

# Honoring the Past, Imagining the Future: Facilitating Productive Conversations about Change

Organizers:

Dani Brecher Cook, Director of Teaching & Learning, University of California Riverside  
Library

Brianna Marshall, Director of Research Services, University of California Riverside Library

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**Abstract:**

Like many academic libraries, the UCR Library recently initiated a departmental reorganization process that affected several long-established units. From the beginning of the process, the leaders of the reorganization believed that it was critical to gather significant input from all of the staff members who would be affected by the change, both to learn about what worked (and didn't) in the past, and to imagine possible futures. In this roundtable discussion, we will set the stage by sharing our ideas about methods and activities to foster productive and positive (but also honest!) conversations about transitions in roles and services. Then, we will open the discussion to brainstorm other approaches, considerations, and challenges to an inclusive approach to change management that honors and acknowledges past work, accomplishments, and challenges, while also thinking beyond what's the status quo. We invite our colleagues who are interested in person-centered approaches to change to join us in this conversation.

## Appendix I. Roundtable Handout

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Brianna Marshall & Dani Brecher Cook, UCR Library

Strategies for gathering feedback to help foster productive and positive (but also honest!) conversations and set the stage for transitions in roles and services.

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## Joint Department Retreat

**Format:** Early in our change process, we held a joint departmental retreat scheduled outside of the library building. Our goal was to learn more about the ideas librarians had for how the new departments could best meet user needs.

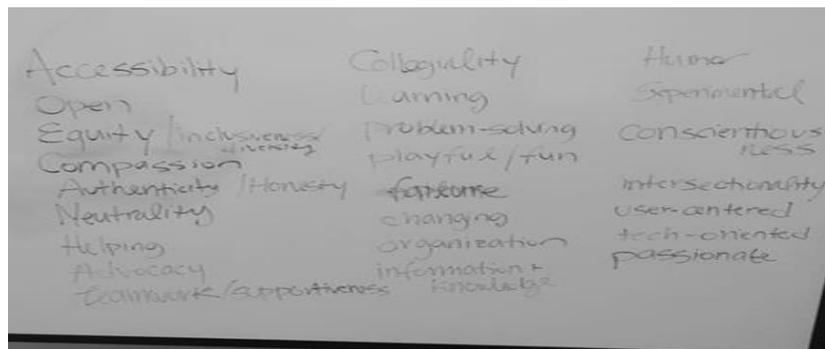
### Activity 1: Processing Exercise

- We asked each person to fill out post-it notes that finished the sentences “My job is...” “My department is...” and “The library is...”
- Then we asked them to place the post-its on a chart where the X-axis ranged from the past to the future, and the Y-axis ranged from negative to positive.

### Activity 2: Keep / Toss / Create Exercise

- Keep - What should we keep doing since it works really well and serves a user need?
- Toss / Change - What should we toss or significantly change? What doesn't work well or no longer has impact?
- Create / Adapt - What do we need to create to meet the needs of today and have greater impact on our users?

### Activity 3: Departmental Values Discussion



## Information Gathering (Open to All)

**Format:** A master document was shared on Google Drive and open to both departments. Librarians signed up to fill in information for 2-3 service areas. After their first pass, all librarians were invited to fill in any additional information they might know about the services. Example questions included:

- What is the current service?
- Who are the target users?
- What do we know about our current model (data, feedback, standing with national trends, etc.)?
- \*\*\* How can this service be improved?
- \*\*\* Is there anything else you'd like to share about this service?

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## Information Gathering (Individual and Private)

**Format:** Some of the feedback we wanted to gather was private in nature, so we set up surveys to capture this information. We did not share the information back with departmental colleagues.

### **Outreach Methods**

This survey allowed librarians to provide information about the outreach methods they employed in working with different departments. Example questions included:

- Are there specific faculty, graduate students, or program groups that you work with more closely?
- How do you work with new faculty in this department?
- How do you work with new courses in this department?
- Are there requests from faculty or students in this department (or ideas that you have for outreach) that you don't have time or resources for currently?

### **Reflective Statements**

This survey invited librarians to give information about their strengths, interests, and preferences. Questions included:

- Please describe the strengths, skills, abilities and expertise you have as a librarian or library staff member.
- As a librarian or library staff member, are there areas of responsibility you are interested in growing into, or increasing your expertise in? Please describe.
- Please indicate the roles or positions in which you have strong interest (you may indicate more than one).

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## Drop-In Discussion Meeting

**Format:** We held regular meetings throughout our change process where we shared information, facilitated discussions, and solicited feedback. However, we felt that it was important to schedule at least one meeting without an agenda that was solely for the purpose of open discussion.