UNIVERSITY OF GLOUCESTERSHIRE

TICER International Summer School, Digital Libraries à la Carte 2010

Tilburg University, the Netherlands, 26 - 30 July 2010

Title: The Flexible Professional: a fusion of cultures to support learning and teaching

Author: Margaret L. Weaver, Head of Learning, Information and Student Services, University of Cumbria, UK

Abstract

This lecture will provide an overview of national developments in library convergence and multi-professional working, focussing on a "one stop shop" approach, becoming known as "super convergence". Focussing predominantly on academic libraries in the UK, it will also explore the various factors contributing to these changes. The cross boundary working that is emerging as a result is presented through the lens of one higher education institution - the University of Cumbria.

Building on the previous work [1] to create a different kind of University in the north west of England, the lecture outlines the next stage in the University's strategic reshaping. This has involved a realignment of the campuses estates to meet the academic vision and a reconsideration of the workforce requirements. Consequently the next generation of "new academic teams" is emerging which fuses professional services staff from an every widening array of departments. This further blending of student facing services requires Information Professionals to be increasingly flexible in their approach to both self development and service delivery. The lecture aims to involve the audience in bringing out the implications for role design and future leadership programmes in order to support an increasingly holistic approach to collaborative working.

(1) Weaver, Margaret, and Beaty, Liz. (2009) The flexible campus – joining up people, pedagogy, place and process.
Peer reviewed paper presented at EDUCAUSE Australasia, Perth, May 2009
http://www.caudit.edu.au/educauseaustralasia09/program/abstracts/tuesday/Margaret-Weaver.php

Introduction

The rise of converged library services in the UK

The future of Libraries is in the balance or so many commentators would have us believe (Frey, 2010, JISC 2010). Changes to the scholarly publication cycle, the primacy of the internet as the information carrier of choice and consequent change in user behaviour which bypasses the expertise of librarian, (Brophy's disintermediation, Brophy, 2007) is quoted as being the death knoll for traditional libraries unless they adapt. However I believe a quiet revolution has been taking place as universities and colleges reinvent their support services to meet the agendas of today's and tomorrow's

students and researchers. Modern academic libraries are at the forefront of these developments.

One strategic response taken by an increasing number of higher education (HE) institutions is the bringing together of formerly separate functions into a single student-facing entity, providing a range of services, including library services, to support students and staff more holistically. In the UK arguably this movement was initiated by three influential reviews of higher education practice that had profound effects on how academic libraries would develop over the next ten years.

Firstly, the Feilden Report on Human Resources in academic libraries, published in 1993, made some important assumptions about change to the year 2000:
"that all institutions will move to greater operational convergence between their library and information services"
And further

 …Organisational convergence will continue to take place, but it will be driven largely by personal and political factors within each institution. A move towards greater operational convergence will be universal in some functions. For example, all institutions will produce integrated library and information service strategic plans and all will manage their networks jointly. Almost all will provide joint information literacy training for customers. Many, but not perhaps the majority, will combine front-line enquiry desk jobs so that one person handles initial questions on computing and library matters. The scale of this will be influenced more by location of the two services and new building layouts rather than by policy factors." (John Fielden Consultancy, 1993)

Secondly the Follett report recommended that "each institution should fundamentally reassess the way in which it plans and provides for the information needs of those working within it and the place of the Library in meeting those needs" (Joint Funding Councils' Libraries Review Group, 1993). This led to a comprehensive programme of change including many projects to modernise and build new university libraries in the UK, the scale of which had not been seen since Carnegie.

The move to further convergence of services can also be partly attributed to the impact of the comprehensive review of academic libraries conducted by Lord Dearing in 1997. (National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education, 1997). Wilson, writing subsequently about the impact of Dearing on learning support staff concludes:

"Whether the Dearing Report was identifying trends rather than instigating them is open to discussion;…Nevertheless Dearing was clear that the subject/learner support should be central to the teaching and learning of the future, enabling a seamless experience to be offered to students" (Wilson, 2003, 85).

Academic Library structures and managerial convergence
Bringing functions and services together into a unified managerial framework has been seen as one way to "exercise greater strategic control and direction over the converging areas of IT and Library Services" (Hanson, p.3) and as a way to address the increasingly wide range of student needs via a "one-stop shop" service approach. The Fielden and Follett Reports of the 1990's (mentioned above) first recommended that academic library personnel could, and should, influence learning support and that they required appropriate training and development to do it. The term "para-academic" was coined to describe the pedagogic role that subject librarians would need to play in the future in order to remain relevant to their institutions. I believe the profession has been active in taking forward this agenda. At my own institution this has been fully embraced through the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy; however it is evident that continued effort needs to be put into the design of super convergence models to foreground the academic nature of the service, especially in times of economic uncertainty. There is a real danger that we may slip back to the reactive models of the past.

On the other hand in the literature on library convergence, teamwork and collaboration with and between professionals is seen as being essential to the model (Corrall, 2005). Indeed, most of the studies on converged services highlight the benefits of convergence in providing an integrated service environment that provides a stronger customer focus. Field's seminal work on convergence in the UK (Field, 2001) goes further and explicitly mentions that a study by Pugh (Pugh, 1997) found that 61% of converged libraries believed that support for learning and teaching had improved, results confirmed by Wilson. (Wilson, 2003). Fisher also discusses the various models of convergence and the reasons for adoption and points to the creation of multi-disciplinary teams as being a direct result of service realignments. (Fisher, 2004) Understandably new staff working contexts and perspectives develop as a result of these advances. The assumption here is divided between the institution's desire for greater control and the converged library's mission to provide value for money and I would contend - for leaders of such services to have a strong service and personal identity.

Advantages of convergence

The notion that converging services brings long term benefits has been discussed in the academic library literature ever since. (Martin, 1996, Field, 1996, Field, 2001). In the early adoptions of the converged model, the IT and Library departments were the two main areas merged and the impetus was largely technological in nature arising from the use of learning technologies and the professionalization of learning and teaching. (Harris, 1988, Martin, 2008, 149, 150)

Since then the rationale for such moves has been explored by various writers, many of them Chief Librarians themselves. A key work by Hanson, is the most revealing account of convergence experiences in British academic Libraries. His case studies, provide a detailed picture of academic library convergence in the UK. Accordingly he states the principle advantages as being:

- o   Clear strategic direction governing all of the converged services
- o   A combined budget covering all of these areas
- o   A place on the university's senior management group, ideally for the director
- o   An opportunity to forge a common customer focussed service ethos
- o   An opportunity to plan and design new service delivery models based on user convenience, one stop shops, integrated learning centres and service points (Hanson, 2005, p.4)

The case study writers are on the whole positive about the converged model and prophesy its continuation. However they conclude that the evaluation of its success remains a major challenge. (Hanson, 2005). Whilst leadership themes are not explicitly dealt with in the work, the change management agenda is successfully portrayed and the reader has insights into the thinking of individual leaders and the challenges presented by merged services. This decade saw many more institutions adopt converged service models and set the scene for the "super convergence" trend which emerged.

Super Convergence

The distinction between strategic (organisational) and operational convergence, outlined by Fielden remains, however what can be evidenced recently is the converged service envelope is enlarging to encompass an ever widening array of student facing support. The importance of the topic to UK practitioners is demonstrated by a report from the UK Society of College, National and University Libraries (of which all higher education institutions (HEIs) are members). (Heseltine, et al, 2009) The report

documented a recent sharing of experience by ten Directors of Service, who met to debate the significance of this trend – so called "Super-Convergence". They were "keen to discuss what these developments meant for [their] own skills set and professional identities as well as…organisational structures, staff roles, service models and student expectations" (Heseltine, 2009 p. 122) and identify assistive change programmes. Derived from a small scale survey undertaken between 14 super converged services, they listed thirteen different support areas that were in the "mix", and which included far more than just "library" and "IT " convergence. In summary:

- o Student Services, welfare, counselling, personal development planning
- o Information, advice and guidance across a full range of specialisms, careers, money etc
- o Multimedia and content creation
- o Educational development units
- o Virtual Learning Environment support
- o Academic skills for students across the full spectrum of learning support including information literacy
- o Classroom and media support
- o Course management and assignment submission

Notably absent was quality assurance work and formal convergence with Facilities Management activities. (Both the latter have been fully discussed as possible professional service models in my own institution). However the group did comment on the close working relationship that was developing between information professionals and estates professionals due to the creation of flexible learning spaces across the sector - a trend previously reported (Weaver, 2007b), and the closer relationship with the student and the Student Union that emerges as a result of super convergence. (Marsh, 2008) To give some idea of scale in the UK it is thought that approximately 20 institutions (out of 72) are currently super converged and many more than this operating a converged service of some kind. I would question whether super convergence can be fully adopted in multi-campus operations as my case study of Cumbria shows, this is not without challenge and requires creativity in implementing blended roles.

Drivers and enablers of super convergence

To understand super converged libraries better, I will next explore the conditions which contribute to its introduction, such as institutional mission, simplification of services,

library space redesign and the wider economic environment – the latter having enormous impact on public services including higher education.

Institutional mission

The current thinking on the reasons for which services are placed together in super converged service departments is that that the context and scale of the convergence is wholly dependent on mission, significantly:

"…there is no set of activities definable independently of the institutional context". (Heseltine, 2009, 122)

Others have previously noted the primary role of the Vice Chancellor in such decisions, (Hanson, 2005) and the associated political dimensions, whilst Akeroyd observed the lack of written evidence for the rationale for convergence. This writer proposed four drivers for convergence which still apply in 2010 :

- o The merging of technologies and formats: media with computing and the pervasiveness of IT meaning an upskilling of users' and requirements of IT
- o Changes in learning and teaching notably move to elearning
- o The growth and importance of corporate information and the need for to manage it
- o Student and staff demand for simpler services

My University's mission in Cumbria (see case study) led to a debate about the fundamental nature of services such as my own in the lives of students who might never set foot on campus, but learn from the workplace or virtually. Being able to describe complex provision easily to students and staff was paramount.

Simplification of services

Watson, believes that whilst integration makes sense and can take different forms it is the effect on students that matters a position most of us would agree with;

"The focus of integration therefore should be at the point of delivery. For students it does not matter how complex the organisation is in the back office, provided that services are integrated at the point of delivery. Students should not have to understand how the university is structured in order to access its services" (Watson, 2008. p.10).

From a student services perspective the range and balance of student support services is also being examined by the Scottish Higher Education Enhancement Committee (SHEEC) who have taken an international benchmarking approach, and they confirm

that "several institutions seem to be re-conceiving what are considered to be student services and physically reorganising them beyond the traditional model to incorporate some academic-related services". Bournemouth University is cited as an example of super convergence whilst other institutions are collaborating (not formally converging) with the library as the focus. (SHEEC, 2009, p.19)

Simplification of the front line was indeed a major driver for the University of Cumbria, to avoid silo working and bring about an integrated service capable of flexibility to match the diversity of the student population and reach a distributed community spread across many campuses and locations remote from the physical campus. Moreover the University's reshaped presence, required a fundamental rethink in terms of space and place as outlined by Weaver and Beaty. (Weaver and Beaty, 2009).

Learning Space and library as place
 There is much interest in the pedagogy of learning environments, whether physical or virtual and the impact on student learning. Research has shown that students' approach to learning is complex and can be mediated positively by technology, under certain conditions. One response has been to create a range of technology-rich learning spaces; these have become pervasive in higher education and describe a conceptually different "classroom" in which active learning takes place using appropriate learning technology and with support that is student centred rather than tutor centric. Institutions have therefore recognised that there is a link between physical space and its configuration, the curriculum and the individual student experience. Similarly, the boundaries between student social behaviour, academic study, prior learning experience and use of IT are blurring as the NET Generation enter HE.

Consequently a major redesign of libraries movement has revolutionised the way students interface with academic services and many are offering the super converged experience via adaptation of existing buildings or new build   The Information Commons concept, initiated in the USA is being adopted in the UK partially or wholly (as in the case of Sheffield University, Glasgow Caledonian, Warwick University) and as one might expect these developments are in the main driven by Information Professionals. These new library spaces place the service in a position to consider co-location or reorganisation of teams or a formal restructure involving super converged services. Interestingly space alone was not the driver for the University of Cumbria's super convergence, but the enabler of implementing the newly formed service. However the management of space and effective space utilisation continues to

dominate the UK higher education headlines when it comes to value for money and full economic costing. This points to a third driver for super converged services – the global economic downturn and recession leading to uncertainty and instability.

Uncertain economic times

Whilst Martin points to the role of technology as a driver, (Martin, 2008, p.150), the drivers for super convergence are becoming more hard edged as the economic situation worsens. Improved accountability and measuring impact across a range of interconnected services is also thought to be a benefit of the super converged service. For example combining infrastructure management with the emerging trend of outsourcing means managers are more focussed on maintaining service standards and service agreements than previously. The latter has certainly increased; depending on the size and scale of the institution, revenue funding streams are reducing which is impacting negatively on staffing budgets, whilst capital spending and projects are encouraged as one-off rather than recurrent spend. This requires more commercial management skills and creativity in managing ongoing development.

Shared Services

History tells us that uncertain economic times appear to encourage innovation yet at the same time can be destabilising and slow growth in some areas. Writers discussing convergence analyse the convergence of systems, processes, technologies and teams. One new development is the idea of service convergence between institutions by creation of shared services (perhaps supra-convergence?). Shared services are not new to USA and Europe but the UK community has not widely adopted them, although much preparatory work has begun under the auspices of the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE, 2006). HEFCE, working with SCONUL, the academic Library sector body conducted a survey on shared services in 2009. They found that over 60% of respondents are involved in or planning some form of shared service activity and high cost benefits were seen in the areas of licensing and physical space savings. (https://sconulss.blogspot.com/).. Many articles and training events are appearing to assist staff to cope in times of unprecedented change. The SCONUL Top Concerns Survey which asks Chief Officers of SCONUL institutional members for their views of strategic priorities found that Funding and Financial Management was the top concern, as it had been in 2009. "97% of respondents [135 institutions responded – 80% of members] rated this as a very high or fairly high concern for the next twelve months". (SCONUL 2010)

Is a super converged service more able to ride the storm? Certainly blending services creates new opportunities for the deployment of staff in different service areas - the latter becoming a dwindling resource, and can build in the flexibility required to deliver a one-stop-shop experience. Envisioning a new service model requires leaders of services to elevate their thinking and perhaps move away from their original professional identity in order to understand the different professional groups that will form their new service.

The University of Cumbria took up such a challenge in early 2008 ahead of the economic downturn, but with an immediate personal financial challenge. The cross boundary working that is emerging as a result is presented through the lens of one leader at the University of Cumbria, situated in the north west region of the UK.

CASE STUDY: University of Cumbria, UK
I will next outline how the University of Cumbria designed and implemented a super converged service during a period of extreme challenge. The account develops the concepts (previously described in my paper, written with Professor Liz Beaty, describing a different kind of University formed in 2007 to reach learners on the West coast of Cumbria with little tradition of higher education. The working context is highly unusual and presents a unique opportunity for us to make a major contribution to future student participation levels in HE in Cumbria, which are well below the UK national average – less than 16% compared to over 40% nationally. Factors such as the dispersal of the communities we serve, the poor economic profile of Cumbria, and its problematical geography and communications mean that many of the traditional ways of conceiving student learning are no longer appropriate. The University is adopting a model of flexible learning which seeks to overcome these constraints and which fits the professional study requirements of our students and challenges the prevailing thinking about how students might engage in 21st century learning and its support. (Weaver and Beaty, 2009). This was made all the more complex because of the multi-campus nature of the University.

Reshaping the University to meet its mission and new Business Plan published in 2010, http://www.cumbria.ac.uk/AboutUs/News/Publications/BusinessPlan.aspx has involved the collective efforts of all staff in the University; support from external stakeholders, financial and political has been vital. It has also involved a realignment of the campuses and estates to meet the academic vision and a reconsideration of the workforce requirements. Consequently the next generation of "new academic teams"

is emerging which fuses professional services staff from an every widening array of departments. I'll describe the blending of student facing services into a coherent whole, the restructure itself and the use of flexible job descriptions. Finally I will reflect on the implications for leadership of super converged services generally and in severe economic times specifically. (The latter will be explored more fully at the TICER presentation).

Rationale for Super Convergence at the University of Cumbria

Some convergence of student support services had taken place in 2005 when library services successfully merged with elements of IT and media services to form Learning and Information Services (LIS), so in one sense the proposal to merge LIS and Student Development and Advisory Services (SDAS) was not a new concept. However, when the Head of SDAS left the University this led to the opportunity to combine the two departments, under the leadership of a single service head. Announced in January 2009, we knew it was part of an ongoing wider process to re-shape the University more fundamentally in order to meet the mission and aims as described in the Business Plan. Therefore I was clear with staff that the structure should not be seen as static and "finished" but as emergent, divergent and tuned into innovation and forward thinking. We also had a pay reduction target and a historical overspend to address.

From the outset there were objectives set for this restructure, shared with all staff.
- To deliver a structure which is holistic, student centred and which implements the University's Strategic mission
- To ensure that the new Service shape is both cost efficient and effective and meets the Staffing Strategy/payroll targets in a sustainable manner
- To embody structures and cross campus team-working that implements the new campus shapes and learning modes, and to assist with the university's *Flexible Futures* 2o2o vision in the Business Plan
- To build on good practice in the constituent services recognising the strengths of each
- To ensure that the proposed leadership and management structure delivers support for younger learners and vulnerable adults and have the specialist attention they require in order to study successfully

The concerns of staff were initially that this had been a top down decision, made by the University Senior Management team, and staff had not been consulted. As the restructure rolled out however, staff became aware of the University's precarious financial position which post-merger placed us in an environment of cost cutting, budget stringency and overall reduction of the work force. I had a savings target to meet for the new service and this figure was shared with staff early on; it represented a significant cut in payroll. Unfortunately, the assimilation of higher level strategic benefits of super convergence were understandably overtaken by worries about job losses. At that early stage comments about identity and converged identities, multidisciplinary teams and changing roles of professions were not uppermost, but these emerged during the further consultation and the job design phase.

I felt it was important that staff had the opportunity to name the new service, and the 270 affected staff were asked to put ideas forward as were members of the University. The name chosen was Learning, Information and Student Services or LISS for short.

Core Principles of LISS
The constituent services comprising LISS were considered to already be closely aligned in terms of role and remit which helped develop core principles which all could embrace. Placing the learner at the centre of our plans helped us to define professional services that would continue to build capacity in the University – itself changing. The new LISS would fuse the strengths of both LIS and SDAS: specifically in relation to cross boundary working - both services had close faculty links and considered partnership working across functions and departments as essential. Therefore the new structure did not seek to change those things that were working well such as academic liaison, academic skills and retention work, community development, one stop shop, and customer care – more it sought to bring together existing strengths and expertise and implement the wider Shaping the University plans.

In summary the bottom line for the new structure was to create truly multi-disciplinary teams and harness staff energies and expertise across various areas, designing a student development pathway and escalation path for enquiries from frontline to resolution. We also had to implement the planning assumptions on types of campus and the four learning modes – to future proof the service as far as possible.

Integrating the physical environments where our services were presently separate into a single space envelope and/or co-locating teams was critical, allowing unified

management practices. As the new Head of Service I wished to maximise the previous work on moving professional services away from the "remedial" to becoming true partners in the academic process and be pro-actively engaged with our customers, the like of which was advanced at the University.

To help staff and students to engage with the proposals I developed a metaphor to describe the new department shape. Staff were able to comment and feedback on the proposals at every stage and changes were made as a result.
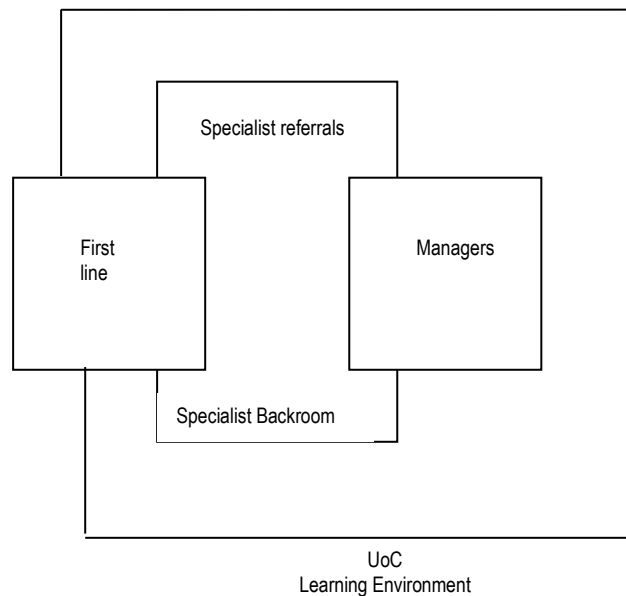
The "Strategic Sandwich"

Over time we developed a model for the new LISS that would implement the core principles and deliver the cost savings required. To develop flexibility of service provision across the entire student journey via blending various roles, I used the metaphor of the "sandwich" which was a tangible way to describe quite a complex set of circumstances.

The strategy was to have generic transferable functions at two tangential points: the managerial levels whereby managers would have roles spanning various functions, and at the front line which would enable triage and a LISS one stop shop approach; (the latter built on the success of the SDAS "I-Zone" frontline which was already blending service enquiries across the SDAS specialisms at one location (See Stephenson, 2008). This created – the "bread" layers..

The "filling" of the sandwich is the specialisms which will be necessary for more complex referrals and intensive work which has to be carried out face to face and/or confidentially such as student support (Specific learning difficulties and Additional Learning Support), information fluency surgeries/teaching academic skills (some), counselling and crisis management, individual careers/employability advice, disability support and assessment.
Or that which requires specific expertise and knowledge of compliance matters. (See figure 1)

Figure 1 The Strategic Sandwich

UoC
Learning Environment

```
                    ┌──────────────┐
                    │  Specialist  │
                    │  referrals   │
          ┌─────────┤              ├─────────┐
          │  First  │              │ Managers│
          │  line   │              │         │
          │         ├──────────────┤         │
          └─────────┤  Specialist  ├─────────┘
                    │  Backroom    │
                    └──────────────┘
```

UoC
Learning Environment

Backroom activities eg infrastructure and administration such as:

- o Student discipline and Adjudication Policies and process
- o Safeguarding
- o Electronic resources management and acquisitions
- o Complex cataloguing of learning resources (not day to day)
- o Technical support
- o Legal eg copyright, data protection, (not generic administration)
- o Key performance indicators and planning

were part of the specialist "filling" whilst producing e-content and e- materials was not seen as specialist, as all roles have to be able to do elements of this work. Backroom was in effect split from frontline and centralised on a single campus. Complex IT help was part of this new framework with a central Service Desk which meant no physical IT support at the various campuses, quite a change in culture for our customers.

Four LISS Teams

Four LISS teams were created, each incorporating the model in Figure 1. Additionally each team was given a strategic partner interface to manage across the University, providing a focus for further fusion of delivery. There is not space for a full description but in summary the teams are:

(i) Learning Centres: New model of Service Delivery: interface with students. This team provides the LISS service in physical and virtual modes, on campus and off campus;

eg in libraries, gateways, learning centres and at partner locations and via third parties. Information, advice and guidance and informed referral is the focus for this team using one-stop-shop approaches such as that pioneered in the Lancaster Gateway.

(ii) Learning Core –Backroom business processes: interface with LISS teams and strategy/policy. This team supports LISS by maintenance and management of the infrastructure and backroom processes and is the administrative heart of LISS. It is the home of the Destination of Leavers in Higher Education and the Student facing and Information Policies of the University, Learning Resources acquisition, quality of service, and the LISS web presence.

(iii) Learning Strategy Team: interface with Faculties concerned with Learning and teaching, information and academic skills, research and student development – the key interface with Faculties. Students' Skills development and wellbeing is the focus of this team as is scholarship of academics.

(iv) Learning Advancement Team: interface with Further Education Learners

The roles in this team are all compliance related, governed by external agencies. They have Further Education provision, specialised roles and have to meet student need assessed by externals. The nature of the provision is about developing students with complex needs/safeguarding/statutory requirements.

Designing the management layer for each team involved creating roles with a site responsibility as well as with a team and functional responsibility. The leadership implications for the team leads are still unfolding; most challenging has been the need for managers to understand a different set of professional issues such as student crisis situations, expansion of what constitutes learning resources (for example integrating careers information and advice) and managing with less in terms of resources with no loss of quality. Collaboration between managers, and between campuses is built into the managerial model (for example by having Learning Centre Managers for a wider geographic area such as North and South as opposed to by each campus) as no team can function without the other.

Service Tableau: Implementation in a multi-campus "Gateway" setting

Each type of University estate required a distinctive and connected mode of operation to enable flexibility, and continuous access to learning support. I had been involved designing the overall framework and knew that in order to be future proof the LISS model had to implement services using the University campus typology (Weaver and Beaty, 2009). I would suggest that having this overarching University framework is a

---

pre-requisite when designing faculty and service structures (super converged or otherwise).

For example implementing the service model with the University's base campuses (Lancaster and Carlisle) meant each team had a major presence there and to some extent was more straightforward than at the smaller locations. So at Ambleside, Lilly hall and London the model had to be flexible enough to accommodate the different scale of operations and different student learning approaches, which were largely work based experiences. Taking Lilly hall as an example; this is not a base campus but a Gateway campus requiring a different flavour of the "sandwich" one which centred on partnership and collaboration. Here the University has a presence in a space owned by a strategic partner, Energus, where we occupy 600 square metres of space at the Lilly hall development, on the west coast.

Partnership is central to delivery of University Services here. This partnership enables the co-location of two major providers of education and training for the region, with an emphasis on employers, business and the nuclear industry, and up-skilling and re-training the workforce in Cumbria as part of the Energy Coast initiatives. The partnership is a new one, and is of interest in terms of organisational development for the University and for LISS wishing to improve practice. It is the case that two very different cultures have been brought together via the Lilly hall project.

Having a flexible LISS presence was essential tp the student learning experience at a location which was experimental and remote from base campuses. Here a single "blended" post has been constructed – the Learning Gateway Manager, one which emphasises the student centredness of the University and is able to work across multiple functions even beyond the LISS super converged model. The post holders embody the ultimate in super convergence – being the single university staff member at Lilly Hall. In effect the role holder facilitates access to the entire University's functions and works with the partner to deliver different elements. A formal review of the Gateway conception is underway.

Flexible Job Descriptions

To enact the LISS service philosophy and to be future proof, meant designing job descriptions which could adapt to the current situation yet be flexible enough to meet changing demands. I realised that the fluid nature of the University would require a lot from staff, not least because of our operating context as a new institution with high

aspirations for distributed and work based learning; this would be very likely to take staff outside their comfort zones. Put this into the super converged context and it becomes imperative to have roles designed that will work across the specialisms we have and also in the various locations.

An interesting article by Pennell in the USA, highlights how succession planning, based on "on the job" experiences can be better facilitated by providing developmental opportunities not limited by formal job descriptions. (Pennell, 2010). This would seem particularly important for super converged services given the cross boundary working and individual stretch that is required. At my university we have approached this by using a set of generic role profiles, which have been developed by Human Resources for Professional Services staff. We were able to choose from three job families for our roles and ensure that the fit was correct:

- Learning
- Facilities
- Services

I had to think differently about describing the roles, focusing less on task and more on generic areas of activity which would be transferable to the different contexts. For example using "learning spaces" not "libraries", referring to the University Leadership and Management Framework to describe behaviours and building in collaboration as a major element.

The value to the university is that the profiles were all evaluated using the Higher Education Role Analysis framework, adopted widely by the UK sector, which would allow consistency of grade for work done across the University and movement between roles and University departments as the university structures changed.

Towards a new understanding of professionalism

Inevitably, super converged services leads to a more diverse set of professional groups working together – a fusing of expertise and professionalism. I believe that identifying the discourses of the various professions will give insights into the cultures which are being brought together. Briefly comparing student services literature with that of librarianship uncovers many similarities but also differences. The librarianship literature is concerned with content: collections and digital resources, design and delivery of information skills programmes, networked learning support and support for elearning. Also emerging are the pedagogies of new learning spaces physical and virtual. (Weaver 2007a) The changing

information landscape is well charted with hybrid library developments taking prominence as is the role of the library in a global information society. Articles on Learning and Teaching convergence with academic roles foregrounding librarians as educators and pedagogical supporters of learning can be found including the changing roles of subject librarians. Identity and converged identities: multidisciplinary teams and roles, staff development; changing roles of professions is also a contemporary feature.

On the other hand the Student Services literature that exists includes student improvement programmes and services to help students make the transition into higher education, more so than librarianship. On the whole, in the UK we do not have the accounts of integrated services from a Student Support Services perspective, making it difficult to compare viewpoints. Perspectives from the United States offer greater insights, for example Hollister describes how a partnership between Careers Services, located within the Student Affairs department, and Library Services at the University of Buffalo delivered benefits to both professions and improved seamlessness of service to students via Information Skills teaching, demonstrating that duplication can be removed and expertise diffused by cross-boundary working. (Hollister, 2004). What these studies show is that learner support staff can and do work together delivering synergistic services to higher education students without formal super convergence. However there is little theoretical underpinning or interconnection. What we are seeing here is that the combinations of professional discourses have not yet themselves converged and accounts in the literature are still attached to singular professional identities.

Fusion: Professional Identities
The complexity of these different forms of convergence is blurring boundaries between service departments causing a re-think of professional roles and job design. Further research is needed to identify the cultural discourse of "super converged" professional groups: this might include
- Academic Skills professionals
  o Learning Technologists
  o Educational Developers
  o Careers Advisors
  o Finance Professionals
  o Administrators
  o IT professionals

A word of warning however; this is not a simple matter of description; Atton reminds us that "the actions of any professional always take place in a context, whether political, economic, social or cultural. Any claim to professional objectivity must be balanced against the effects of those actions" (Atton, 1996, p.9). Intuitively though I think we construct our own identities based on our conceptions of self and prior experience. These espoused theories are often deeply felt and tacit which mean they are difficult to expose and consequently to influence and yet change in roles is inevitable with consequences for value systems (see below)

The IMPEL Project (arising from the publication of the Follett Report) first suggested that there was a need for a shared understanding of service objectives and multi-professional perspectives drawing on the values and behaviours of staff. The IMPEL2 project continued this work, particularly examining how electronic libraries are impacting on role perception and educational partnerships. (Walton, 1996) The assumption in 2001 was that subject skills were still important, whilst Wilson and Halpin, writing in 2006 encapsulate the huge shift that the library profession has actually made with the explosion of electronic information and web based services.

"to complement the hybrid library environment, academic LIS professionals have evolved to become new hybrid information professionals, encouraged by a process of work assimilation between disciplines and across professional boundaries, posing questions about the true professional identity of contemporary academic librarianship". (Wilson and Halpin, p. 79)

Taking this a stage further, the leader of a super converged service has a broad remit – influencing all areas of the institution and the "new academy" – what is termed a Corporate Leader. As Conway, writing about the changing identity of administrators observes:

"…what might be happening is a trend towards "university work, rather than separate general and academic work" (Conway, 2000, 15)

How might Information Professionals prepare for these new imperatives perhaps working with multiple professional groups? Our starting place must surely be to define and understand what kind of leadership traits are needed.

Towards a new understanding of Leadership

Speaking from experience, leading a super converged service in times of economic constraint is not without challenge. My previous work on identifying the gap in the literature has signalled the need to uncover the many new relationships emerging between the support professions brought about by the trend for convergence and super-convergence of HE academic services. My book attempted to bring together some of these new "voices" and suggested that there was strategic and personal benefit to be had by considering the common ground that exists between the various professions, and undertaking further research into the scholarship of learning support in its own right. (Weaver, 2008, p203). The affective area of our work was introduced in this text and it is to this which I now return to try and uncover what might be at the core of the professional learning supporter and leader. At the heart of the matter are notions of self as the transformative leader.

To illustrate, work by Bong and Skaalvik concluded that self concept can affect career choice; that normative comparisons are not helpful to self efficiacy, and that the learning environment can be of assistance in mediating academic self worth. (Bong and Skaalvik, 2003) Why do we need to grasp the importance of self in professionals' minds? I think we need to uncover professional standpoints and the role of self related perceptions and their effect on bigger concepts/conceptions such as super-convergence.. The potency of self belief is most affected by short term success in tasks and the feedback of others; in reverse failure easily reverses the feedback of others and is less sustainable than a positive self concept that seems to carry one through as a longer term persistence. The latter will need to be part of the successful Information Professional's armoury in the future.

Conclusions

Understanding and valuing the emotional work we undertake will be increasingly important in times of change.

Current models of convergence take the fusion of service portfolios even further, beyond the Library and IT combinations to encompass other student facing services, such as Student Services, Facilities Management, Centres for Learning and Teaching and Student Administration Services.

The literature has yet to catch up on the many implementations of converged student support services, and I hope this account has made some contribution from the

perspective of one UK regional University. Hence I believe the super convergence debates revitalises the organisational culture and allows synergies to emerge that were formally hidden.

The emotional life of leaders in these contexts is a significant area warranting further exploration to allow a fusion between work life balance (avoiding burnout) and help understand   emerging professional identities, preparing leaders for times of unprecedented uncertainty.

I have for some time been interested in the emotional life of leaders in senior Information Professional roles and the impact on professional identity. Using the construct of emotional labour, (Hochschild, 1983) I will be highlighting my work so far in this area at the TICER International Summer School where I hope delegates will become involved in the debate on this little studied phenomena.

References

Akeroyd, J.(2007) Taking stock of convergence. *LIBRARY + INFORMATION Update, 6* (1-2), p. 50-52

Atton, Chris, (1996). Towards a critical practice for the academic library. *New Library World, 97*, Number 1129, pp.4-11

Bong, M. and Skaalvik, E. M. (2003) Academic Self Concept and Self Efficacy: How Different Are They Really? *Educational Psychology Review*, *15* (1), p.1-40

Brophy, Peter (2007) *The Library in the Twenty-first Century*, Facet Publishing

Conway, M. (2000) Defining administrators and new professionals. Perspectives, 4 (1), p. 14-15

Corrall, S. (2005) The turn of the wheel: projects and politics at the University of Southampton. IN: Hanson, T. (ed.) *Managing Academic Support Services*, Facet publishing, p. 141-151

Field, C. D. (1996) Implementing convergence at the University of Birmingham. SCONUL *Newsletter*, *9*, p.33-37

Field, Clive D. (2001), Theory and Practice: Reflections on Convergence in United Kingdome Universities. *LIBER QUARTERLY, 11*, pp 267-289

Fisher, B. (2004) Converging on staff development. In: Oldroyd, M (ed). *Developing academic library staff for future success*, London: Facet Publishing.

Frey, T. (2006) The Future of Libraries*. The personal blog of Futurist Thomas Frey.* Accessed: http://www.futuristspeaker.com/2006/11/the-future-of-libraries/   31   May 2010

Hanson, T. (ed.) (2005) *Managing Academic Support Services*, Facet Publishing,

Harris, C. (1988) Academic Information Services at the University of Salford. *British Journal of Academic Librarianship, 3* (3), p.147-152

Heseltine, R. et al (2009) Super-convergence: SCONUL Shared experience meeting, 16 February   2009,   SCONUL   Focus,   46,   p.121-124.   Accessed http://www.sconul.ac.uk/publications/newsletter/46/34.pdf

Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) (2006)
Shared services: the benefits for higher education institutions. Circular letter number 20/2006. Accessed at
http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/circlets/2006/cl20_06/
Hochschild, A. R. (1983) The managed heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling, Berkeley, University of California Press

Hollister, Christopher. (2004) Bringing information literacy to career services. Reference Services Review, 33 (1), pp.104-111

John Fielden Consultancy (1993) *Supporting expansion: a report on human resource management in academic libraries*, Bristol, HEFCE

Joint Funding Councils' Library Review Group (1993) *Report* (the Follett Report), Bristol, Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)

Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) nd   *Libraries of the Future*, Accessed at http://www.jisc.ac.uk/media/documents/publications/lotfbrochure.pdf

Marsh, S. (2008) From learning to learner: the role of Learner Support Services in the Bradford student experience. IN: Weaver, M. *Transformative Learning Support Models in Higher Education: educating the whole student*, Facet Publishing, p. 51-65

Martin, J. V (1996) Subject specialization in British University Libraries: a second survey. *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science, 28*, (3), p159-169.

Martin, L. (2008) Transforming ourselves: developing the multiprofessional team. IN Weaver, M. *Transformative Learning Support Models in Higher Education: educating the whole student,* Facet Publishing, p. 149-163

National Committed of Inquiry Into Higher Education (1997) *Higher education in the learning society: report of the National Committee (Dearing Report).* London, Stationery Office

Pennell, K. (2010), The role of flexible job descriptions in succession management. *Library Management, 31* (4/5), p. 279-290

Pugh, L. C. (1997*) Convergence in Academic Support Services,* British Library Research and Innovation Report, 54, London, British Library Research and Innovation Centre

Scottish Higher Education Enhancement Committee (SHEEC) International Benchmarking Group (2009) *Supporting Student Success: a forward looking agenda* http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/documents/InternationalBenchmarking/InternationalBenchmarking.pdf Accessed June 13 2010

Society of College, National and University Libraries, 2010, *SCONUL Top Concerns Survey,* 2010, prepared by Priority Research Ltd, SCONUL. Accessed at: http://www.sconul.ac.uk June 13 2010

Stephenson, C. D. (2008) Widening horizons: dissolving boundaries: organizational change and the seamless learning agenda. IN: Weaver, M. *Transformative Learning*

Support Models in Higher Education: educating the whole student, Facet Publishing, p. 33-49

Walton, Graham, Day, Joan. and Edwards, Catherine. "Role change for the academic librarian to support effectively the networked learner: Implications of the IMPEL Project." *Education for Information,* 14 4, (1996): 343-350.

Watson, L. (2008) It's not about us: it's about them. IN: Weaver, M. *Transformative Learning Support Models in Higher Education: educating the whole student,* Facet Publishing, p.3-18

Weaver, M.L. (2007a) Beauty in the eye of the beholder? Exploring conceptions of learning and teaching through the creation of flexible learning spaces: the Learning Gateway - a case study. *New Review of Academic Librarianship , 12*, (2) November pp. 109-125

Weaver, M. (2007b) Going Native?: Planning *and delivering innovative learning spaces through partnership.*SCONUL Conference on building design: accessed at *www.sconul.ac.uk/groups/space_planning/events/Dec07/weaver.ppt*

Weaver, M. (ed) (2008) *Transformative Learning Support Models in Higher Education: educating the whole student,* Facet Publishing

Weaver, M. and Beaty, L. (2009) The flexible campus – joining up people, pedagogy, place and process.
Peer reviewed paper presented at EDUCAUSE Australasia, Perth, May 2009
http://www.caudit.edu.au/educauseaustralasia09/program/abstracts/tuesday/Margaret-Weaver.php

Weaver, M, Holland, P. and Toner, L. (2009) Supporting the Supporters: developing staff in multi-disciplinary teams – a case study: St Martin's College of Higher Education, United Kingdom. IN Connor, E. *An Introduction to Staff Development in Academic Libraries*, Routledge, Chapter 6.

Wilson, R. (2003) Learner support staff in HE: victims of change? Journal of Librarianship and Information Science, 35 (2) June p. 79-86

Wilson, K. M. and Halpin, E. (2006) Convergence and professional identity in the academic library. Journal of Librarianship and Information Science, 38 (2), June, p. 79-91