An Opportunity to Challenge and Change the Status Quo

A Report by the Cornell University Library

Goals 2010 Strategic Alignment Group

The pessimist sees difficulty in every opportunity.
The optimist sees opportunity in every difficulty.

-- Winston Churchill

Presented to Anne Kenney,
Carl A. Kroch University Librarian,
on September 15, 2008,
revised October 23, 2008
Executive Summary

In June 2008, the Goals 2010 Strategic Alignment Group (SAG) was formed to examine issues related to achieving the Cornell University Library’s (CUL) strategic goals (Kenney, 2008a). SAG members are a diverse group of library employees representing academics and non-academics, large and small units, recent hires and people with longer tenures at Cornell. Those members are: Eric Acree, Bonna Boettcher, Linda Bryan, Jim Del Rosso, Erla Heyns, Angela Horne (Chair), Somaly Kim-Wu, and Bethany Silfer. Our broad charge stated:

The Goals 2010 Strategic Alignment Group (SAG) will prepare a white paper by September 15th, 2008 for review by Anne Kenney and members of the library’s Administrative Team (CAT). SAG’s work will provide senior library administrators with an ongoing, multi-directional communication process that feeds input up, down and throughout CUL. The team’s report will propose how to engage staff in implementation of the library’s goals and objectives for the period 2007-2010 (available at http://www.library.cornell.edu/staffweb/CULGoals_2007-2010.pdf) and will also recommend ways to ensure that the library’s strategic direction can be course-corrected as the information landscape evolves. The paper will include expected outcomes and measurement options, including agile methods for continuously gathering information about innovative opportunities and focusing efforts on user needs. Data gathered in the recent ClimateQUAL survey and the upcoming staff engagement call (coordinated by the Research and Assessment Unit) will be integrated into SAG’s work as appropriate.

SAG approached its work as an opportunity to consider CUL from a 360 degree perspective. As we move into a new era under Anne Kenney’s leadership, we can review the immediate past and learn from trends. As University Librarian (UL), Anne Kenney encouraged us to think realistically about the realities of CUL’s culture and styles of work, while also taking a deep look at the aspects of our culture/working style that could be enhanced to improve overall results.

To this end we deconstructed the charge into six key topics: engagement, communication, course correction, outcomes and measurement, ongoing information gathering, and teamwork. After the August 11 and 12th all-staff meeting announcements concerning the new CUL organizational structure, we were also tasked to analyze the need for continuing Council of Librarians (COL) and Library Management Team (LMT) or replacing them with a different structure.

We reviewed results from surveys conducted in 2008 such as ClimateQual(ClimateQUAL quantitative results) (Kenney, 2008b) and the Staff Call to Engagement, scanned relevant literature, met with selected groups, and reflected on our own diverse experiences working at both CUL and elsewhere. Anne Kenney’s wish for CUL to be an “employer of choice” resonated throughout our work as we sought to improve an already excellent library system.

Full explanations for our various recommendations are included. There are no perfect solutions for any of the issues faced by CUL, so we attempted to build a case for multiple suggested courses of action. Each of these suggestions is presented as an opportunity to
move CUL forward collegially and effectively. We felt it was wisest to present the UL and her Library Executive Group (LEG) with options rather than strict directives; as a new administrative group, the UL and LEG can use this document to test how far they are willing to push certain ideas during their first months as an intact team.

We advise the following:

**Engage CUL employees**

- Define engagement, in its various manifestations, for all library employees
- Begin building a climate that values, promotes and matches employee strengths to work opportunities, be they at the unit or CUL level
- Underscore that each person has individual responsibility for his/her day-to-day performance
- Develop annual work plans tied to the strategic directions at the smallest workgroup levels to help employees begin engaging with the strategic directions
- Recruit and retain a diverse workforce

**Enhance communication**

- Build an expectation of open and respectful communication among all employees
- Improve communication, both interpersonally and through technology
- Develop mechanisms for employee input, ensuring that employees who communicate receive responses
- Revitalize Staff Web, transforming it into an effective, highly-used intranet for knowledge management
- Underscore the need for each library employee to take responsibility for knowing the information necessary to do his/her job

**Commit to ongoing information gathering**

- Develop a transparent process by which information is gathered, distributed and archived
- Look beyond CUL for input (e.g., Cornell, peers, associations, business, etc.)
- Establish a safe mechanism by which any member of CUL can contribute ideas and identify trends
- Recognize that information gathering is a never ending process

**Rely on outcomes and measurement**

- Ensure that CUL’s strategic goals have tangible, assessable outcomes
- Ensure that every strategic goal has a corresponding means of outcome measurement that answers the question "What difference will this goal make to CUL’s internal and external stakeholders?"
- Make assessment habitual, rather than intermittent. We must develop a culture of evaluation by requiring all units/teams to regularly report on progress so that
successes and failures can serve as references for future risk-taking. This must occur within a framework of safety: workers must know that risking time and effort will not mean risking employment or promotion.

**Prepare for course correction**

- Institute an (at least) annual review of Goals 2010
- Make it the responsibility of every team/unit/employee to share trends they see and suggest ways to help CUL move in new directions
- Develop a culture that views course correction as a positive reaction to environmental factors rather than as failure to achieve goals
- Require every group/committee to justify its direction annually and be prepared to think creatively about ways to improve/alter their activities. Committees must have clear charges, and their chairs and members need to be accountable (and rewarded!) for the work they do

**Value and reward teams**

- Form a Committee of Committees (CoC) to review all CUL-wide, non-unit-specific committees, task forces, and working groups with an eye towards creating a mechanism to ensure that future CUL-wide teams are balanced, fairly selected, and necessary
- Commit to the ideal of high performance teams and help train all chairs and team members to work to their full potential
- Institute peer evaluation of all chairs and team members involved in group assignments and incorporate into annual performance reviews.
- Explore value of a social network overlay to see the connections between top level management, units, and teams/groups

**Consider future of Council of Librarians and Library Management Team**

- Disband both groups effective immediately
- Survey the UL/LEG to determine their needs for input from middle managers
- Survey unit heads/middle managers to determine what mechanism they prefer to funnel ideas up the administrative CUL chain. Does it need to be a regular forum? Will other communication options work equally well or perhaps better?
- Allow time for LEG to move forward with additional restructuring in the new units
- Consider establishing the Library Forum (LF) which will be convened when senior or middle managers have topics for discussion and debate. Membership in LF would depend upon many factors, including any additional changes within the new organizational structure

If these recommendations are accepted, SAG feels that CUL will be strongly positioned to enhance library employee engagement and successfully fulfill Goals 2010. If attention is not paid to the underlying issues surrounding teamwork, engagement, communication,
outcomes and measurement, information gathering, and course correction, the library system will continue to move forward disjointedly, with some teams functioning superbly and meeting their goals, and others limping along unsure of why they exist. If CUL makes a strong commitment to these recommendations, the rewards are limitless.
Overview

"..... the overall well being of the library in the future is contingent upon the continuous cultivation of both management and leadership competencies..... Libraries must develop and support a culture where every individual is encouraged to play a leadership role in whatever position he or she holds." (Shepstone, Carol and Lyn Currie, 2008)

In October 2006, then Cornell University Librarian Sarah Thomas formed the Planning to Plan (P2P) team to develop the process for CUL’s next strategic plan. The team’s charge read:

The Planning to Plan (P2P) Working Group is charged to devise an inclusive process for the creation of CUL’s next strategic plan. The team’s proposed strategic planning process will:

- engage all library staff in candid, respectful discussions and other idea-gathering opportunities
- involve key stakeholders who represent our diverse users
- reflect the library’s core values and mission
- tie the library’s goals and initiatives to those of Cornell University
- help guide the library towards goals and initiatives that frame our future and underscore how every staff member’s day-to-day work furthers the library’s overall direction
- include an evaluation process for assessing progress towards meeting stated goals and objectives
- incorporate the means for additions, revisions or deletions as the library landscape evolves and as assessment warrants

The P2P team will report regularly to the University Librarian and present final recommendations to Sarah Thomas and LMT by January 31, 2007.

Due to Thomas’ departure for Oxford University in spring 2007, P2P’s work did not continue. Following the hiring of Anne Kenney as the 11th Carl A. Kroch University Librarian, SAG was formed.

As SAG began its work in June 2008, we first needed to discuss the absence from our charge of any need to identify strategic goals for the library. This was unnecessary because CUL’s current strategic plan had been developed in spring 2008 in response to President Skorton’s direct request to all colleges/units for a set of strategic goals. Anne Kenney, in consultation with CAT, developed the plan known as Goals 2010. SAG’s role, therefore, has been to consider ways all of CUL can work effectively at moving forward CUL’s goals rather than develop the process itself.

Additionally, the UL asked us to consider “elephants in the room”, those issues that, unless acknowledged and addressed, will hamper communication and movement forward. We spent a great deal of time reflecting on these “elephants” and they are reflected in this report.
Methodology

SAG approached its work with an eye to the calendar. We had three and a half months to gather information, brainstorm and synthesize our recommendations.

We started our deliberations with a meeting with University Librarian Anne Kenney to clarify the charge and to clarify her expectations. We had two additional meetings with the UL as the weeks progressed and the chair of the committee, Angela Horne, met with the UL on two occasions to discuss our progress and verify that we were on target.

Under the leadership of our chair, the committee members participated in team-building which enhanced our development into a cohesive working team. We devised an ambitious timetable that took into account summer vacations; since we had a short timeframe we scheduled weekly meetings and for some weeks added a second meeting time. We created a wiki to capture our discussions, agenda items and minutes, background readings, and other documentation.

Our data gathering included review of internal CUL documentation, “Priority Team 9: Innovation without Burnout”, “Call for Staff Input Summary Report”, “2008 Organizational Climate and Diversity Assessment (ClimateQual)”. We reviewed both the qualitative and quantitative ClimateQUAL data.

Our literature review resulted in the bibliography at the end of this report. The most significant and informative article is by Carol Shepstone and Lyn Currie, entitled “Perspective on… Transforming the Academic Library: Creating an Organizational Culture that Fosters Staff Success.”(Shepstone, Carol and Lyn Currie, 2008) We highly recommend it as required reading for every CUL employee.

We scheduled a meeting with new librarians to gather their input and gain their perspective on some of the issues under discussion. Additionally, Somaly Kim Wu led a discussion with Mann Library employees and Bonna Boettcher did the same at the Music Library. We considered expanding the discussions to other groups as well, but our short time table precluded this.

We requested strategic plans from all units and departments in CUL, but received very few documents. Several libraries were waiting to update or create their plans after the UL was announced and the organizational restructuring occurred.
Engagement and Communication

“A fundamental and enduring cultural change will only occur if the change process becomes personalized, individuals are willing to engage in new behaviors and there are changes in the managerial competencies demonstrated in the organization.” (Shepstone, Carol and Lyn Currie, 2008)

“I have a backline support job—it is not very glamorous and often overlooked in terms of recognition. I often feel pretty neutral about its importance, and my importance, in this organization—I feel pretty easily replaced. This is not a bad thing, necessarily, but does lead to a level of disengagement.” (ClimateQual, 2008)

Engaged library employees understand and embrace the mission, values, and goals of their organization. Engaged employees may work in primarily solitary situations; they may participate as active members of their unit or department; they may participate in teams and committees that cross unit boundaries. Regardless of their specific style of engagement, employees should be able to see how they and their work contribute to the organization as a whole. They are treated with respect for the ideas and skills they bring to the organization, regardless of their place in the official hierarchy. Creativity is valued and employees are willing to take risks, without fear of reprisal. Communication is free-flowing and respectful in all directions.

Fostering Engagement

In order to foster employee engagement, the organization provides opportunities for library employees at all levels to develop their strengths and learn new skills.

“Specifically, an engaged employee is positive on the following items:

- **Retention.** Desire to stay with the organization.
- **Effort.** Motivation to give more than is required.
- **Advocacy.** Mindset to actively recommend the company as a great place to work.
- **Passion:** Feeling an emotional connection, even “love,” for the organization.” (Feather, 2008)

SAG recommends that, in order to facilitate worker engagement, CUL must:

**Begin building a climate that values, promotes and matches employee strengths to work opportunities, be they at the unit or CUL level**

“The overall well-being of the library in the future is contingent upon the continuous cultivation of both management and leadership competencies, and … libraries must
develop and support a culture where every individual is encouraged to play a leadership role in whatever position he or she holds.” (Shepstone, Carol and Lyn Currie, 2008)

Clearly, this is happening in some areas of CUL. From the *ClimateQUAL Quantitative* data, we learn “The good news is that according to ClimateQUAL measures of job satisfaction; approximately 73% of ClimateQUAL respondents indicate that they are satisfied with their jobs. On average, employees reported a satisfaction rate 3.90 on a 5 point scale. (CUL employees on average rate their job satisfaction between 8 and 13 points higher than employees at other ARLs participating in phase 1 or phase 2 of this research.)” And from the *ClimateQUAL Qualitative* data, “my supervisor will admit his/her mistakes, empower the staff, nurture us, and communicates that s/he wants us to succeed. These are terrific attributes.”(ClimateQUAL, 2008.)

One “elephant in the room,” is concern that employees’ strengths are not considered when work is assigned to them. Representative quotes include the following:

- “I’m struggling to find work within the library that is fulfilling to me; people tend to want me to do tasks that I CAN do, but they are often tasks which are counter to my natural strengths and preferences.” (ClimateQUAL Qualitative, pg 65)

- “My job satisfaction has decreased over the years because my later assigned job duties have not been paired well with my skill set…” (ClimateQUAL Qualitative, pg 45)

We need to recognize the variety of skills each employee brings to the organization and utilize those skills. Managers can use employee development tools such as the Clifton Strengths Finder assessment that has been popularized by Marcus Buckingham’s best seller *Now Discover your Strengths*.

A second elephant is the issue of how employee status can negatively impact engagement. Representative quotes from the recent surveys include:

- There is tension between librarians and library support staff - who are often made to feel like second class citizens within the library system. (ClimateQUAL Qualitative, p. 29)

- A hierarchy is followed in my place of employment. We are labeled "professional" staff and "support" staff. (ClimateQUAL Qualitative, p. 29)

Employees should not be excluded from participating in the work of the CUL community simply because of their "status" in the system. We are striving for a culture of respect for all employee contributions.

From Anne Kenney’s “Call to Engagement,” we learn that “our culture is risk adverse, because the few risk takers we have are not embraced. … Changing a culture is a long term process and the senior administration needs to demonstrate that they understand this
and want people to be more daring.” (Research and Assessment Unit, 2008) In order to begin building a climate that fosters engagement, behaviors need to be adopted and modeled from the top down. When employees see their supervisors and managers exhibit consistent behaviors, ones aligned with CUL’s values, they will be able to trust those behaviors and be willing to engage and take risks. CUL managers need to understand and adopt the “Cornell Leadership Skills for Success” and “Cornell’s Core HR Values and Principles.” All library employees need to be familiar with the CUL’s values as listed at [http://www.library.cornell.edu/about/LibraryMission.html](http://www.library.cornell.edu/about/LibraryMission.html) and these values should be revisited periodically and amended as appropriate.

**Underscore that each person has individual responsibility for his/her day-to-day performance**

In discussions with SAG, Anne Kenney described her desire to articulate a social contract between CUL employees and CUL. CUL has a responsibility to employees to provide an open workplace, opportunities for training and development, and a culture of respectful dialogue. Employees, in turn, also have a responsibility as part of this contract to engage with CUL’s mission, values, and priorities and to work to their best abilities.

Employees can demonstrate responsibility by following the “Staff Skills for Success” (for employees not on academic contracts), the attributes listed in “Procedure 13” (for employees on academic contracts), and CUL’s “Leadership Attributes” (for employees with management responsibilities). Rank does not separate us from an obligation to each other and to the library system as a whole. Each of us must feel committed to and supported by CUL’s values.

**Develop annual work plans at the smallest workgroup levels which are tied to the library’s strategic directions in order to help employees begin engaging with the strategic directions**

Shepstone and Currie state that “to ensure meaningful communication and dialogue that allows different voices to be expressed—[libraries must] involve all staff in the formulation of action plans at the unit level.” (Shepstone, Carol and Lyn Currie, 2008) Moreover, “[a]chieving lasting change in organizations then requires getting employees involved in planning and implementing change.” (Shepstone, Carol and Lyn Currie, 2008) Though CUL employees were not widely consulted in the creation of Goals 2010, they can be active participants in efforts to achieve those strategic directions.

One way to begin the process of engaging employees is to ask those at the smallest functional workgroup level to discuss CUL’s goals and to develop plans of work for their specific workgroup; this would occur in consultation with their supervisor/manager. Those plans can then be shared with other workgroups in the unit and revised as the

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1 This is an internal document that has not been distributed widely at Cornell.
members of the workgroups choose. Unit directors/managers must review the plans with the workgroups regularly (monthly, quarterly or semi-annually) to assess progress and to determine whether course corrections need to be made.

By jointly creating work plans at the unit level, all employees will be engaged directly in charting strategic direction. It is not solely the responsibility of managers to craft strategies; rather, it is an opportunity for a unit’s diverse members to share ideas and contribute to the process. This shared activity will strengthen bonds within workgroups, and can help funnel progress throughout CUL. If these work plans are shared in an organized manner, all units will understand more fully the work being accomplished throughout CUL, and these grassroots planning efforts will provide a barometer for middle and upper management to understand how all employees are engaging in CUL’s strategic priorities. It will also provide a basis for CUL-wide course correction. Finally, it will help solidify a culture of assessment as unit plans are reviewed regularly, progress is noted, and successes are celebrated.

**Recruit and retain a diverse workforce**

To achieve this, CUL must:

*Continue to support the mentorship and Fellows programs.* Both programs offer opportunities to diversify the workforce and to provide an environment conducive to employee training and retention.

*Create a strong welcome program for new employees that embraces them quickly and helps them assimilate into the workplace.* CUL has made a good start on this recommendation by establishing the “New Librarians” program. Still, the program needs to be extended to all permanent employees, regardless of rank or status. An additional benefit of a program for new employees is that it will allow them to meet others outside their work units and develop networks for support, information sharing and future collaboration.

**Enhancing Communication**

SAG also recommends the follow methods of improving communication:

*Build an expectation of open and respectful communication among all employees*

Emmott indicates that:

“According to the CIPD’s [Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development] latest survey of employee attitudes, the three main drivers of engagement are having opportunities to feed your views upwards, feeling well-informed about what is happening
in the organisation and thinking that your manager is committed to your organisation. The ability to give upward feedback is sometimes called the employee ‘voice’. But this should not be confused with mechanisms for consulting or communicating with employees, such as employee forums or works councils. If managers want an engaged workforce, they need to communicate directly with them. The real issue is how far managers are listening to what employees say, and what, if anything, they are doing about it.” (Emmott, 2006)

One person’s idea of engagement is not the same as the next person’s. According to Shepstone and Currie, engaged employees require “supportive feedback, listening and resolution of interpersonal problems, [thus] helping individuals improve their performance, expand their competencies and obtain personal development opportunities.” (Shepstone, Carol and Lyn Currie, 2008) They also indicate that effort is needed to “create an environment where opinions are valued, considered and respected by all.” (Shepstone, Carol and Lyn Currie, 2008)

A major “elephant in the room” relates to issues of employee status that affect the free flow of information and negatively impact task engagement and alignment with strategic priorities. The following comments reflect this, and are excerpted from a range of library feedback mechanisms.

From Anne Kenney’s “Call to Engagement”:

- “Communication is mostly from the top down…policies and priorities tend to be communicated irregularly and inconsistently, with little thought to others’ specific needs.” (p. 11)
- “Communication is not our strong suite.”
- “Information does not always make its way to all individuals; a chosen few learn things, others have to find out from other sources. “(p.11)
- “New Administration should set an example of true leadership: 1. Keep CUL transparent. 2. Keep CUL ethical and inclusive. While understanding that ultimate decision making lies with administration, a healthy culture is one in which staff can debate freely, and respectfully present alternative view points without fear of retaliation. 3. Be aware of pitfalls of creating a two-class system. Do not remove AUL and top level administrators too far from hands-on knowledge of daily operational realities.” p. 7

From ClimateQUAL:

- “Staff on the lower rungs of the ladder (even the academic ladder) are rarely consulted about their opinions or thoughts on important departmental matters. “(p.65)
- “I have seen the same work flow problems for years. I can foresee what kinds of problems we will run into before starting a project. Yet every time, upper management is surprised that we run into these problems. I have stopped trying to communicate these issues as they are mostly the kind of things that hands-on-
people deal with and it has proven very difficult to get the visionary people to understand.” (p. 26)

As with building a climate that encourages engagement, in order to begin building a climate that encourages open and respectful communication, behaviors need to be adopted and modeled from the top down. When employees see that their supervisors and managers are open to their comments and suggestions and take them seriously, they will be more likely to step forward and participate in CUL.

**Improve communication, both interpersonally and through technology**

*Interpersonally:*

*Retain Take One messages, Shop Talk gatherings, and All-Staff meetings.* From Anne Kenney’s “Call to Engagement,” we learned that “There is overwhelming support and appreciation for both the All Staff meetings and Shop Talks. Many respondents also desired smaller meetings especially meetings that fostered brainstorming/interactivity/local discussion/mingling.” (Research and Assessment Unit, 2008) Consider having the AULs lead some Shop Talks as well. This would provide a chance for employees at all levels and from all divisions within CUL to interact with those in administrative positions outside their divisions.

All-Staff meeting programming needs to be broad enough to appeal to all employees, not just to those on academic contracts. The meetings might also be a venue for employee input if the format for input is reconsidered. Given sufficient time, those in attendance could break into smaller groups (8 – 10 people) to discuss and report back on specific issues. Employees who may be reluctant to speak in front of the entire group are more likely to participate in a smaller venue. Follow-up questions could be posted to the CUL intranet for input beyond those individuals who were able to attend a particular Shop Talk or All-Staff meeting.

*Develop a mechanism for employee input.* Employees need venues to discuss new ideas and to express concern about actions being taken. One possibility is instituting “Skip-Level” meetings. Employees would be invited to meet with the person next up in the organization from the immediate supervisor to discuss specific issues (for example, flexible scheduling). The meetings should not be about the employees’ supervisors nor considered part of an evaluation, but instead as a way to gather as much information as possible for the decision-making process.

In addition, it would be good to develop some sort of technological means of input for employees who wish to send comments anonymously and/or have working schedules that preclude attendance at a particular event. Recognizing employee diversity includes honoring diversity of communication styles as well as working hours.
Through technology:

The Research and Assessment Unit (RAU) analyzed the comments received from the UL’s “Call.” (Research and Assessment Unit, 2008) Pertinent conclusions include:

- “Most, but not all, respondents indicated that they prefer email over wiki/web/blogs as a primary means of communications. There is a clear majority preference for information being pushed to the staff. Most of these respondents didn’t mind using web-based platforms for additional information if the links were “pushed” to them via email messages.” p. 28

- “Some respondents preferred to have more information posted to wikis, blogs, or intranet sites rather than have email pushed to them.” p. 29

Revitalize the employee intranet as an effective tool for information and knowledge management

We need one place where information – calendars, schedules, reports, etc. – is cumulated, rather than expect each employee to maintain exhaustive personal files. A revitalized employee intranet (a successor to the outdated StaffWeb) would include, at a minimum, the following characteristics:

- An organizational framework that is clear on the top page
- A section for CUL announcements
- A cumulative CUL calendar, listing events, receptions, committee meetings, etc.
- A place for committees and task forces to post meeting agendas prior to their meetings and to post minutes after their meetings
- A place to cumulate Take One messages, notes from Shop Talks, and notes from All-Staff meetings
- A one-stop place to find information necessary to do one’s job (links to HR policies, forms, documents, wiki pages, etc.), including information from all divisions of CUL
- Can accommodate employee feedback

Rather than inundate employees with e-mail, RSS feeds could be developed. By subscribing to the information feeds most important to their jobs, employees will be empowered to keep personally aware of matters directly related to their jobs. Alternately, a daily message could be sent reminding employees to check the employee intranet, including a link and a summary of what has been posted during the day. This would result in a push information option that isn’t overwhelming and can be managed by the employee directly.

The Department of Communications is ideally positioned to manage the revitalization of StaffWeb, and we would advise that they form a cross-library team to tackle this project inclusively. The content suggestions above are merely a starting point; CUL-wide
surveys and discussions with key stakeholders such as committees, library administrators, and employees will help revitalize the intranet as the rich resource CUL needs.

**When the employee intranet is revitalized, underscore the need for all employees to take responsibility for knowing the information necessary to do their jobs**

The often large number of daily CUL e-mails forces employees to develop individual, elaborate systems of record keeping to ensure that they do not accidentally delete a piece of information that might be needed in the future. Few of us have an adequate e-solution that allows us to take full responsibility for tracking relevant CUL information. A revitalized employee intranet with a transparent organizational structure would enable employees to find the information they need quickly and easily. As information experts we should be able to develop a site that serves, at a minimum, as current announcement service, feedback enabler, and archival repository.

**Characteristics of CUL’s desired open communication environment:**

- Employees are valued
- High level of trust
- Conflict is invited and resolved positively
- Creative dissent is welcomed
- Employee input is solicited
- Employees are well-informed through formal channels
- Feedback is on-going

It is difficult to overstate how frequently the theme of good communication presented itself throughout the preparation of this report. Its ubiquity in our discussions is reflected in its presence in nearly every section of this report, and is representative of its importance to achieving the strategic goals of CUL.
Ongoing Information Gathering

“Self-reported data from 153 university [library] employees indicated that the desire to provide upward feedback related negatively to fear of retaliation and positively to role appropriateness, perceived usefulness, rater self-efficacy, leader-member exchange, knowledge of upward feedback, top management support, coworker support, and feedback-seeking behavior.” (Kudisch, Fortunato, & Smith, 2006)

In the context of this report, information gathering is the process of surveying employees to gain input on how well or poorly progress is being made towards achieving organizational goals. In order to achieve CUL’s Goals 2010, various methods of information gathering should be tested.

One of the challenges within CUL is making the distinction between academic and non-academic employees (librarians and non-librarians), examining how these two groups co-exist together, and establishing which roles each group has with regard to achieving CUL goals. With regards to information gathering this distinction between academic and non-academic is important, but not exclusive: input from all groups is valued. However, the method by which information is gathered is dependent on the nature of one’s job responsibilities which differ with each group. We need to acknowledge the differences, and work to minimize animosity felt by one group towards the other.

Information gathering can be seen as an empowering agent when the voices of the employees are taken seriously and incorporated in the decision making process of management. "Our employees value having a voice, and we value what they have to say." (Heaps, 2007) One idea from one particular employee may lead to breakthroughs and have a domino effect throughout CUL; how do we ensure that this lone voice is heard, and heard by the people who can take action?

SAG’s recommendations regarding information gathering are as follows:

**Develop a transparent process by which information is gathered, distributed and archived**

The process by which the organization gathers, distributes, and archives information must be transparent and accessible to all employees. Transparency helps to instill trust and minimize surprise. Specifically, there must be transparency regarding the process of gathering information, the techniques for compiling and distributing that information, and the mechanisms for preserving or archiving results.
To gather information, two criteria must be considered: the audience and the purpose. Depending on the audience, one might choose, for example, an anonymous survey instead of a focus group. The purpose will help refine how broadly input must be gathered.

Examples of information gathering techniques that could be used at CUL are:

- Surveys (electronic, paper)
- Focus groups
- Suggestion box (virtual, electronic; anonymous or named)
- Shop Talks
- Amnesty sessions – confidential, regular opportunities for candid feedback

Look beyond CUL for input

In their 2006 book, *Higher Education in the Internet Age: Libraries Creating A Strategic Edge*, authors Breivik and Gordon write, "The challenge for [higher education] administrators is to see libraries not merely as ends in themselves (libraries are frequently presented as self-contained units in academic plans and accreditation reports), but as strategic tools in achieving campus goals and priorities." CUL must track trends gathered by different groups such as Cornell University itself and other business organizations. We must regularly scan wide-ranging sources, as well as establish the role CUL plays within the larger university setting and beyond.

Create an environment of respect, honesty, and believability to ensure employees that their opinions are valued

CUL must ensure anonymity and immunity through safe employee feedback and suggestion programs. All must feel comfortable sharing ideas that might seem outrageous but that may keep CUL on the cutting-edge. We must reward creativity and innovation without punishing ideas. "By soliciting your thoughts and feelings, management is telling you that you are valued. Of course, management also must clearly demonstrate that they will act upon the feedback from teammates [employees]."(Heaps, 2007)

The goal of the organization should be geared toward developing an atmosphere of trust and respect. The process used to gather information from employees is critical to this outcome. In other words, "seeking input from employees sounds like a good idea, but the path to success is often obstructed by poorly planned initiatives that alienate rather than inspire."(Sweetman, 2005) The goals of the information gathering process must be clearly stated and understood, and the results made available.
Keep employees informed

Employees should be told of actions resulting from their reports; seeing results of feedback is just as important as giving the feedback in the first place. The organization should produce periodic summaries of all follow-up actions without naming names.(Hirschman, 2008) Employees need to feel that their suggestions won't be criticized or their concerns minimized. In addition, to ensure continued feedback in the future, employees need to see action taken based on their suggestions: if the promised changes have not been made, an explanation must be provided.(DeVoe, 1999). In general, employees need to believe that the process has substance, which would lend itself to credibility. "If you go out and ask for feedback, you'd better be prepared to accept it in a positive way. Don't look to make an argument out of it."(DeVoe, 1999) CUL’s senior administrators and middle managers must develop thick skins.

We must encourage employees to provide constructive feedback in positive ways that focus on behaviors rather than individuals. There is a tendency for administrators to lean towards a monologue instead of trying to create a dialogue with employees. CUL can use the data gathered during the information gathering process as an opportunity to implement change through dialogue.

Moreover, employees should have a clear line of communication to the necessary recipient of their information, and hear relevant news from appropriate sources. This will ensure accuracy up, down, and across CUL. Project sponsors must respond directly and promptly to teams when advice or input is requested.

“[An] environment of open communication will foster better team work, enhanced work relationships, increased job satisfaction, and promote innovation and creativity.”(Saunders, 2007)

There is no single best way or method to gather information. Information gathering is an ongoing, never-ending process. CUL must be flexible and transparent in this process and create an environment that fosters open communication in order to receive support from all workers. “In such a climate, employees feel free to express opinions, voice complaints, and offer suggestions.”(Saunders, 2007) Silence is NOT golden; CUL must an environment where employees feel safe to voice constructive disagreement.
Outcomes and Measurement

"Program outcome measurement helps organizations increase the effectiveness of their programs and communicate the value of what they do." The emphasis on collecting the data needs to be complemented by a commitment to using it. (Morley, Lamkin, 2004)

Strategic goals strive to establish a path for growth and progress towards and organizations mission and goals, yet all too often the organization’s movement along that path is never examined. This failure to assess leaves the organization meandering. Goals never take root within the organization’s culture, and eventually the organization develops new goals to replace those that have been forgotten… but which tend to face a similar fate.

In order to stay on the critical path and integrate strategic goals into CUL’s culture of achievement, we must focus on clear outcomes derived from our strategic goals. We must embrace a culture that assesses rigorously and regularly the outcomes of our efforts. In keeping with this notion, SAG makes the following recommendations:

CUL’s strategic goals need tangible, assessable outcomes

In order to connect with library employees, the goals of CUL must have tangible, assessable outcomes that are meaningful to library employees. Rubin recommends crafting outcomes that "benefits … the end user, that demonstrate the effectiveness of a program or service." Of course, CUL has a set of end users as broad as its mission and values. As such, we should look to paraphrase Rubin's (29 Rubin, Rhea Joyce 2006) more general definition: outcome measurement answers the question, "What difference will this goal make to CUL’s internal and external stakeholders?"

CUL administration needs to answer the question: "What difference will this goal make to CUL’s internal and external stakeholders?" for every element of its strategic plan. The dividends of this approach will be two fold: first, presenting a clearer picture of what CUL will look like after these goals are reached helps library employees see how their efforts contribute to achieving Goals 2010. Secondly, connecting a vision statement to Goals 2010 enables a culture of assessment at CUL. (As a community, when we are clear where we want to be, and we know what we are doing to get there, measuring our progress becomes easier.)

CUL must embrace a culture of assessment; assessments of committees, projects, and even the entire organization (e.g. ClimateQUAL) must be scheduled regularly

Establishing tangible outcomes, as described above, is a crucial step towards creating a culture of assessment within the Cornell University Library. Lakos and Phipps, in
reference to a work they coauthored with Betsy Wilson, defined a culture of assessment as:

“A Culture of Assessment is an organizational environment in which decisions are based on facts, research, and analysis, and where services are planned and delivered in ways that maximize positive outcomes and impacts for customers and stakeholders. A Culture of Assessment exists in organizations where employees care to know what results they produce and how those results relate to customers’ expectations. Organizational mission, values, structures, and systems support behavior that is performance and learning focused.” (28 Lakos, Amos 2004)

At the moment, CUL's methods of assessment are effective but intermittent. Periodically capturing high-level historical reference points (such as LibQUAL and ClimateQUAL) is essential yet insufficient. We need ongoing assessment of our operational practices in order to make real-time course corrections and to reinforce the aspects of our work that are making the greatest impact. Furthermore, if such assessments are undertaken regularly, the stigma that is commonly associated with them -- the notion that we only assess when something's gone wrong -- will fade, and this in turn will make the assessments more effective. Assessment cannot only occur when there is a problem: it should be a constant, ingrained activity conducted via an assessment tool(s). This approach will result in an organizational culture that welcomes and values measurement of library functions and practices, celebrates accomplishments, and appreciates lessons learned from creative experimentation.

A culture of assessment is the daily flossing that obviates the root canal. It allows an organization like CUL to take care of problems before they arise by staying abreast of the organization’s current conditions. It is crisis prevention, instead of crisis management.

**CUL’s strategic goals and their associated outcomes need to be integrated at all levels, from CUL strategic planning to individual employee evaluations**

But a culture of assessment can't be achieved through scheduling alone. CUL must also embrace assessment at all levels of organization. ClimateQUAL tackles assessment at the highest level, but we must also look to the foundations as well. Employee evaluations, from student workers to the highest administrative levels, must evaluate one’s efforts within the context of achieving organization's goals and outcomes. The mission and values of CUL will become diluted if the individuals who comprise the organization are held to contradictory standards.

Furthermore, this sort of assessment needs to be brought to bear on our committee structure, which currently lacks all but the most rudimentary sort of evaluation.
Committees must have clear charges, and their chairs and members need to be accountable (and rewarded!) for the work they do

One of the primary ways in which both outcome measurement and assessment in general can be brought to bear on the CUL committee structure is an increased focus on committee charges. A clear charge focuses the group’s efforts and allows the committee and CUL administration to evaluate the outcome of its work. Anecdotal discussions that emerged from SAG’s investigation of this issue indicated that committees with strong charges were perceived as being stronger and more effective than those that lacked clear direction, and members of those committees felt more engaged with the committees’ work.

Some standing committees, of course, may find it challenging to link their work to specific charges and/or output. However, the effort must be made if the vitality of those committees is to be achieved and maintained. All committees should be able to articulate how their efforts meet external and/or internal stakeholders’ needs.

With such assessment comes accountability, for both committee chairs and committee members. This accountability is not intended as a negative: committees must be recognized for achieving their goals, implementing their outcomes, and fulfilling their charges. Celebration needs to be integrated fully into the assessment timeline, and not only at the conclusion of a team’s work overall.

Committees should not be set in stone: assessment can and should lead to changes in charges, leadership, and membership. Committee members should receive feedback on their contributions

A major change to the culture of CUL is that being removed from a committee, or having a committee disband, needs to cease being viewed as a sign of failure. All too often, committees stagnate due to lack of changes in management, membership, or mission: change can be perceived as a failure on someone’s part, and this fear of perceived failure may contribute to the unnecessary continuation of some efforts.

Outcome management and public praise can address this: the committee has accomplished its charge, and therefore it can move on to new tasks, which naturally indicates a need for new membership and leadership. By adhering to this new model, people will feel appreciated for their achievements, and the committee can move forward and keep up with the changing needs of CUL.

This movement forward may well include the dissolution of a given committee. Again, in a culture of assessment, this is not a bad thing: many of the most successful groups at CUL have a single task, accomplish that task, and disband. That attitude must be brought to the CUL committee structure as a whole. Neither historical inertia nor political balances should determine the continuation of a committee or working group; each group needs a charge, goals, and assessable outcomes.
Elements of this all-encompassing culture of assessment are noted and discussed in other sections of this report, as well. All recommendations made within this report should be assumed to have a corresponding mandate for regular assessment.
**Course Correction**

“On course does not mean perfect. On course means that even when things don’t go perfectly, you are headed in the right direction.” (Garfield, 1986)

Charles Garfield lists course correction as one of the six capabilities or aptitudes of the high achiever, providing examples such as playing a video game that requires a car to stay on a track. Garfield also examines the challenge of navigating the Apollo 11 spacecraft to the moon. In both situations, constant adjustments are necessary as well as anticipation of obstacles. Apollo 11 had to be course corrected repeatedly because they “were not on a perfect path, but they were on a critical path”. Course correction keeps teams on track, and understanding the critical path – rather than a hypothetical perfect path – allows them to course correct. (Garfield, 1986) A critical path is the most efficient and the most appropriate way to reach team goals, and along that path is opportunity for mistakes and corrections.

Course correction requires a clear understanding of where an institution is, what it wants to accomplish, and a commitment to staying on course to meet the needs of the organization. Commitment to projects and services that meet the needs of a sub-set of our users must be balanced against all priorities. Garfield says that “the corrections don’t have to be big, dramatic events. They can be daily little moves with immediate, short-term payoffs.” Peak performers make constant and effective corrections. (Garfield, 1986)

At CUL, course correction will allow us to take educated risks while knowing that watchful eyes are calculating how to stay on the critical path towards Goals 2010.

**Create a culture of course correction**

It must be a high priority at CUL to develop a culture that sees course correction as a positive reaction to environmental and social factors rather than as a failure to achieve goals. This will require senior administrators to be flexible and to unanimously state that projects or services that must change course or be abandoned altogether are not failures nor are the employees who were a part of those projects or providers of the services. For a primarily hierarchical organization such as CUL, this will require a culture shift in order to allow voices to be heard from all segments and levels of the library systems. We must value open communication, create clear performance goals with measurable outcomes, and show respect for the skills of all employees, both those who plan and implement strategies and those who execute and provide daily services. Course correction is not just a deliberate one time change; the signs that an organization is moving in the direction of transformation is when “the organization adopts a fluid, flexible structure that accommodates rapid change and generates continuous innovation. A new thinking is evident within the organization, a mindset that eschews the “one right way” of doing things and that embraces changes and reconciles opposite points of view.” (Educause, 1999)
Define change

In order to find the critical path, we must look to sources both internal and external to define the changes we mean to implement. Not only should we monitor what others are doing and identify new needs of our users, but we are also responsible for inventing and devising new ways of doing business, finding solutions for problems others have not yet articulated, and sharing our creativity with others. We have to be able to initiate change at all levels of the organization and “capitalize on change that is thrust upon” us. (Garfield, 1986)

Course correction is clearly not just staying on track toward the goals of the institution, but it is also the tracking of change in the profession and in the academy that require a radical shift in institutional goals and direction. In order to keep on the forefront of our field, trend tracking is critical. Thus the need to course correct is tied closely to the need for constant information-gathering about the changing information landscape.

Track trends for radical change

It is the responsibility of every team/unit/employee to share trends they see and suggest ways to help CUL move in new directions. However, the central responsibility at CUL for collection, organization and more formal scanning of new trends should lie with the Research and Assessment Unit (RAU). RAU is perfectly positioned to assume a leadership role for how trends are tracked, filtered, and communicated. The following are some suggested areas where formal tracking could be focused.

Library Profession
Within the library field many organizations track trends. Employees who attend conferences and keep up-to-date with professional reading also can help track trends. We recommend that RAU organize how CUL can be involved in assessment committees at the industry level to not only learn from what others are doing but to be on the forefront of this ongoing research. Examples of such efforts are the work by ACRL in this area. Significant ACRL reports are the 2002 report on the “Top Issues Facing Academic Libraries”, as well as the 2003 and 2007 OCLC Environmental Scan reports. Other reports are ACRL’s 2003 “Research Agenda for Library Instruction and Information Literacy” and the 2004 “Scholarly Communications Research Agenda.”

IT Profession
The AUL for Information Technology and the Chief Technology Strategist must take responsibility to monitor advancements in IT that inform the need for course correction in the library. An important resource for some of this data gathering would be EDUCAUSE and specifically the EduCause Center for Applied Research.
Management Literature
A review of the management literature will bring new management and assessment techniques to light and should be selectively evaluated for possible application at CUL.

Discipline Specific
Often new teaching, learning or research methods in various disciplines could help inform us as we adjust to the changing needs and expectations of users. CUL should always be aware of new developments and share that data as appropriate with RAU and the library as whole.

Goals 2010 Annual Assessment
The library’s strategic goals must be reviewed at least annually to ensure they are still relevant and moving forward CUL efforts to fulfill its mission to serve Cornell students and faculty in the pursuit of teaching and research at the highest levels.

Unit and Group/Committee Annual Assessments
CUL committees and teams should review their charge annually and be prepared to think creatively about ways to improve or alter their activities or priorities. Committees must have clear charges, and their chairs and members need to be accountable and rewarded for the work they do.

Employee Training
Create a training course to inform employees about elements of course correction and to introduce new cultural expectations.

All Staff Meeting Discussions
The University Librarian should discuss new trends in the field and how they might or might not impact CUL. This should be done at least annually and is an opportunity to seek volunteer trend trackers for the next year as well as an excellent way to demonstrate to all employees how we fit into the world of the academy, not just locally but also globally.

CUL Reads
An area of the intranet could highlight key readings tied to Goals 2010. A separate list could target new employees and include the top five things new employees need to read in order to jumpstart their careers at CUL. Oversight for these two projects could be handled by RAU and feature suggestions made by anyone at CUL.
Value and Reward Teamwork

“Teams outperform individuals acting alone or in larger organizational groupings, especially when performance requires multiple skills, judgments, and experiences.” (Katzenbach, 1993)

“The problem is not that we have too many committees and meetings – the problem is that (A) we don’t assess people’s performance on those assignments, not in a way that includes peer assessment, etc; also (B) we don’t have well-led committees. No agenda. Poor facilitation. No clear goals. No clear ties to the overall library goals.”—(CUL Call, 2008)

At CUL, many groups tackle multiple assignments. Every library employee serves on at least one group, and some employees contribute to multiple groups, ranging from unit teams to CUL-wide committees. CUL uses a mix of terminology to describe these team assignments, such as “committee”, “working group”, “task force,” or “ad hoc”. For the purposes of this report, team encompasses all of these various terms, and is defined as “a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, performance goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable.” (Katzenbach, 1993)

As Anne Kenney thought through the new organizational structure for the library, she placed high value on a team-based culture. (Take One, May 12, 2008, http://www.library.cornell.edu/staffweb/TakeOne/TakeOne.html) In meetings with SAG she has stressed that team service is a privilege that comes with personal responsibilities. Our thinking about teamwork was informed in large part by the Innovation Without Burnout report, a document that underscored team-based issues.

Team service is a privilege

In each of its conversations with Anne Kenney, SAG was reminded that CUL-wide teamwork² is a central value for CUL, and a privilege. Certainly some teams include ex officio members, and employees on academic contracts are expected to serve on teams as part of their responsibilities to the organization. Team members must work to their full potential, always seeking to move their charge forward constructively. Those who bring their “A game” (as the Johnson School terms it) and constantly strive to enhance their team’s work should be rewarded for their excellent service. Those who are not driven to participate effectively and fully will not be asked to serve on teams. Team service is closely tied to every employee’s personal responsibility to perform at their highest levels, and to library administrations responsibility to recognize and reward teams and individuals accordingly.

² The scope of this report is to tackle CUL-wide work, not unit-level work. Though these comments refer specifically to CUL-wide teams, they may have weight at the unit level as well.
Demystify the team member selection process

There is a perception within CUL that team members are selected via a murky, political process that rewards a select few. Employees often grumble after an announcement is posted to CU-LIB with details of a new group that has been formed to tackle a particular project – a public call for volunteers rarely occurs. Many task forces and ad hoc groups are formed with very little fanfare and a certain amount of secrecy. Individuals who might have wanted to share their talents on a certain project, or develop new skills by serving on a team outside their usual job description, often do not have an opportunity to put forward their name for a specific assignment. Unless you are “in the know”, you will not have a chance to volunteer. Upper-level managers do not always share with employees’ opportunities for team participation, instead declining on the employee’s behalf, and not all managers take the time to track their employees’ evolving career aspirations. All of these factors have led to the widely-held belief that the same people are routinely assigned plum committee opportunities at the expense of other, equally (or more) qualified/engaged individuals.

To help combat this perception, we recommend that an inventory of current CUL-wide teams be created. This will be conducted by the Committee on Committees (CoC). Though it might seem ironic that we recommend yet another committee be formed, no current group exists for which this task is an obvious match. Through a careful member selection process, this group can collect information about current teams, and do so as objectively as possible. This will help avoid the creation of new teams whose intended work appears already in the charge of an existing team, and also help diversify team membership. CoC is not suggested as a “power group” able to disband teams or deny membership to eager volunteers. Rather, CoC is a primary tool for team success as CUL strives for full employee engagement and greater transparency. Project sponsors and AULs will continue to sanction the formation of new teams and sign off on membership rosters.

Create a 3D Model of Team and Other Relationships within CUL

The UL’s new organization structure affords the library a streamlined managerial structure. What it lacks is a clear connection to the current CUL-wide team structure. There are software programs that show inter-relationships among business units, and we suggest CUL explore a visual representation of our complex organization. A 3D model would reveal how the various parts of CUL connect one to the other, from UL to AUL to unit to team. One software tool that intrigues us is The Brain’s “Visual Information Management” tool (http://www.thebrain.com/#-93). Many employees would be better able to understand the “six degrees of separation” within the library if we could map our 3

At the same time, it is important to note that managers remain responsible for the work of their individual units/areas, and should be consulted during the process of assembling a team, either by the person in charge of team selection or the employee who wishes to volunteer.
network of human interactions. Equally importantly, a 3D model would help us see when there is overlap between projects.

**Provide teams with the tools to become high performance groups**

A surgeon would not be expected to operate on a patient without the requisite scalpel and other instruments. She would also be surrounded by highly skilled nurses and other experts who would assist during the procedure. So, too, should our teams be given every tool possible to help them become high performance groups. These tools include:

- **Training for team leaders.** At a minimum, team leaders must be able to lead with respect, motivate team members, provide constructive criticism, honor differing viewpoints, and manage conflict. We currently provide some training at CUL on a few of these topics, notably “Crucial Conversations”, but we must develop a Team Training Approach (TTA) that will assist team leaders to become highly effective.

- **Training for team members**. Just as team leaders must perform well, so too must their project colleagues.

- **All teams should have a charge, milestones, a sponsor(s), a balanced membership, and a communication plan.** Definitions of task forces, committees, ad hoc groups, and other teams should be clear. Membership should rotate on ALL teams, and chairs should have set term limits on ALL teams (this will require team succession planning.) CUL should consider creating team member “job descriptions”.

- **Institute peer evaluation for team leaders and members.** The timeframe for this will vary with every team assignment, but we suggest that two questions be asked of every team member at agreed-upon intervals during their work and that the responses be passed to the chair for constructive evaluation of the entire team:

  * I value the following contributions Team Member ABC makes as a member of the team.

  * I believe Team Member ABC could provide additional value to the team by... (adapted from Muschewske, 2006)

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4 Of course, unit teams would also benefit from TTA as much as system-wide teams. SAG envisions a TTA model that could be later adapted for unit use. In fact, all units would have staff on CUL-wide teams, so the TTA techniques and best practices would organically filter to units.

5 This is particularly true for standing committees. The energy and outcomes-based goals-setting style of short-term, task forces can be overlaid on long-term teams. This should help minimize the potential lethargy of standing committees with minimal membership rotation.
It will be crucial that team leaders be trained how to debrief the peer evaluation comments in a positive, non-damaging manner. We believe that peer evaluation is crucial for overall team accountability and that it will help teams stay on track.

**Expect Teams to Communicate Often and Request Feedback Broadly**

Some CUL teams promote their work widely and often. Others remain all but underground – if you know one of its members, you might be “in the information loop”, but you otherwise would be hard-pressed to keep up-to-date on their progress. As the CUL employee intranet is revitalized, it will be important for ALL teams to update the entire library regularly on progress towards milestones. All team communication plans will be unique, but each team must have one. If a wiki is used, the comments feature will be an excellent way for any CUL employee to share feedback. This will allow teams to course correct and keep abreast of any controversial issues or possible setbacks. Anonymous forms of feedback should also be considered, depending on the nature of the project. We recommend that the Director of Communications conduct training to help teams focus their communication strategy and to determine the most useful means for communication (open forum in addition to minutes, etc.).

Standing committees should be required to publish annual reports that indicate how the year’s work is tied to the groups’ charges. Working groups’ and task forces’ final reports/recommendations should be made available to all CUL employees (with the exception of those including sensitive information.) If there are concerns that these annual reports should not be readable by the world at large, the staff intranet could include the necessary security restrictions.

**Reward Teams and Allow Them to Not Succeed**

If team service is a core library value as expressed by the UL, we need to reward high performance teams. At a minimum, team performance needs to be included in employee annual evaluations. Chairs need to be acknowledged for their skilled handling of challenging assignments, or helped to improve their contribution if they falter. Moreover, if CUL is to embrace risk-taking in an effort to meet Goals 2010, teams that do not succeed (due to course correction, forces beyond their control, etc.) should be reviewed as learning cases. Unless we examine why failures occur, we risk treading the same dangerous waters again and again. The employee intranet should include information about short-lived projects that were shelved, so that everyone can understand why a certain direction was attempted and didn’t quite succeed.

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6 We do realize, however, that some teams may be working with sensitive information that cannot be shared broadly. Nonetheless, they should be encouraged to share summaries of their activities and accomplishments.
A quick one-question survey could be administered to all CUL employees to gather ideas for appropriate, desired rewards. The suggestions could be reviewed by Library HR and Library Exec, and options could be selected for team chairs to bestow on their teams. In tightening economic times, a range of non-cash rewards could easily be brainstormed.
Consider Future of Council of Librarians / Library Management Team

The CUL organizational restructuring announced on August 11 & 12, 2008 (Kenney, 2008a) included a request for SAG to ponder whether Council of Librarians and the Library Management Team should continue to exist, and if not, what (if anything) would replace them as additional levels of managerial and advisory support. SAG recommends that LMT and COL both be dissolved and a deeper review of this issue occur in Fall 2008, after LEG has decided how it will operate. For example, until Janet McCue assumes her role as AUL for TROL, it would be presumptive of SAG to try to determine how Janet’s own organizational structure will function within CUL as a whole.

Additionally, SAG has followed the Academic Assembly (AA) discussions concerning the future structure of AA. We endorse the University Librarian’s formation of a cross-library group to review inclusiveness within the AA; their findings will be extremely relevant to overall engagement at CUL.
Summary

SAG’s work touched upon a number of challenges facing CUL in its pursuit of forward movement on Goals 2010. The library as a whole will benefit from the implementation of our recommendations addressing issues of engagement, communication, course correction, outcomes and measurement, information gathering, and teams. We also advise that SAG continue until December 15th as a group that will work with library stakeholders to develop the action plan for our recommendations. Cultural changes will not transpire overnight, but a good deal of progress can be made through concerted, thoughtful effort, and our team is interested in, and well-placed to, continue this important work. SAG’s membership will need to be enhanced with consulting roles for individuals who will take charge for certain recommendations, people such as the as Director of Communications and Director of Research and Assessment.

In its final meeting with Anne Kenney, SAG was asked to draft its top goals for a December 15th milestone. They are, in expected completion order:

1. Hold open meetings to garner feedback from CUL on our report and help course correct our recommendations
2. Share findings of ClimateQUAL with CUL
3. Form Committee of Committees and finish review of current team assignments, etc.
4. Develop, test, and launch a training plan for team leaders and members
5. Revitalize the employee intranet and enhance overall communication for team activities
6. Take steps to build a culture of respect with senior administrators voicing no tolerance for disrespect
7. Review Cornell leadership skills for success; revise and adopt CUL success model
8. Develop a replacement solution for COL/LMT

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7 One action step that could be taken would be to develop transparent opportunities for discussion and feedback on topics such as this report. All employees should have opportunities to voice their opinions in a manner with which they are comfortable.
Appendices

a. SAG charge (Kenney, 2008b)

The Goals 2010 Strategic Alignment Group (SAG) will prepare a white paper by September 15th, 2008 for review by Anne Kenney and members of the library's Administrative Team (CAT). SAG's work will provide senior library administrators with an ongoing, multi-directional communication process that feeds input up, down and throughout CUL. The team's report will propose how to engage staff in implementation of the library's goals and objectives for the period 2007-2010 (available at http://www.library.cornell.edu/staffweb/CULGoals_2007-2010.pdf) and will also recommend ways to ensure that the library's strategic direction can be course-corrected as the information landscape evolves. The paper will include expected outcomes and measurement options, including agile methods for continuously gathering information about innovative opportunities and focusing efforts on user needs. Data gathered in the recent ClimateQUAL survey and the upcoming staff engagement call (coordinated by the Research and Assessment Unit) will be integrated into SAG's work as appropriate.

b. References


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