

ONTARIO COUNCIL OF UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES (OCUL)

COLLABORATION FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

THE CURRENT STATE

Ontario's university libraries face funding pressures and rising costs. At the same time, they continue to adapt and adopt emerging technologies and changing learning environments, evolving to meet the needs of students, faculty and researchers. This emphasizes an opportunity for collaborative approaches to library service and the value of shared resources to optimize efficiencies and effectiveness.

BACKGROUND

University libraries contribute directly to their institution's academic mission and help equip students with skills and knowledge to succeed academically. Their spaces, services, programming and resources are central to the university experience and high-quality library resources attract and retain graduate students and researchers. As fundamental infrastructure in academic institutions, university libraries are critical platforms for access to information and related literacies and, ultimately, student success, research excellence, program accreditation, and more.

Across Ontario, university libraries face ongoing resource and service challenges, including:

- Annual increases imposed by scholarly publishers and meeting the demand for multi-disciplinary collections essential to advancing curriculum and research.
- The rapid pace of technological advancements and high costs of infrastructure require an innovative approach to managing – and accessing – library resources.
- Supporting the diverse learning needs of students and researchers in digital and physical environments.
- Increasing demand for research data repositories, research data management, and open publication platforms.
- Expectations to provide education on artificial intelligence, privacy and copyright, and Open Access Resources for equity, diversity and inclusion.

HOW OCUL SUPPORTS ONTARIO UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

Through OCUL, university libraries have been and continue to find cost efficiencies and ways to transform their services and resources, such as:

- **Shared pricing:** Members benefit from advantageous reduced costs for shared services and resources.
- **Shared licensing:** OCUL leads an extensive program of 220 consortial e-resource purchasing and licensing and provides workflow efficiencies by centrally managing and negotiating licensed content on behalf of member libraries.
- **Shared systems:** Omni, the academic search tool, is how library users can search millions of e-resources and access over 25 million print resources, picking up requested items from any of the 18 partner universities in Ontario.
- **Shared services:** Ask a Librarian is a collaborative virtual reference service, offered in English and French, that connects students, faculty and researchers with real-time library and research assistance from across the province.
- **Shared digital research infrastructure:** Borealis is a bilingual, multidisciplinary and secure Canadian research data repository that facilitates the storage, sharing, publishing and discovery of research data.

COLLABORATION FOR SUSTAINABLE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

The valuable contributions of university libraries toward higher education and the research enterprise cannot be understated. Ensuring libraries' sustainability is critical to supporting the delivery of in-demand services and resources that meet the diverse needs of Ontario academic communities. Through consortial collaboration and shared systems and technologies, university libraries can maximize efficiencies and save staffing and resource costs.