forums

Are usually held in the lunch hour on matters of concern or interest to staff such as how the budget is set in relation to the Strategic Plan, staffing issues, public relations, health and safety matters, etc. These sessions provide an opportunity to 'brainstorm' and provide feedback to management in an informal environment outside of the normal administrative and committee process. The Library management has made a commitment that staff forums will be conducted on all matters of general concern to staff.

Committee Structure

The committee structure of the Library has moved towards expert working groups and away from earlier hierarchical groups, although these continue to exist to ensure that all staff are given the opportunity to contribute. Expert working groups have a major role in strategic planning development and include staff with expertise no matter what level this entails. For example, the Public Relations

Committee includes the University Librarian, a library technician, a member of staff and an administrative assistant. Expert groups exist to consider collection issues, information technology matters, reader education, staff development and health and safety. Time spent in such groups is focussed and effectively spent and these groups have greatly assisted in fostering a more collaborative environment in the Library.

All levels and sections of the Library work together with a high degree of mutual support and exchange of expertise. Programmes which three years ago would not have been possible are being handled by teams of staff often volunteering their own time. For example, a voluntary shelf-reading day drew staff from all areas of the Library to assist with reordering the shelves to help users find material. The cataloguing staff suggested that they staff a telephone answering service to assist with peak demand at the Information Desk. This has enabled Information Services staff to handle person to person enquiries without the constant interruption of telephone enquiries. Technical Services staff are at the same time receiving feedback concerning the products of their work. This programme was introduced without compensation to the cataloguing staff for the time involvement and yet productivity continues to improve.

Staff Rotation and Exchange

A more flexible staff rotation and exchange scheme was developed to allow staff to rotate on a range of levels and for varying periods of time. Staff at all levels are expected rotate once every three years. At any one time, there may be 10 exchanges in progress and the library handles more than 30 exchanges annually. An investment in training by middle and senior managers has been necessary to achieve this challenge which is generally accepted and implemented.

Internal Library Communications

Internal communications, including newsletters were reviewed to ensure that staff would be kept well informed on matters of interest to them as well as professional issues. A half time administrative assistant has been responsible for internal communications as well as for the considerably enhanced library public relations programme. This leads me into the next programme I wish to discuss in relation to quality, particularly addressing the perceptions of users.

Public Relations

The goal of the Library's Public Relations programme has been to enhance the links between the Library and the University and to raise the profile of the Library. We put considerable resource and effort into ensuring that we are in touch with user needs and that we are communicating our services and programmes to them.

In 1991, a formal Public Relations Programme was introduced. As I mentioned earlier, the Library had been doing a number of things quite well but the perception of the Library by its users was that the Library's performance fell well short of

meeting user needs.

In the first instance we looked at strategies for improving relations with our user groups. Some user groups were particularly vocal in their criticism of the Library so we targeted this group first. We now hold informal lunch time meetings with academic departments with an overall aim of meeting with five departments annually to discuss matters of interest and concern to them. The head of department invites between three and five key academic staff to meet with senior library staff and to resolve problems to the department. We also hold annual or biannual meetings with other relevant user groups. For example the chairpersons of library user groups, the staff responsible for college or departmental libraries which are not under our control (which has incidentally led to the development of a guide to their collections which we update annually).

All new University staff receive a personal letter of welcome to the Library's service with some brief information and contact numbers. We run a survey of academic staff perceptions of the Library every three years. The first was conducted late last year and we are currently analysing the results. The survey was based on Professor Mairead Browne's survey that she conducted at the University of Technology, Sydney.

Relations with student groups are more difficult to achieve at the University but we keep in regular contact with the student union. We invite student officers to comment on our Strategic Plan. We analyse suggestions made to the Library which are received on our 'feedback board' annually and incorporate these recommendations into our Strategic Plan. We also send the results of this analysis along with our planned strategies to the student union. Students are surveyed every three years concerning their satisfaction with library services. Postgraduate students are surveyed separately. This means that each year we conduct a user survey on a rolling basis - student, staff and postgraduate in turn.

As part of our Public Relations programme we looked at the quality of our publicity. We believe that the quality of our publications is an important aspect for raising the profile of the Library. We generally found that our printed publications were high quality in content but not in presentation, format or consistency. This is a major area of interest for our Public Relations Committee who are responsible for the content and quality of our publications, as well as liaising with editorial staff for university publications. A new high quality library newsletter was introduced called "Ex Libris". A regular article 'From My Desk' provides staff and users with a regular overview of important library activities at any one time and has become a popular way for academic staff to keep in touch with developments in the Library. Articles relating to collections and services, staff profiles and staff development programmes feature in the newsletter also. A more scholarly 'Library Journal' is produced twice a year for the Friends of the Library and other important groups. We are now able to produce an annual report by March of the following year, which is also an important means of promoting the Library to its users.

Other promotional activities for all users include an excellent Exhibition Programme, the Library's participation in Orientation Week and Discovery Day where we offer free tea and coffee to prospective students and their parents. In addition, this year we will commence a Library Week which will be aimed primarily towards students who will have the services of the Library brought to their attention.

We will hand out free online searches and books and we will make it a fun week for students. This was an initiative of a member of the Technical Services staff who wanted to promote a more 'fun' image to students.

The Friends of the Library are also a source of goodwill and support to the Library, organising events and publicising collections.

We keep a clippings file of all publicity given to the Library. This not only helps us to monitor our progress but also is useful to bring out on important occasions such as the Vice-Chancellor's annual visit to the Library. The public relations aspect of the Strategic Plan is developed and driven by a Public Relations Committee and supported by a half time administrative assistant position. Every opportunity is considered for its public relations and marketing potential. In fact, the Strategic Planning process itself has been an excellent means of raising the profile of the Library while involving user groups in the planning process.

This leads me into the next program I wish to discuss which is an essential component for achieving quality outcomes.

Strategic Planning and the Administrative Process

The aim of our Strategic Plan is to make the Library more creative, more efficient and more results oriented. This is an evolutionary process. Ours is not a story of instant success as one of our early attempts to develop a strategic plan had fallen short of our objective for the reasons:

- Not all Library staff had been involved in the process which was perceived as hierarchical and not openly consultative;
- The Plan bore little relation to Faculty Strategic Plans and users were not involved in the process until the final document was delivered;
- There was no agreed view on what was to achieved by the Strategic Plan. It had become a public relations document with no useful outcome.

In October 1991, we therefore reviewed the strategic planning process and began to develop a Strategic Plan which was formed with considerable input from Faculties through their library user committees and Library staff at all levels. The Plan forms the basis of the Libraries annual budget allocation process as programmes which are identified by Faculty and staff as being of highest priority receive funding priority.

The initial document was developed from a number of sources including the Review of Library Services conducted by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Resources),

discussions held at Faculty Library User Committee Meetings, Faculty Strategic Plans, the Staff Perception Survey and the Library Feedback Board as well as the student survey. To enable this process to be managed effectively a senior member of the Library staff with excellent planning skills was appointed to the position of Director, Strategic Planning. It was his task to develop a final document from the action plans after these were ranked by Faculties and all library groups and to ensure that the process was understood and allowed for appropriate contribution at all levels. The strategic planning process has now been absorbed into the library faculty culture and is the recognised means of obtaining support at the programme level. It is theoretically no longer possible to ask for funding for a programme mid-year as all planning must be achieved and budgeted before 1 January.

We have now achieved a point of maturity in our strategic planning process at which I felt sufficiently confident for the Senior Management Group of the Library to spend a weekend reconsidering the process and the overall structure of the Plan. The enormous energy and thought that went into this developmental process supported my view and the outcome is one which should enable us to meet the next triennium with greater confidence in our management processes.

To achieve this outcome we took away our existing Strategic Plan. We then compared the content of our plan with that of the University's to ensure that we were supporting the goals of the University and had not excluded any issues that were important to the University. We then questioned whether the Universities plan structure would meet our requirements and decided to put our own headings in place but use the University's format as a guide. We reassessed how all library staff and users would have input to the Plan and developed a flow chart which will be our guide.

We can now feel confident that Library staff and users can contribute to the Library's Plan in a real way and that we are truly supporting the University's own aims and objectives. As discussed earlier, the Library administrative structure including committees of the Library is in a process of constant review in relation to the Strategic Plan. Expert groups drive important sections of the Plan across the Library. The initiatives in the plan are very much broad-based and not top-down.

A recent report written by the head of a small section of library staff states "we feel that we have participated more in decision-making and more information is coming from library management." The report also states that staff are more aware of customers requirements.

I have mentioned earlier some of the surveys we have conducted for staff and users to measure our performance and whether we are meeting the needs of user groups. Performance measures such as these are an essential element of our Strategic Plan enabling us to determine the effectiveness of our policies and providing us with the building blocks which enable us to meet customer needs through continuous review and improvement.

So far I have talked about how we aimed to provide quality services by (1) redesigning our staff programmes to enable staff to better achieve these personal and organisational goals, (2) refocussing our Public Relations program to ensure that we are more in touch with our users, (3) establishing management systems for achieving continuous change to meet the needs of users.

I would now like to briefly mention how this has affected our collections and services. I will offer only a few brief examples which hope will provide some indication of how the change process has achieved collections and services which are more oriented to the needs of users.

Collections

Although the University of Melbourne has an excellent Bookvote allocations and enjoys the support of the University's administration, it must be recognised that the budget is spread over a broad range of disciplines to the extent that we would not be achieving 'Best Practice' by international standards in most disciplines. Research level recent serials cancellations have cut many core journals from the University's collections and this situation was reflected in the Review of Library Services which was conducted by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Resources) Professor Barry Sheehan when he wrote in 1991 that the Library must use and become part of the Distributed National Collection for access to research collections beyond its own range and use resources available from services such as CARL uncover. Recent policies which include at least three levels of support - local, national and international. These issues are now being discussed together. One example is the work the University of Melbourne is doing in the medical field which will distribute major areas of collecting between libraries with small and large holdings where strengths have already been established.

The ability of the University Library to take such a role which involves commitment from Faculty and the University administration is because these issues have been discussed broadly within the University and are well understood. Academic staff and the Library recognise that we cannot achieve self-sufficiency for research level collections and that planning and consultation is needed to achieve the best use of limited resources. Like many academic libraries we have used the conspectus approach developed by the Research Libraries Group in the United States as a tool for measuring our collections and basing future collection policies on agreed areas for further development. A Collection Management Committee was established to further develop and drive the collections aspect of the Strategic Plan. Since this Committee was established almost all of our collection policies have been reviewed to ensure that our Bookvote resources are being used in a way that most effectively meets user needs. Faculties now have the opportunity to bid for changes to their Bookvote allocation based on their changing needs, changes in the publishing world, etc. The annual revised Bookvote is presented to the Libraries Committee and feedback is given to all Faculties concerning their allocation. One of the major aims of the review of collection policies was to ensure that a more open process was in process, better feedback is given and that the Bookvote allocations can be supported and will be kept under review.

Services

What have been the outcomes of our Quality programmes on services to users? Our aim has been to provide quality services which support the teaching and researching of the University.

Our services have over the last three years been under a process of constant review and development. As you will appreciate, services spread over 22 locations are unable to achieve 'Best Practice' in all areas so again, it is the planning and setting of priorities that take precedence. This part of our Strategic Plan is driven very forcefully by the Reader Services Division Heads with input from Technical Services. During the last three to five years use of services, including lending services has increased by more than 30% while the overall staff of the library has remained fairly constant. Some redeployment has been essential to meet the increased need and strategies have been introduced to help us to meet the demand. For example, Technical Services staff who were eager to receive feedback on their own work products proposed a peak period telephone response service between the hours of 11.00am and 3.00pm daily so that staff on the Information Desk could deal with the queues uninterrupted by telephone calls. The loan period was lengthened for all except high use material to free sufficient staff time to allow Lending Services to introduce a book renewal by telephone service. This service has been so popular that further strategies will be needed in 1995 to ensure its ongoing effectiveness. Hours of opening in major locations were increased in response to demand and we asked the University to upgrade equipment and facilities that were creating inefficiencies. For example, we increased the number and type of photocopier, computer terminals and microform equipment. As discussed earlier, we also put considerable resources into staff training programmes and the kind of public relations activities that allow us to be in a better position to know the needs of our users.

There are many such examples of improvement to services which have been achieved to date from within existing resources. Our ability to achieve these improvements have been as a result of improved work practice, better staff development programmes, more efficient use of our resources achieved through better organisational planning.

In Conclusion

Since the introduction of our "Library of Excellence" programme we have moved considerably further away from our earlier process-oriented culture to one which is "user" and "results" oriented. We are more forward looking and less likely to dwell on the past. The Library has a greater team approach to problem solving and new developments. Initiative comes from all levels of the organisation from individuals and groups alike. Staff and users feel free to raise and discuss issues of importance to them and this can be achieved without conflict. Management strategies are known and funding priorities are negotiated and clear. User groups now support the Library openly and the University administration responds

positively to the Library's programmes.

The culture of the Library is not complacent at any time but recognises that there are always needs to be met and improvements to be made.

Helen Hayes
University Librarian
The University of Melbourne

****

AUSTRALASIAN RELIGION INDEX

Published jointly with Centre for Information Studies, *ARI* indexes approximately 70 Australasian religious studies serials.
Two issues each year, second issue is a cumulation.
Subscriptions are $65.00, $50.00 for ANZTLA members.
Inquiries to: Centre for Information Studies,
Locked Bag 660
Charles Sturt University
Wagga Wagga NSW 2678

A unique service for anyone interested in religion and theology from a variety of perspectives