

## Clusters: A Study of a Non-traditional Academic Library Organizational Model

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### Introduction

As its environment changes, any thriving organization must make adjustments and implement changes in order to respond to new opportunities and challenges. Libraries are no different in needing to be flexible and adaptable in the face of change. Over the past 20 years the library profession has seen disruptive change in the content and services provided in conjunction with the need to maximize both efficacy and efficiency. The University of Arizona Libraries was an early leader in organizational design to meet user needs in academic libraries.<sup>1,2</sup>

The Grinnell College Libraries (GCL) has experimented with a variety of leadership models and examined and adjusted workflows within a short time span. After a new library director in 2006 and a self-study and external review in 2008 the GCL implemented an overall restructuring. The outcome of this restructuring is the cluster organizational structure: a flat structure consisting of several work groups formed around library operations with shared leadership including librarians and library staff. While looking to the team structures seen in other places and adopting some of the features of their structures, the cluster structure differs in important ways, including the shared leadership model.

This article describes the cluster structure as a site-specific organizational structure for a small academic library and impressions of its impact on librarians and staff and the organizational culture. The first section is the literature review of the current literature about organizational culture and structure in libraries, followed by the GCL case study of the cluster structure: its inception, planning, rationale, implementation, and growth. After the case study, the article focuses on the assessment of the cluster structure using the Competing Values Framework (CVF), a survey instrument developed to assess organizational culture. Discussion and future plans for the cluster structure at GCL will include observations about the structure for other libraries wishing to implement clusters at their organizations.

### Literature Review

The authors focused on how staff perceive organizational culture and structure for the purpose of the paper. Organizational structures, such as hierarchical, flat, or team based, are easier to discern from the organization in question. There can be multiple structures within an organization that supports the division of labor and types of activities within the organization. Organizational culture, its characteristics and values, is harder to observe in the same way as structure. What an organization communicates as its values – for example, their mission statement – may not reflect the culture experienced in the workplace. The authors explored culture and structure, and whether they influence each other. While different in their definition and scope, organizational structures may help shape the culture and vice versa. This question is important because structure and culture, along with the external environment and individual staff, influence the type and quality of service provided by the organization. We expected that

the flatter organizational structure would have fostered an innovative and collaborative workplace.

Organizational culture and its impact on a library's ability to meet the needs of users have been the focus of several case studies in the library literature. Several studies use the Competing Values Framework (CVF) developed by Cameron and Quinn as a way to diagnose the culture of a particular academic library. The CVF defines four primary organizational cultures:

- Clan: collaborative, focused on relationships
- Adhocracy: innovative, project based
- Hierarchy: stable, controlled
- Market: competitive, externally facing<sup>3</sup>

Using the CVF, an organization can exhibit traits from more than one culture listed above, providing a more nuanced picture of an organizational culture than tools that measure one facet of culture (flexibility, focus, etc.). This measurement is taken by the Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI), a survey with a series of questions under six areas of cultural dimensions (see Appendix B for survey questions) that is given to staff of an organization.<sup>4</sup>

The CVF has been used to examine both existing and preferred organizational structures and cultures in academic libraries. Maloney et al. used the CVF to identify the preferred organizational culture of emerging and future library leaders.<sup>5</sup> In their study, they found that the preferred culture heavily leaned towards a flexible (Adhocracy) and externally focused (Market) organization.<sup>6</sup> The researchers also found that the participants desired an increase in the Clan vector in the preferred results, though this signals a cognitive break because the consensus culture surrounding Clan would inhibit the flexibility these future leaders prefer.<sup>7</sup>

Before Maloney et al. used the CVF to examine the preferred organizational culture of emerging library leaders, several academic libraries used the tool to compare their current cultures to the preferred cultures as articulated by staff. Shepstone and Currie used CVF to diagnose whether the existing organizational culture at the University of Saskatchewan was optimal for staff success. The study was divided between demographic groups. Overall the preferred culture desired by the librarians from the study was very similar to the one laid out in Maloney et al.<sup>8</sup> Shepstone and Currie, in their discussion of the results, found that the newer librarians' preferred structure differed from the tenured librarians' preferred structure; citing Cameron and Quinn, they observed that the newer librarians desired traits were tied to younger organizations (Clan culture with emphasis on Adhocracy) while the more senior librarians preferred traits were tied to more mature organizations (Market/Hierarchy cultures).<sup>9</sup> The authors did not describe the type of organizational structure their library used, and they were undertaking a skills audit of their staff in order to use the results of the OCAI survey to reinforce organizational changes.<sup>10</sup>

As mentioned above, organizational structures are easier to observe and modify than cultures; therefore, the amount of writing on structural changes and assessment is greater than the literature about organizational culture. Structures need to evolve and adapt over time according to Pugh.<sup>11</sup> Echoing organizational expert James Brickely, Pugh outlined the steps needed for an organization to survive for the long term, including moving away from traditional organizational structures into cross-functional teams based on process.<sup>12</sup> Traditional forms of

structures from classical management theory, combined with the bureaucratic school, shaped the majority of academic library organizations. These hierarchical structures focus on systematic planning and maximizing work output through standardization.<sup>13</sup> Pugh argued that in order for library organizations to survive, they must become “living networks” – decentralized, flattened structures where collaboration is encouraged and the focus is the process and not the product.<sup>14</sup>

Changes to organizational structures, from a hierarchical to a “living network” type, have been the focus of several case studies. Some studies focus on team-based structures, reporting overall positive results from the change.<sup>15</sup> Team-based structures have increased, but they too have their limitations. Pugh observed that most teams that existed in library organizations are actually groups. These groups still faced the same issues as hierarchical structures, including centralization of power, lack of autonomy among group members in terms of defining roles and processes, and no formal incentive for intergroup communication and collaboration.<sup>16</sup>

Some of the team-based structure studies show both the benefits and challenges in using this organizational structure. The University of Arizona Library documented their transition to a team structure in the 1990s, which has influenced other academic libraries in their organizational restructuring. The Library designed their teams based on key assumptions of team-based structures, including the empowerment of staff, self-accountability, continuous process improvement, increased productivity, and improved service.<sup>17</sup> However, Phipps observed that the parent institution’s hierarchical culture and the established existing culture were both significant challenges to a unit’s team structure.<sup>18</sup> Phipps described some of the ways to tackle the challenges of the legacy culture, along with the challenges inherent in a team structure. Successful approaches include facilitative team leadership, moving away from the model of the leader being the expert on the tasks being performed.<sup>19</sup> This was accomplished by structuring the leadership system within the organization before the other parts of the team structure.<sup>20</sup>

Higa et al. described the University of Texas Southwestern Dallas Library’s move from a traditional hierarchical structure to a team-based structure.<sup>21</sup> The move to a team-based structure was prompted by the need to change the library workflow to accommodate the increase in electronic resources.<sup>22</sup> This migration to a team-based structure became overwhelming as the number of teams in the organization took an excessive amount of staff time to manage. The teams were not structured for load balancing in the greater organization, and there was no accountability built into the teams.<sup>23</sup> To address these issues in the team organizational structure, Dallas Library moved to a “region” structure: administration and technology support, client contact, and collections. These three regions had facilitators that were charged with communicating with other regions in sharing concerns and collaboration opportunities.<sup>24</sup> These regions are similar to the cluster structure at the Grinnell College Libraries (described in the case study below), though there are several key differences, including UT-Southwestern’s assignment of entire departments to only one region and their focus on shifting responsibilities from teams to departments rather than the regions themselves.<sup>25</sup>

No ideal organizational structures appear in the professional literature, though there are traits that effective organizational structures and cultures have. Chang and Wu’s study of Taiwan library’s social support climates at work found that staff with higher task variety in their daily responsibilities had higher engagement within the organization.<sup>26</sup> In addition, their study

confirmed previous research indicating that overly formalized and elaborate structures undermine job satisfaction.<sup>27</sup> Given the findings from this and previous studies, an ideal organizational structure would allow staff to have enough autonomy not to hinder job satisfaction and allow staff a range of tasks and responsibilities.

Kaarst-Brown et al. approached the cultural aspect of organizations with cultural theory in mind and explored the concept of one dominant organizational culture versus several subcultures within an organization in varying degrees of conflict and harmony.<sup>28</sup> Noting Berrio's 1999 findings that the most effective learning organizations have strong Clan cultures, Kaarst-Brown et al. argued that traditional hierarchical values have created dysfunctional cultures within academic libraries and that these values should be replaced by structures supporting more Clan and Adhocracy focused cultures.<sup>29</sup> A change in structure does not come easily, but several events such as leadership changes, material format changes, budget cuts, and changes in staff demographics can be capitalized on to trigger an organizational assessment.<sup>30</sup>

Change in an organization, even with a trigger event, has been a topic of debate in the literature. The debate centers on the power of habit in a workplace, especially for workplaces with low staff turnover. Best practices for change management include staff buy-in at the beginning planning stages of the change, clear communication during the process, and transparency of the change process, including reasons and benefits of the change. Some researchers have explored using organizational rituals to support change management; for example, using staff celebrations to establish an organizational value of pursuing long term change commitments.<sup>31</sup> Adeyoyin's study of managing a corporate culture in a library setting makes note of Schein's observations on the two ways that a new culture can be learned: a trauma model where defense mechanisms are learned to cope with the new culture, and a positive reinforcement model where the goal is to successfully embed the culture's values into everyday work.<sup>32</sup> Adeyoyin also mentions Ranganathan's fifth library law, which posits the library as a growing organism, in his discussion about the need for flexibility in a library's culture in order to survive the rapid changes brought on by technology, collections, and populations.<sup>33</sup>

### **Case Study: Cluster Structure at the Grinnell College Libraries**

The Grinnell College Libraries (GCL) is a small liberal arts college library system with eight faculty librarians and 16 staff. In 2009 this library implemented a new Cluster Structure. The existing organizational structure of the Libraries followed a traditional organizational model found in many small academic libraries. Technical services (with two librarians and nine staff) included acquisitions, cataloging, serials, binding and processing, systems, and interlibrary lending services. Public services (with six librarians and seven staff) included circulation, stacks maintenance, interlibrary borrowing, special collections, media services, and reference and instruction services.

The organizational structure and the culture inherent in the system enabled the Libraries to operate fairly well in terms of maintaining collections and providing users with the slate of traditional services. Nonetheless, there were factors that led the Libraries to reconsider their organization, including:

- Project abandonment and the failure to meet goals.
- Advances in technology. The Libraries altered various workflows to accommodate new formats in recognition that the future collection would shift from a print majority to a

mixture of print and electronic media, but the organizational structure stayed the same; for example, shifting resources and workflows to digitize local materials was difficult because of lack of staff in Special Collections.

- Librarian duties and responsibilities. Since librarians have the same expectations as other faculty, they found themselves focusing on teaching, research, and service, leaving little time for managing library operations. If a librarian took a leave for research, then that librarian's management duties fell to the librarian of the college, who already had a full slate of responsibilities.

After hiring a new librarian of the college in 2006, administering LibQual in 2007, and going through an external review in 2008, the libraries implemented a series of organizational adjustments to support valued services and facilitate flexibility in responding to the environment while allowing the organization to tackle opportunities.

Teams were rejected as a naming convention for the organizational structure because "team" has a specific definition with behavior expectations. The cluster structure is an attempt to take the best of organizational design theory while not being tied to a specific school of management. Nonetheless, the envisioned cluster structure is related to a team structure, with emphasis on shared leadership for functional areas, generalized job descriptions, and formalized structures for broad participation in decision-making located as close to the work as possible.

The Cluster model creates groups of leaders for combined areas of operation (see figure 1) to help leave-proof the running of the library. It also has the benefit of bringing of peers together in making decisions about new initiatives as well as in making smaller adjustments to workflows. Shared leadership in the cluster structure facilitates greater integration and articulation of areas of library operations, especially in planning projects. In implementing the clusters no staff member switched supervisor or changed jobs. When a supervisor is on leave, another cluster leader steps into the supervisory role for the needed time period.

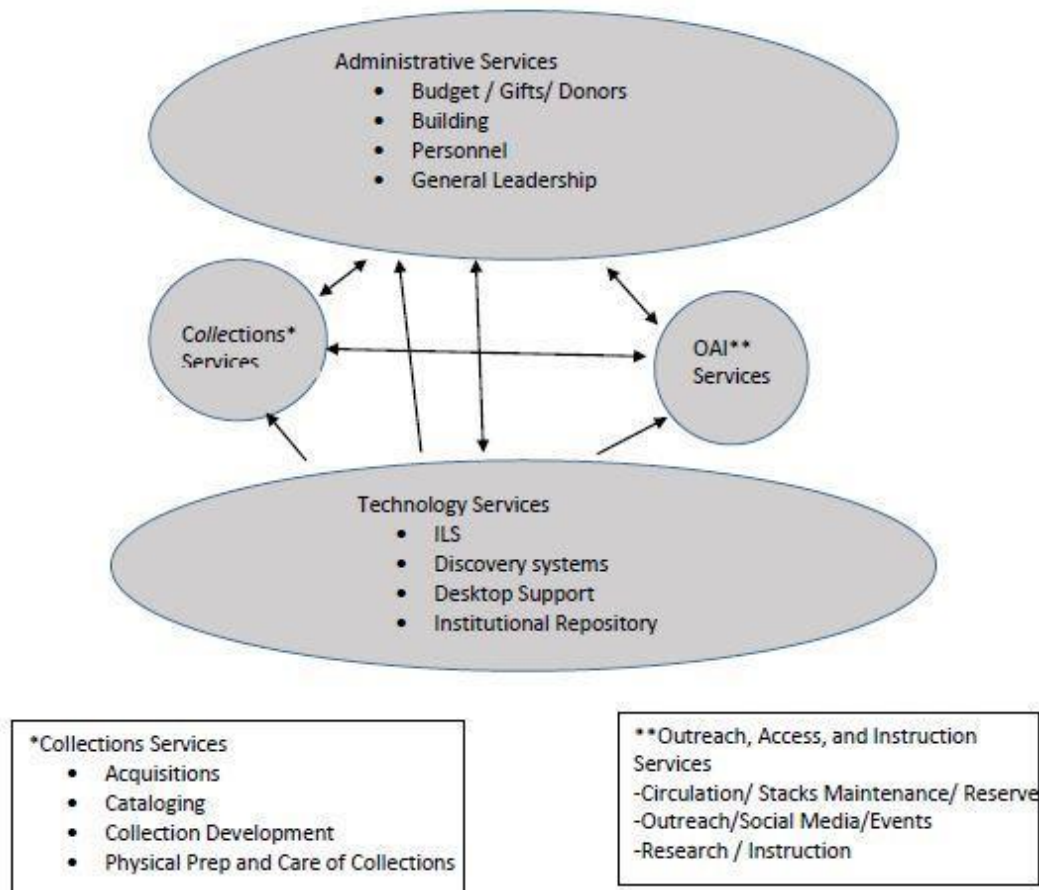


Figure 1: Initial Cluster Design

It was challenging to draw lines for the clusters due to the integrated nature of work in a small academic library. Having everyone in one large library cluster would not provide more flexibility or help with the leadership issues identified. Library operations were divided into four clusters, which will be described in more detail below. Different decisions could have been made, and preserving the supervisory relationship was the deciding factor in those cases.

Staff and librarians have duties that cross the permeable boundaries of the clusters. For example, the media room supervisor performs a variety of duties in the Collections Cluster and the Outreach, Access and Instruction Cluster (OAI). The terminology “dotted-line responsibilities” are used for staff that cross cluster boundaries significantly enough to require input from more than one area for evaluations.

The cluster meeting structures are determined by the clusters and have evolved with each cluster having cycles of decision making and activities. The weekly Librarians’ Meeting was renamed Management Council (MC) to reflect a shift in emphasis to leadership and clarify that this was not a meeting of the library faculty. Major decisions come to MC after the



appropriate cluster(s) have formulated recommendations, which freed up MC to focus more on strategic planning.

The Cluster Structure proposal was presented to staff in early 2009 and revised and refined during the spring. The structure was implemented after an all staff retreat in June 2009. The structure was the focus of another all staff retreat in 2010, where initial concerns were addressed, including communicating cluster activity to all staff and coordinating on projects that involved more than one cluster. In a June 2011 retreat it was decided to add staff from the operational areas to the cluster leadership groups for OAI and Collections to ensure staff representation in leadership duties. The latest change to the cluster structure (2013) involved breaking OAI into two separate clusters: Outreach and Research Services.

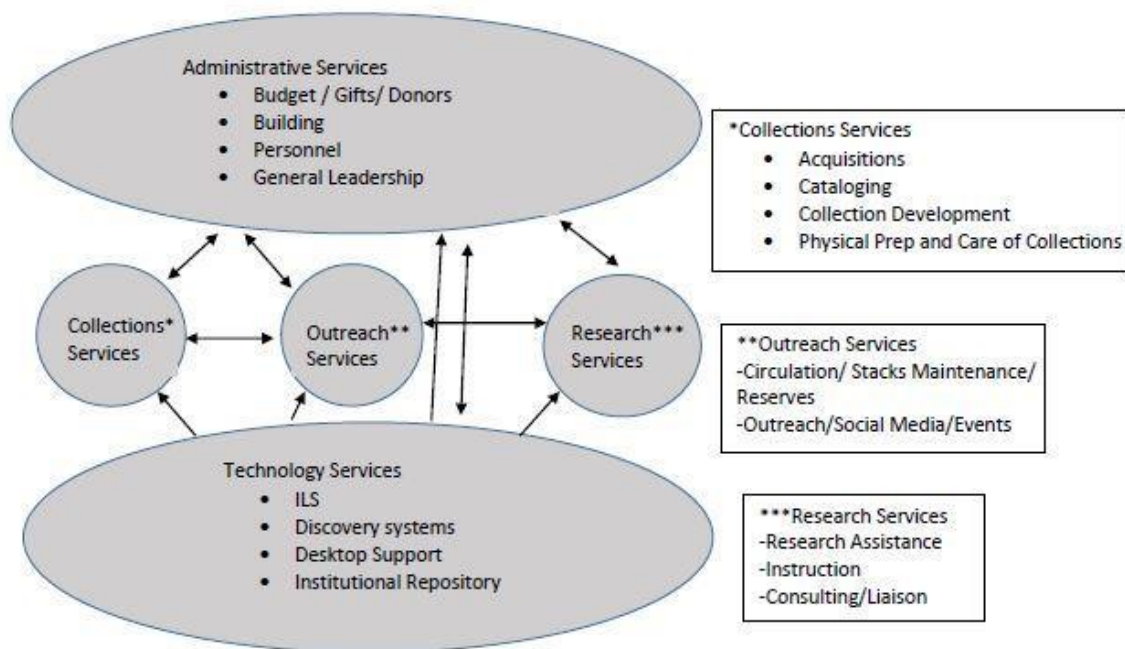


Figure 2: Cluster Design (2013)

### Administrative Services Cluster

The Administrative Cluster has budget responsibilities and provides leadership in human resources areas including facilitating recruiting, hiring, firing, and evaluating. Building coordination, gifts, compilation of reports and statistics, other communication with external offices and keeping track of other activities that happen on a regular cycle are also part of the Administrative Cluster as it facilitates the work of the library.

The Administrative Cluster currently consists of the Librarian of the College, the Associate Librarian (three year rotating assignment), the Manager of Access Services, the Acquisitions and Discovery Librarian, and the Administrative Assistant to the Librarian of the College. The Administrative Cluster meets weekly to confirm the agenda for the Management

Council meeting (all staff have access to the agenda and can propose agenda items) and to touch base on the many projects that are moving along as well as doing environmental scans.

### Outreach, Access, and Information Services OAI (2009-2013); split into Outreach Cluster and Research Services Cluster (2013-)

The OAI cluster was a very large cluster in its scope of operations, which includes circulation, stacks management, reserves, interlibrary services, research services, instruction, and outreach. The staff in these areas struggled to be closely allied because of the discrepancy between librarian duties (instruction and research) and staff duties. The librarians do not supervise the staff in the cluster but do provide significant leadership.

The OAI Cluster consisted of the two Humanities Librarians, the Social Studies Librarian, the Archives and Special Collections Librarian, the Manager for Access Services, Library Assistant (LA) for Special Collections, three LAs for Circulation; one LA for Circulation and Serials Check-in (dotted line), and a LA for Interlibrary Services. The other MC members rotated into and out of the OAI cluster leadership and had research, consulting and instruction responsibilities that fall in this cluster. OAI initially had MC members in the cluster leadership group and added staff after the January 2011 retreat. In 2013 the OAI Cluster split into the Outreach Cluster and the Research Cluster:

- Research Cluster: Humanities Librarian and Coordinator of Research Services, two other librarians, one staff member from access services, one other staff member. Provides leadership and coordination for instruction and research services including training for basic information services and the student research tutors.
- Outreach Cluster: Humanities Librarian, two other librarians, two staff members. Provides leadership for access services, interlibrary loan, user-experience, web-site and social media content and coordination, and campus and community engagement.

### Collections Services Cluster

The Collections Services Cluster (CC) consists of the traditional areas of serial and monographic (including electronic) acquisitions, cataloging, and processing. The collection development responsibilities of each librarian also falls into the collections cluster. Database maintenance and reports and statistics are also core collections cluster duties. There must be clear communication between the Collections staff and the Outreach services staff who do collections maintenance and interlibrary loan in order to facilitate several key cross-cluster activities including demand driven acquisitions, missing books, transfers, withdrawals and shifts.

Collections Services is a large cluster with four MC members and nine staff, three of whom are in dotted line positions with other clusters. The Acquisitions and Discovery Librarian (staff supervisor) and the librarian in the leadership position for collection development, two MC members and three staff from the cluster form the leadership group.

The cluster consists of the leader for Collection Development (currently the Science Librarian), the Acquisitions and Discovery Librarian (staff supervisor), two other MC members, three Library Assistants (LA) for Acquisitions and Serials (including Government Documents), one LA for Cataloging and Processing, two LAs for Cataloging, an LA for Burling Media Room (dotted line), and the Electronic Resources Management Specialist. The Collections Cluster



leadership meets weekly, typically for thirty to sixty minutes as an open meeting. Whole cluster meetings are held twice yearly and as needed.

### Technology Services Cluster

The Technology Services cluster provides leadership, support, and training for technology work and initiatives of all areas of the libraries. This includes projects surrounding open source technology, integrated library system, and some desktop support. The Technology cluster includes of the Discovery and Integrated Systems Librarian, Library Systems Support Specialist, Digital Library Applications Developer, Social Studies and Data Services Librarian; and one other MC member. The Technology cluster meets on a weekly basis and invites others as needed. Campus Information Technology staff are regular visitors to the meetings.

### *Assessment of cluster structure (2011-2012)*

Anecdotally, the cluster structure has made a positive difference in both library operations and staff participation. The clusters appeared to have facilitated a more open discourse among staff as evidenced in staff participation within the cluster meetings. Shared leadership worked particularly well in functional areas by improving workflows and productivity. Outreach, which is led by librarians who do not supervise staff, had more challenges in establishing operational protocols. The clusters provide a more inclusive process for determining library initiatives and projects while also providing an accountability structure which improves project completion. In January 2011 the Grinnell College Libraries were awarded the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) Excellence in Academic Libraries Award based on projects facilitated by the cluster structure.

While signs indicated that the cluster structure was working, a more quantitative assessment was needed. In fall 2011, MC conducted a library-wide online survey of staff perceptions of the cluster organization's effectiveness and gathered suggestions as to how the cluster structure might change to address any issues (see Appendix A). Responses to the survey were anonymous and consisted of both Likert-type scale questions and open-ended questions about the staff's understanding of library operations and the role clusters play in these operations. The majority of respondents felt that the cluster structure provided opportunities to influence the direction that the library takes in goal setting as well as projects and daily operations.

The survey pointed out that the communications problems identified in the previous retreats and staff meetings had not all been resolved. Almost half of the respondents did not know who the leaders were for the clusters that they were not part of, citing poor documentation about cluster membership. About half of the respondents also reported infrequent reading of cluster reports. The reasons given were lack of motivation, difficulty getting to where the meeting notes were stored, and the formatting of the notes themselves. Some of the documentation issues mentioned in the survey have been addressed; for example, a staff member created a wiki page listing membership in each cluster, including co-leaders. Other issues, like meeting note content and formatting, are aspects of the general communication problems which require ongoing attention. The concerns about meetings have been addressed by using the first half of the June 2012 planning retreat to train staff on best practices for meetings including setting ground rules for the GCL meetings, while training in project management was the focus of the June 2013 staff retreat.

Clusters have encouraged library staff to look at ways to integrate skills and analyze workflows for greater efficiency. Circulation staff have seen a greater emphasis on cross-training in interlibrary loan, library event support and outreach, and basic reference services. At the time of writing of this article, the GCL are in the midst of analyzing workflows in Library Services and Interlibrary Loan, which members of Collection, Outreach, and Technology clusters are co-leading. Another significant cultural and operational change is the move of documentation from restricted storage folders into a library-wide wiki. This is an ongoing project in conjunction with workflow examination.

With five personnel changes due to retirements and four due to job moves, GCL was now bringing staff into the organization with the cluster structure as the norm. The authors went forward with another round of assessing the cluster structure in order to examine whether clusters support the cultural needs of this highly functional staff. This time, the authors chose a survey instrument that had been used in previous organizational culture studies in the library field, the Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI), to gain an understanding of the library workers' perceptions of the cluster structure through the lens of organizational culture.

## **Research Study: OCAI Survey and CVF Analysis of the Cluster Structure**

### Methodology

The authors used the Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI), a survey with a series of questions under six areas of cultural dimensions (see Appendix B for survey questions and scoring sheet). This survey has been used extensively in assessing organizational culture in numerous research studies as well as throughout different occupations.<sup>34</sup> Although longer versions of the OCAI have been developed and used by researchers, the majority of studies use the original six-area version of the survey.<sup>35</sup> The main purpose of the survey is to assess the key areas of organizational culture:

- Dominant Characteristics
- Organizational Leadership
- Management of Employees
- Organizational Glue
- Strategic Emphasis
- Criteria of Success

The survey takes two measurements of organizational culture: the perceived culture at the time the survey is administered, and the desired culture that the survey taker wishes the organization to have in the future. The survey taker has 100 points to divide between four statements under each area, with more points being assigned to statements that are either true of the current perceived culture or desired for a future culture. Each statement under each area corresponds with one of the dominant cultures but is not labeled as such in the survey itself.

The sample population was a convenience sample of the librarians and library staff at the Grinnell College Libraries. At the time of the survey, the Libraries employed eight full time librarians and 16 library staff in various full-time and part-time positions. The OCAI was replicated in electronic format using a subscription online survey service. The electronic

survey was distributed through the library email list with a two week survey period. There were no incentives provided for taking the survey, nor was participation mandatory for the librarians or staff. The authors reserved the option to participate in the survey due to the very low number of librarians in the sample population. In addition, the results will be used for internal assessment, and author participation in the survey would provide a more comprehensive view of the organizational culture from the librarian population.

After the survey period was over, the results were exported into Microsoft Excel for analysis, stripped of any identifiable information (IP address) outside of the demographic question of whether the survey taker was a librarian or staff member. The scoring sheet for OCAI was replicated in electronic format using Excel and the results were tabulated per the scoring sheet instructions.

### OCAI Survey Results

Thirteen complete responses were collected from GCL employees: seven library staff and six librarians completed the survey. Four responses were omitted due to being incomplete or abandoned mid survey. Overall the response rate was 52%, with the librarian response rate at 75% (out of 8) and the library staff response rate at 44% (out of 16).

The results were compiled based on three demographic categories: overall, library staff, and librarians. The overall result combines the two specific employment demographic sections. With the exception of one score in the library staff results set, there were no key characteristics that scored greater than 50 in a 100 point scale in the survey.

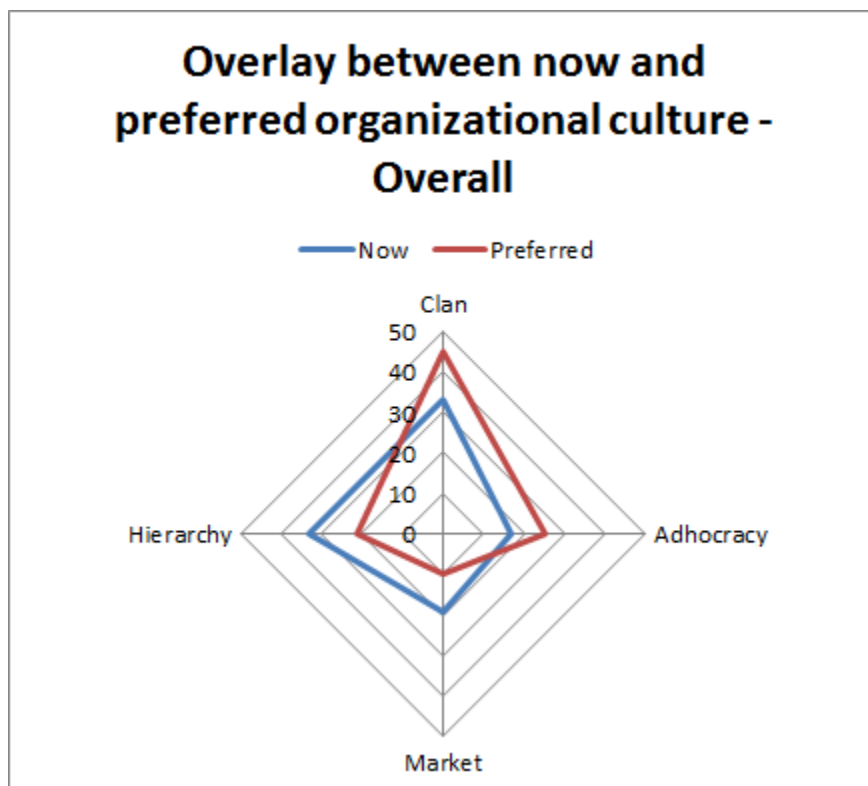


Figure 3 - Overall results for current and preferred organizational culture

In Figure 3, the overall results for the current organizational culture heavily lean toward both Hierarchy and Clan sectors, with both at a score of 33. Market and Adhocracy cultures are two points apart from each other, 19 and 17 respectively. The preferred organizational culture in Figure 3 shows a shift away from Hierarchy (21) and towards Clan (45). Market culture is less desired in the preferred culture (10) while Adhocracy is slightly more desired than what is demonstrated in the current culture (25). The difference between the current and preferred culture demonstrates the gaps that the current organizational structure has, including the perception that the culture of an otherwise flat organizational structure is hierarchical.

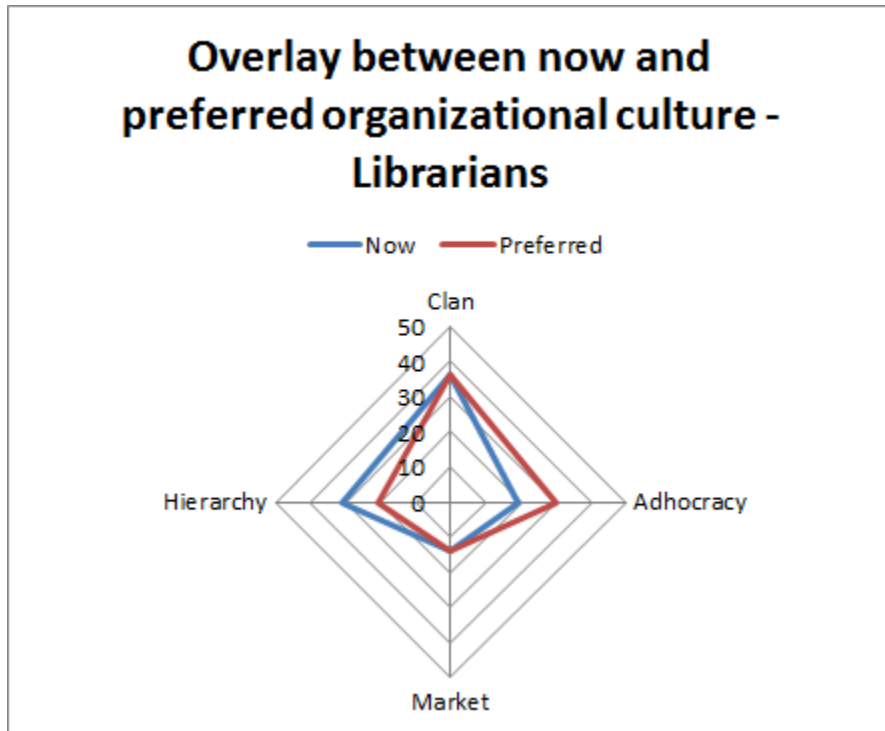


Figure 4 - Librarian results for current and preferred organizational culture

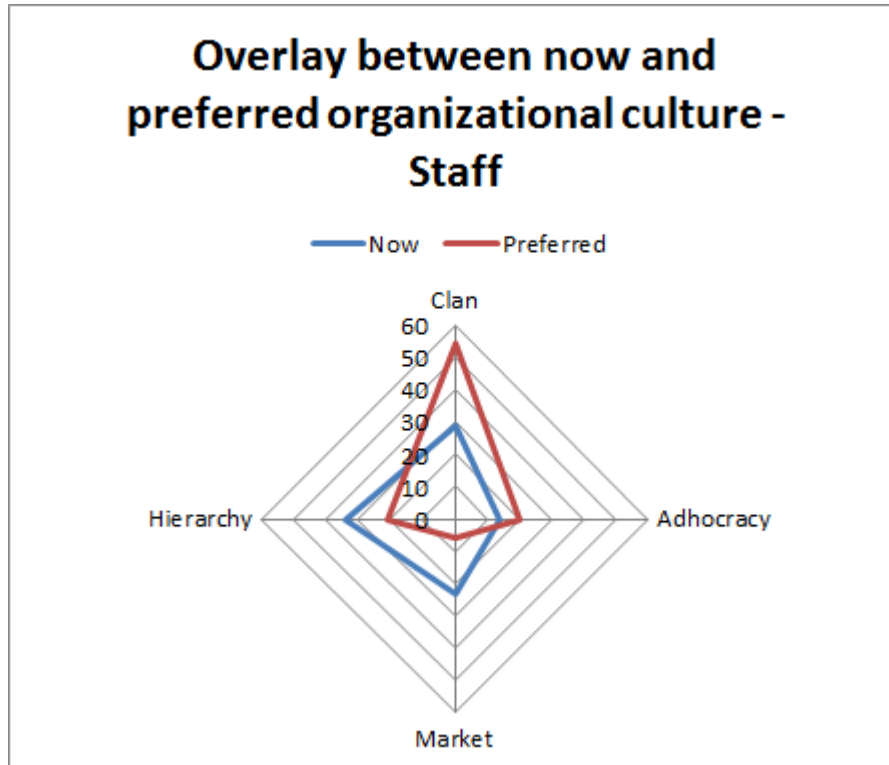


Figure 5 - Staff results for current and preferred organizational culture

The differences between the staff (Figure 4) and the librarians (Figure 5) are striking. Staff perceive that the current culture of the libraries is predominantly Hierarchical (34) with strong Clan culture overtones (29). The librarians also perceive a strong Hierarchy culture in the Libraries (31), but feel that there is a stronger Clan culture than the staff (36). A bigger difference between the two groups is found in the preferred culture. Staff prefer an overwhelmingly strong Clan culture (54), almost equal amounts of Adhocracy and Hierarchy (20 and 21 respectively), with very little Market influences (6). The librarians do not have an equally strong preference for any one culture. In fact, the Clan and Market numbers are the same between current and preferred cultures. The differences are in the other two cultures: fewer Hierarchy traits (21) and more Adhocracy (30).

The study has a few limitations that constrain its generalizability. The first limitation is the very small sample. One response of 100 in one statement and zero in the other three statements affected results in the preferred culture that otherwise would not have had a major influence on the results if the sample group was larger. Another limitation is that the cluster structure is in flux due to being a relatively new organizational structure for the Libraries. The perception of constant structural shifting can influence how staff and librarians perceive current organizational culture. The results of the perceived current culture will change over time as the structure continues to evolve.

### Discussion

The results tell an interesting story of the cluster structure at the Grinnell College Libraries. The preferred cultures of both librarians and library staff show that the current culture is not meeting preferences. Our expectation was that there would be less perceived



hierarchy and more of a Clan culture with strong Adhocracy leanings for the librarians. It is debatable whether or not there is a structure that enables greater overlap between current and preferred cultures. The differences between current and preferred cultures point towards a general desire for more flexibility in the organization than what is perceived currently. Both groups wish to see the culture better facilitate Adhocracy, which includes traits such as innovation and project based operations. This can be interpreted as a signal for cross-training within staff duties and for more flexibility to pursue initiatives from the librarians. Early responses to this assessment include the implementation of increased cross-training across clusters as well as revised job descriptions which were reviewed in an organized effort in 2012. Ongoing reviews of job descriptions have been integrated into the annual staff evaluation cycle at the campus level.

The largest discrepancy between staff and librarian preferred cultures requires more action than simple cross-training or a slight shifting from production tasks to autonomous projects. Library staff see the current organizational culture as lacking in Clan cultural traits such as mentorship and close relationships, with librarians seeing less of a deficiency in the current culture. This could be an indication of a wider issue within the campus faculty/staff cultures and the different criteria under which people work (for example, emphasis on production for staff versus project management for librarians). One would assume that the flatter organizational structure of the clusters, along with their emphasis on cross-functional groups and projects, would foster relationships between colleagues, but other factors, such as workload, come into play when trying to foster these relationships. The Libraries need to investigate the gap between current and preferred cultures and determine if and how the cluster structure might be modified to close this gap with regard to expectations and values, or whether more process oriented training would be effective.

Another aspect inviting discussion comes from the literature. In their 2010 research regarding emerging library leaders and organizational cultures, Maloney et al. wrote:

“... what might less Hierarchy culture type and more Adhocracy culture type mean operationally, in an individual library? The instrument employed in this study, the Competing Values Framework, could also be used to explore this question. The CVF is designed to be used as both a diagnostic tool and as a guide to an organizational culture change process.”<sup>36</sup>

In an attempt to answer the question above, the authors analyzed the results to determine if the cluster structure might fit into the profile Maloney et al. outlined in their research. Does the cluster structure provide an example of such a preferred culture of emerging library leaders? The answer, based on the perceptions of the library staff and librarians, leans toward “no.” The current perceived culture among the librarians and library staff includes strong leanings towards Hierarchy and Clan. Although the librarians and staff are not the emerging leaders that Maloney et al. focused on, the perceptions of the librarians and staff as a whole indicate that this structure might not be the structure that would draw in emerging leaders. However, given that Maloney et al. also found that emerging leaders want Clan type culture in addition to Adhocracy, the cluster structure might have something to offer in providing an organizational structure that fosters Clan cultural traits over time.

While the cluster structure supports various Adhocracy traits (project based working groups, cross functional collaboration, etc.) it is running into the same problem other “flat” organizational structures, including teams and group based structures, have encountered in working within a system with an entrenched, systematic hierarchical culture. Hierarchical

structures in the workplace support institutional activities. An example of this is the supervisor/employee relationship required by Human Resources for performance reviews, disciplinary actions, and other supervisory duties. The GCL subscribes to a flatter, more distributed structure than the supervisor/employee model, but it is still bound to the external structures to accomplish institutional mission critical duties and goals. Perhaps one explanation for the discrepancy between the library staff and the librarians regarding perceived current hierarchy in organizational culture is due to the reality that library staff are more tied to hierarchical institutional cultures, such as the annual review process that focuses on productivity, that directly affect their employment and daily duties while librarians, as faculty, operate in more of an Adhocracy.

## **Conclusion and Future Steps**

Reviewing the planning, implementation, growth, and assessment of the cluster structure has brought up several key points for reflection within the context of the professional literature as well as within the GCL. The cluster structure was an attempt to create an organizational structure that was more adaptable than the hierarchical structure traditionally found in academic libraries while avoiding the pitfalls of team-based organizations. The desired result was an organization that was flexible in both staffing including facilitating cross-training and cross-functional projects, and in distributing responsibility and decision-making.

The identified goals of the restructuring process –leave-proofing the libraries for supervisory duties through shared leadership, better follow-through on cross-operational-area projects, and more flexibility in responding to changes in technology and formats – have been achieved. Decision-making has been more broadly distributed and the MC leadership group is able to focus more on opportunities as the result of the clusters bringing forward well-considered proposals. The cluster leadership groups are set up so that at least one strong perspective outside a functional area is included, which helps to ensure that the important questions are asked and explored before a proposal is brought forward. The inclusion of front-line staff in the cluster leadership has brought understanding of how much work implementing decisions will be and in having stronger voices for the primary users of our library, since some staff interact more with the students and faculty than the librarians do. GCL is considering re-surveying the campus community to ensure that the focus is still on the services most valued by our community.

One question this article was not able to definitively answer pertains to how strong the link is between organizational culture and structure. In the professional literature, some ties have been made between the two; however, changing an organizational structure does not automatically change an organization's culture. This case study and assessment show that there are multiple factors in play in both implementing a new organizational structure and in understanding how organizational cultures are affected by change. Because the academic institution itself has a variety of organizational structures and internal cultures in different areas, the academic library's structure and culture fall under the influences of structures and cultures of the larger institution, akin to the observations made by several researchers into the subcultures that exist in dominate organizational cultures.<sup>37</sup> Changes to both structure and culture mean librarians and library staff face cognitive dissonance between library and parent institution when the structures/cultures differ and it may be necessary to invest more time in process training commensurate with the Clan and Adhocracy cultures in order to develop the behaviors that support the preferred cultures.

The formation, evolution, and assessment of a non-traditional take of the more traditional team structure in academic libraries created more questions than definitive answers; however, the questions themselves provide opportunities for further growth of the system. While this structure originated from a small academic library, the cluster structure could be responsive enough to scale up or down to a certain degree depending on the size of the library operations; the flexible core of the structure would allow for such movement. Libraries working under traditional team structures but are looking for a more fluid approach might find the cluster structure fitting their needs for flexibility and organizational responsiveness. The cluster structure seems to help cultivate certain desirable organizational traits as well, though the extent of this cultivation depends on the greater culture of the academic library's parent organization. Additional training and constant reinforcement of structural cultural norms may be necessary to combat the more negative parts of the parent organizational culture; additional resources would be needed beyond the normal effort of organizational upkeep. Nonetheless, the cluster structure might offer organizations a tool to aid them in creating a healthy organizational structure and culture.

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## Appendix A: Internal cluster assessment survey

[Likert Scale Questions (Strongly agree Moderately agree Slightly agree Slightly disagree Moderately disagree Strongly disagree Don't know)]

[Follow each question with a comment box]

1. I feel well informed about the libraries' goals.
2. I feel well-informed about the libraries' activities.
3. The library is focusing time, energy, and funding on the right things.
4. I have ample opportunity to influence the direction of the Libraries or my area
5. I understand the cluster structure
6. I know who the leaders are for each cluster.
7. My cluster includes the right functions and people.
8. I attend too many meetings (the number of meetings I attend exceeds the benefit I see from my participation in them).
9. I read all the clusters' monthly reports regularly.
10. The library director is engaged in the right way in the work of the clusters.

[Open-ended Questions (comment boxes)]

11. What suggestions do you have for automating, streamlining, or reconfiguring workflows or staff roles?
12. What work should we do more of?
13. What work should we do less of?
14. What positions should we have that we don't currently have?
15. Other comments:

[yes/no questions]

16. Are you part of Management Council? (yes/no)
17. Are you (or have you been) part of a Cluster Leadership Group (not Management Council)? (yes/no)



## Appendix B - Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument

Instructions for completing the Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI). The purpose of the OCAI is to assess six key dimensions of organizational culture. In completing the instrument, you will be providing a picture of how your organization operates and the values that characterize it. No right or wrong answers exist for these questions. You are asked to rate your organization in the questions. In this study, the organization we are studying is the cluster structure within the Libraries.

The OCAI consists of six questions. Each question has four alternatives. Divide 100 points among these four alternatives depending on the extent to which each alternative is similar to your own organization. Give a higher number of points to the alternative that is most similar to your organization. For example, in question one, if you think alternative A is very similar to your organization, alternative B and C are somewhat similar, and alternative D is hardly similar at all, you might give 55 points to A, 20 points to B and C, and five points to D. Just be sure your total equals 100 points for each question.

Note, that the first pass through the six questions is labelled “Now”. This refers to the culture, as it exists today. After you complete the “Now”, you will find the questions repeated under a heading of “Preferred”. Your answers to these questions should be based on how you would like the organization to look five years from now.

1.	Dominant Characteristics	Now	Preferred
A	The organization is a very personal place. It is like an extended family. People seem to share a lot of themselves.		
B	The organization is a very dynamic entrepreneurial place. People are willing to stick their necks out and take risks.		
C	The organization is very results oriented. A major concern is with getting the job done. People are very competitive and achievement oriented.		
D	The organization is a very controlled and structured place. Formal procedures generally govern what people do.		
	<b>Total</b>		

<b>2.</b>	<b>Organizational Leadership</b>	<b>Now</b>	<b>Preferred</b>
A	The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify mentoring, facilitating, or nurturing.		
B	The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify entrepreneurship, innovating, or risk taking.		
C	The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify a no-nonsense, aggressive, results-oriented focus.		
D	The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify coordinating, organizing, or smooth-running efficiency.		
	<b>Total</b>		

<b>3.</b>	<b>Management of Employees</b>	<b>Now</b>	<b>Preferred</b>
A	The management style in the organization is characterized by teamwork, consensus, and participation.		
B	The management style in the organization is characterized by individual risk-taking, innovation, freedom, and uniqueness.		
C	The management style in the organization is characterized by hard-driving competitiveness, high demands, and achievement.		
D	The management style in the organization is characterized by security of employment, conformity, predictability, and stability in relationships.		
	<b>Total</b>		

<b>4.</b>	<b>Organization Glue</b>	<b>Now</b>	<b>Preferred</b>
A	The glue that holds the organization together is loyalty and mutual trust. Commitment to this organization runs high.		
B	The glue that holds the organization together is commitment to innovation and development. There is an emphasis on being on the cutting edge.		
C	The glue that holds the organization together is the emphasis on achievement and goal accomplishment. Aggressiveness and winning are common themes.		
D	The glue that holds the organization together is formal rules and policies. Maintaining a smooth-running organization is important.		
	<b>Total</b>		

<b>5.</b>	<b>Strategic Emphases</b>	<b>Now</b>	<b>Preferred</b>
A	The organization emphasizes human development. High trust, openness, and participation persist.		
B	The organization emphasizes acquiring new resources and creating new challenges. Trying new things and prospecting for opportunities are valued.		
C	The organization emphasizes competitive actions and achievement. Hitting stretch targets and winning in the marketplace are dominant.		
D	The organization emphasizes permanence and stability. Efficiency, control and smooth operations are important.		
	<b>Total</b>		

6.	Criteria of Success	Now	Preferred
A	The organization defines success on the basis of the development of human resources, teamwork, employee commitment, and concern for people.		
B	The organization defines success on the basis of having the most unique or newest products. It is a product leader and innovator.		
C	The organization defines success on the basis of winning in the marketplace and outpacing the competition. Competitive market leadership is key.		
D	The organization defines success on the basis of efficiency. Dependable delivery, smooth scheduling and low-cost production are critical.		

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## Notes

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- <sup>20</sup> Ibid, 74-75.
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