



## REPORT TO THE LIBRARY BOARD

MEETING DATE: SEPTEMBER 22, 2009

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| Session:           | Public Session   |
| Subject:           | Community Engagement - FIMS  |
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| Purpose of Report: | For Receipt and Information Only <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

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### Recommendation

It is recommended that the Library Board receive this report.

### Issue / Opportunity

London Public Library staff are fortunate to work in a City which is also home to an academic school supporting their profession. This affords staff an opportunity to participate at different levels with both faculty and students of the Faculty of Information and Media Studies (FIMS). In turn, FIMS has sought out numerous opportunities to engage LPL staff and to partner with the Library for research. Without question, this is a mutually beneficial relationship.

### Background & Review

Recently, LPL staff and FIMS faculty and staff have come together in a variety of ways.

- Guest Lectures by LPL Staff - Staff are frequently invited by faculty to appear as guest lecturers and have spoken on a wide variety of topics - Program Evaluation, Children's Services, Libraries in Communities, Teen Services, Serving Diverse Populations in a Public Library, Collection Development, Public Libraries in the Community, Information for Business, Cataloguing, Information Sources and Services, Newcomer Services, Fairy Tales. On occasion, FIMS classes will be held at an LPL location and usually include a tour of the facilities by staff.
- Lunch & Learn Series – Over the summer of 2009, LPL and FIMS ran their first joint lunch and learn series, held at FIMS. LPL staff conducted a number of well attended talks for faculty and students. The series included:

May 13. "Outreach in the Community."

LPL reaches out to the community through two innovative projects. One was to deliver services by embarking on a community outreach pilot program, the Library Road Show and the second was to engage the community in developing the Carson Library Branch into a critical and relevant neighbourhood resource.

May 20 "Child and Youth Network."

Since 2007, LPL has been involved in a network of agencies and organizations that provide services for children, youth and their families, with a vision of: "Happy, healthy children and youth today; caring, creative, responsible adults tomorrow." Discover how the library has been an integral part of this process.

June 3. "Library Settlement Partnership."

Over 2,000 immigrants arrive in London annually; the city has the highest per capita population of refugees in Canada. Since a library card is one of the first pieces of ID acquired by newcomers, the library is a crucial point of connection for new residents

June 10. "Teen Services."

Over the last three years LPL has embarked on an ambitious plan to make itself more relevant and accessible to teens. Engaging teens in all steps of this process, the Library changed the direction and shape of its programs, services and resources.

June 24. "Socially Vulnerable Project."

Every day, LPL opens its doors to those who struggle with personal issues related to health and safety, to those who live on the streets or in shelters. To what extent do library services and resources embrace and benefit these individuals? Can we be more?

- FIMS One-On-One Job Shadowing Program – This Fall, LPL staff will embark on a job shadowing program with FIMS. The program will involve librarians working in public, academic, government and special libraries around SW Ontario. The goal is to give students an opportunity to see a range of professional roles and experiences in real life work settings. Participating LPL librarians will have an opportunity to mentor an up-and-coming librarian, to highlight the work of LPL and to talk about the aspects of their work they love most. LPL librarians will also gain insight into coursework currently being offered at FIMS. This will be a truly enriching experience for all involved.
- LPL Supports for Faculty Research – Occasionally, LPL will work with FIMS faculty to support their research. Two recent examples are:
  - i) Consumer Health Information Study - The purpose was to study how people look for health information and the role of the public library in their search. Staff and members of the public were asked to participate on a voluntary basis. Members of the public were asked to complete a survey (paper), and to participate in an interview. Staff were also invited to be interviewed. The study was conducted at Central, Cherryhill and Jalna, and the questionnaire was made available from the LPL website. Although there were fewer respondents than had been hoped, useful data was collected and both public and staff had the opportunity to participate in a worthwhile project. The final results are still to be shared.
  - ii) Social Capital: The Socioeconomic Contributions of Libraries - The purpose of the project was to investigate the relationship between public libraries and social

capital and how public libraries contribute to their community and individual social capital. The study will occur over a 3 year period with the research being conducted in the first year at urban public libraries, the second year at rural public libraries and the third year interviewing library decision makers. The first year of the project began in November 2008 with a pre-test at the Cherryhill branch to iron out any issues with the questionnaire and set up. The urban library component was completed by June 2009 with four LPL branch locations participating in the project: Beacock, Central, Crouch and Sherwood.

## **Future Engagement**

LPL staff have embraced these opportunities for sharing their knowledge and experience and for their own enrichment and development. Such engagement can only serve for the betterment of the profession. LPL will continue to seek out and partner with FIMS in every way possible.