Leading libraries
The view from beyond

Prepared by

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October 2017

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Foreword

In 2016 SCONUL established a Leadership Task and Finish Group to develop a range of initiatives to enhance the collective leadership capacity across SCONUL and to support individuals and groups of staff in member institutions in their leadership development.

At an early stage of this project we identified the value of an approach that supports reflections on leadership and assists academic library directors in gaining personal reach and strategic influence within their organisations and to guide the planning of their leadership development. The work is underpinned by various pieces of research including a literature review on leading in uncertain times and an investigation into the perspectives of executive-level leaders in UK universities reported in, 'The view from above'. This work was scoped by a subgroup led by Jane Savidge (University of Southampton), and Roisin Gwyer (University of Portsmouth), and assisted by Michelle Anderson (University of Hull), and Jan Conway (University of the Creative Arts). SCONUL commissioned consultants Professor David Baker and Alison Allden OBE to undertake the literature review and conduct the research through a series of interviews. This work is published in two separate reports[1].

During the development of this investigation, discussions with the SCONUL Board suggested that a further dimension to the work, providing a useful perspective for library leadership, would be gained by the addition of an international perspective to our understanding of the strategic position and impact of library leadership. As a result the current report was commissioned, based on a digest of a small sample of interviews conducted with library directors who have experience of working at leadership level in both the UK and abroad.

Areas explored include differences in the strategic position of the library, similarities and differences in how library leaders are perceived, views on the benefits of international experience, and the advice offered to other directors contemplating a move of this kind including views on the professional support available from sector organisations.

Although this piece of work was limited by time and resources to a very small number of carefully selected participants, it is based on detailed interviews with individuals who

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1   Baker, D. & Allden, A. (2017). Leading libraries: The view from above. Baker, D. & Allden, A. (2017). Leading libraries: Leading in uncertain times: a literature review

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have experience in one or more top-level strategic roles in academic librarianship in the international context. This report provides a rich seam of comment providing insight into the role, status, and impact of academic libraries and their leaders and offers an interesting perspective and some valuable nuggets of advice for the SCONUL leadership community and those who aspire to similar roles either in the UK or abroad. I am struck by how much the views correlate, complement, and enhance the themes of the larger and parallel research, 'The view from above' and by the sense that moving across continents has been an exciting and transformative experience. The snapshots in 'The view from beyond' indicate that leadership development and personal ambitions can be fulfilled by moving outward as well as upward.

We are grateful to the library leaders who were interviewed for their generosity in sharing their experience and views and for their time and support for this work, and to David Baker and Alison Allden for their commitment and enthusiasm in completing this additional investigation. I would like also to acknowledge the support from Ann Rossiter, Executive Director of SCONUL, the Executive Board, and the work of the members of the Leadership Task and Finish Group, in particular Jane Savidge and Roisin Gwyer, in shaping and directing this additional phase of the project.

Alison Baud

Director of Library & Learning Services, Bath Spa University

Chair SCONUL Leadership Task and Finish Group 2016 – 17

October 2017

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Preface

Introduction

This document provides a digest of the interviews undertaken as the second phase of the work commissioned by the SCONUL Leadership Task and Finish Group and carried out by David Baker and Alison Allden, covering 'the view from beyond'.

Approach

Six senior librarians were identified as potential interviewees in consultation with the SCONUL Leadership Task and Finish Group and were invited to participate. Appendix A1 provides the content of the introductory letter outlining the purpose of the investigation. The interviewees were either from the UK and had moved abroad or had moved here from other countries to join a UK university library or to take up a related strategic role.

Each person was interviewed and detailed notes were taken. It was made clear before the interview started what the ethical framework and boundaries of the research were to be and confirmation was sought and gained from all the interviewees to proceed.

Following the interview, the notes were written up, anonymised, and returned to the interviewees for comment and correction. The final versions, once agreed with the interviewees, were base-lined and lodged with the SCONUL office securely for the duration of this project.

Presentation

This report summarises the six interviews. We have provided a digest of the interviews that reflects the words and tone of the interviewees, captured in the numbered text boxes. The text has been categorised and organised according to themes discussed and developed with SCONUL representatives, taking account of the parallel literature review and the earlier set of interviews of UK senior leaders. A commentary on the interviewees' responses has been provided as appropriate.

David Baker and Alison Allden

August 2017

1. Interviewee profiles

The interviewees all had significant experience in senior roles within libraries, both in the UK and internationally. Several had been headhunted for their current post. All reported to a very senior member of the institution in which they worked. Their posts are typically seen as both academic and administrative / managerial, though the UK libraries are more obviously regarded as central services and not academic units. All the interviewees were attracted by the opportunities and challenges that working in a different country and another culture would bring. One had prior knowledge of the place to which they moved because of family connections there. While all the roles focused on the library, one had a more significant portfolio across the institution in their current role. All the libraries were significant operations with national and international reputations and status.

The interviews provided helpful insights, enabling us to compare the position of libraries and librarians across the UK, Germany, USA, Hong Kong, and Australasia, based on the interviewees' experiences 'at home and away'. The observations about current leadership issues and the value of leadership development in these different countries were described, together with comparisons of the role of professional support organisations analogous to SCONUL in the development of senior librarians.

The interviewees explored the issues of leadership in the differing national cultures and the professional and personal challenges they faced when moving abroad. It was therefore possible from the interviews to glean advice on the opportunities and challenges of moving to library leadership roles abroad, either from or to the UK.

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2. Status of the library and librarians

There was a perception from some that the status of both the library and the librarian in an academic context was generally more valued in other countries. The expectation that the librarian would have a PhD or higher degree in librarianship or related disciplines was more prevalent abroad, particularly in the US. The library also tended to be associated more closely with the academic organisational structures in some of the countries represented whereas in the UK it is increasingly seen as one of the service departments.

Quote 1
While it is unwise to over-generalise about the significance of the move and the differences between the UK and overseas experience the sense is that the library retains its status as 'mission critical' in Australasia.

Quote 2
The librarian is an officer of the university. There is no single view of how the library is perceived within the institution, though it is generally held in high regard. The university is very generous with funding and the interviewee has been able to fund a whole range of new initiatives, including digital developments such as a digital scholarship lab. [Hong Kong]

Quote 3
Librarians in the US don't [always] have as much status as in the UK. Librarians report to their deans who then delegate that responsibility to an administrator. In consequence, librarians must fight for access to their president or their provost because of these attempts to delegate the library responsibility down the chain. Because of this, in some cases at least, the librarian has a diminishing voice within the academic community. The successful people are those who are expanding their roles. For example, in the US, the Dean of Libraries at the University of Illinois sits on the Deans' Council and was Acting Provost for several months. Librarians' skills in project and financial management come to the fore in these situations.

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> *Quote 4*
>
> There is not much difference in perceptions of the library from the top table between the UK and the States. The library is often left to the second layer down [in the UK] and the CEOs do not get involved in any real way. But they do take advantage of the positive view of the library by the students; 'our students love our library' is the general perception. The [CEO] is very proud of the new library at [location], but doesn't get it in terms of the collections… [They have] misperceptions at that level: they don't have to have the detail; they don't make many connections with the library, only with journals and research, but there is a lot more going on in terms of the library doing support for research and other areas.

Traditional library territory (e.g. learning space) is increasingly being provided by other services. In the UK, there is a trend towards combined services, incorporating the library, to support student learning and the student experience. This has inevitably led, in some cases, to dilution of the senior university librarian role. However, the distancing of the librarian from the most senior layers of the university leadership is also seen in other countries.

In some areas, the library is seen as less relevant to academic endeavour than previously.

> *Quote 5*
>
> The library [in Germany] remains a distinct department but there are some changes. Since 2002 it has been possible to apply for funding from the equivalent of the research council to encourage closer working and mergers with the IT / Computing Centre.

> *Quote 6*
>
> The library [in Australasia] is valued as transformational in the increasingly digital environment. So far there is not a sense of libraries going down significantly in profile in this context although there have been a number of converged services that bring libraries and other student services together, which brings opportunities and challenges.

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Quote 7

There is now a sense at some places that new building and learning hubs are beyond the control of the library. The image of the library and what it means is no longer so clear. Do librarians still have a role? This is questioned.

Quote 8

It is notable that the library has lost the natural and life sciences – i.e. their professors no longer go to the library and therefore their support for the library is largely lost. They find it hard to explain or appreciate what the library now is other than the organisation that looks after the licensing of resources and provides space for students to study.

Quote 9

Achieving and maintaining a strong reporting line is indicative of the increasing challenge for the librarian to remain at a high strategic level. Changes at the top may provide opportunity for conversations around the positioning of the library and its reporting line. It tends to be seen as part of professional services and part of that executive management group. It is less common for the librarian to be part of the university executive board.

Quote 10

In Australasia it has been noticeable over recent years that there is increasingly demanding government policy and red tape. This has resulted in an expansion of the executive-level positions with multiple DVCs, PVCs and DPVCs. This may mean twelve or more round the executive table and as a result the librarian has often been pushed down. This contrasts with the historic role of the librarian who would once have been treated as a full professor.

Quote 11

The library is 'placed differently' within professional services. In the US, the library is typically part of the academic portfolio, with the university librarian reporting to the provost. That is the norm in the States, with at least 75–80% of libraries being part of the academic portfolio. Some library staff even have faculty status, or at least academic staff status.

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It was suggested that librarians should work collaboratively rather than try to preserve territory.

Quote 12

It is vital that library leadership demonstrates open collaborative leadership or you can be sidelined without it.

Quote 13

In the UK, it used to be more difficult to get collaboration than in the US. But people are now much less concerned about sharing and collaboration, at least in the US. The lead has been taken by government agencies in the UK, whereas in the US it is more driven by the American entrepreneurial spirit.

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3. Policy and culture

The impact of externally driven policy on libraries was mentioned in several contexts beyond the UK, especially Germany and Australasia. This is frequently the result of politically and economically driven agendas that are changing the way higher education is positioned nationally. Most significantly, this is creating the need for a much more business-oriented approach to management, moving the library away from the academic culture of the university.

Quote 14
One driver of change is the development of the campus environment. In this case the level of investment is not the major concern but the speed of response [in] improving the student experience [is]. This has to be set against investment in the research infrastructure. [Australasia]

Quote 15
The impact of rankings [has resulted in] a further drive in the push for efficiency and the use of benchmarking to assist with this… data-driven and evidence-based responses to external pressures are key. [Australasia]

Quote 16
There was the need to build business capability as the government was pushing universities to become more business-like. In the UK, it is necessary to unlearn this approach and avoid overly managerial speak. There is still the sense that a more intellectual conversation, which is characteristic of a traditional university culture, is what is expected. In some respects, the business drive in [Australasia] went too far and lost the essence of what a university is. It is therefore important to lead within the culture of the country and the institution that you are working in.

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Quote 17

There is a need to understand the changes and develop appropriate responses, but this will depend on the university. For example, for teaching and learning, the development of MOOCs and teaching repositories may be demanded, while for research-led universities it may be that library collaborations are key to sharing resources and the management of research data.

Policy influences provide only one of the distinguishing features of the various national contexts. The influence of different national cultures was also commented on by interviewees. Part of these cultural differences revolved around difficulties over language and understanding. The nuance of 'English' as spoken in different countries needs to be recognised; as does the lack of language proficiency as a barrier to movement where English is not spoken. Limited knowledge of the local language may result in ineffectual management or poor leadership impact.

Quote 18

Some UK colleagues have had to address both the difference in the culture of universities and the language issues when moving abroad, and within Europe there may be these difficulties too.

Quote 19

The problem with poor language skills at a senior level is the motivation of staff if you are unable to communicate with them.

Quote 20

Always when you go to new places I would stress that you should listen to people first.

Quote 21

Always observe before you speak and avoid making assumptions overtly!

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The demands on library leadership identified by the interviewees were noticeably different in the several countries. These included: response to business drivers, the prevalence of bureaucracy and more committees, differences in the way decisions are taken and varying levels of funding and accountability. Because of such differences it may be necessary to adapt leadership styles, together with vocabulary and negotiating / reporting methods.

There was common advice to listen and absorb differences before making changes and voicing opinion on how to do things differently.

Quote 22
Globalisation and the economic situation impact on the global information environment. This is both in the sense of what resources are available and expected, but also the financial pressures of the exchange rate. Furthermore, the international nature of higher education, including the movement of staff and students is an important influence.

Quote 23
The university librarian has a lot of autonomy in the US. But universities are risk-averse. There are sensitive issues, for example regarding funding allocations, but it is about asking advice rather than the permission of senior management. In the UK, there are a lot of rules and regulations around governance and even management via committee. Working in the UK it was necessary to learn a lot about the frameworks, but once it was understood how the process worked and knew the people, they were left to get on with it, having established trust. Timing is important, though, in terms of when to take decisions.

Quote 24
Academic libraries are revered in both the US and the UK. There is a deep respect for the library as institution, but the library is everyone's second-favourite cause. They love the library but they don't always walk the talk. The library doesn't always have a seat at the table. But in major Russell Group universities the library can be a real jewel. This is less likely in the US.

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Quote 25

In the US in general people are more willing to take risks. In the oldest Russell Group institutions, there are deeply ingrained traditions and these become embedded in people and the way things should be, whereas in the US there is not the same corporate memory and therefore more can be done to change things, though in terms of departmental libraries in Russell Group universities, the UK was ahead in terms of integrating the libraries.

Quote 26

The British colonial history [in Hong Kong] means that structures, titles, and roles appear to be much as in the UK, though there is an increasing American influence. Local and regional preferences are also taking hold, for example four-year undergraduate programmes. In sum, the position is that the organisation is structurally like the Anglo-American model (for example in the committee set-up) but culturally very different.

Quote 27

The approach is hierarchical: the role of the leader is very much respected, as is seniority more generally. The Confucian approach of creating harmony is of paramount importance. There is also a strong emphasis through culture on saving face, and a strong tendency to push the decision-making up to the senior ranks rather than for it to be done by middle management.

Quote 28

The university comes across as much more ambitious than those in the UK. It is better funded, more global in outlook and is building international links – notably with China, North America and the Pacific Rim. International exposure is seen as being the key. Asia is very dynamic, picking up a lot from the experience of interactions across the globe.

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Quote 29

The approach in the UK is much more bureaucratic, with an emphasis on papers and committees. The hierarchy of permissions required before anything could be done in the library was something of a culture shock. The explanation given by university staff was that the committee structure gives the librarian protection when a (difficult) decision is taken and that they are not blamed directly in consequence. This was not the interviewee's experience, however, so more recently they have just taken the decision and the blame.

Quote 30

It takes time to get your feet under the table in a different culture. In the UK, for example, within the committee framework, you have to prepare papers in advance, etc. It takes time to learn – who you go to and so on. It is sometimes years before some things become plain.

Quote 31

In the States, the drive for academic status gives a vitality to the library, with lots of new options being put forward. But this is less good for doing the day-to-day work because the library staff are being academics. Perhaps the situation has gone too far in the States with faculty status for librarians: 'the pendulum will swing back'. On the other hand, in the UK, where library staff do not have faculty status, it is hard to motivate people to consider new ways of working; they just want to do their jobs.

Quote 32

Being seen as professional versus academic is a major difference between the UK and the States, which leads to questions of what peer group do you belong to? But otherwise there is not much difference between the two countries' HE systems when it comes to libraries. Deans of Libraries in the States would be more hard-nosed, fighting for their budgets. In the UK, where they are regarded as one of the professional services, librarians seem to be less hard-nosed and more collaborative. There is an expectation that the library will be supported in response to 'pretty please' requests for resources.

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Quote 33

Cross-institutional local / regional collaboration [in Hong Kong] is stronger than in the UK and there is generous government funding for shared initiatives such as a shared ILS. The university libraries' consortium has a full-time manager. Training, conferences, teaching and learning in information science, and traditional inter-library benchmarking are carried out by the co-operative.

Quote 34

Comparing US and UK experiences of university librarianship, the work is similar enough the same to make it doable and feasible but different enough to be interesting.

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4. The decision to move abroad

In many cases the move was the result of approaches by headhunters rather than necessarily a pre-formulated plan. However, the move was considered to provide for a career-enhancing opportunity. More than one interviewee referred to moving to work abroad as a personal and professional adventure. The opportunity provided by an international career move was in many ways the fulfilment of ambition that might otherwise have been realised by a move upwards, as explored in 'The view from above' interviews. All reported that moving, including internationally, enhanced and speeded up career development and its trajectory. Several interviewees commented on the need for supportive friends and family. Cultural differences in terms of willingness and ability to move were also noted. It was generally accepted that many skills and much experience gained at a high level are transferrable even if there are then cultural and other differences to deal with.

> *Quote 35*
> The move to [country] provided a career-enhancing opportunity which broke free from the UK mould. Region, class, mission group, and previous career constraints and limitations are not so binding when moving abroad; it can provide the chance to go up the career ladder and even fast track that, if ambitious and ready for change.

> *Quote 36*
> The advantages [of moving abroad] are that no one pre-judges you based on what you did before. It is liberating!

> *Quote 37*
> I decided to explore it as an adventure. It is a chance to move out of the box and provides a huge benefit and opportunity to expand your knowledge and experience.

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Quote 38

It is the combination of being abroad and moving to the right place that is attractive in career terms, i.e. a prominent place that is prestigious rather than a small and unknown university.

Quote 39

Accepting a job abroad is an adventure. It is perhaps a mistake to over-research once you have accepted a job abroad; just be confident you have experience that you can share.

Quote 40

It may be helpful to have visited other countries and built up some awareness. Look at the political and policy environment and have an idea about the institutional landscape and the differentiation between countries.

Quote 41

The experience of working in another country and a very different culture has been a fabulous training. Every time that you move to another environment you examine what is the same and what is different. I had a mentor who talked about 'tools in the kitbag'. There is always more than one solution, but internationally, it's like doing it on steroids.

Quote 42

The experience of working in another country and a very different culture has been transformational. It provides a different perspective on professional work, notably providing a strategic and global approach. The interviewee has been able to develop a wider helicopter view of work.

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Quote 43

Working for so long in the UK meant that it was very challenging to work in an environment that is not your cultural home. You don't really appreciate that until you have been here for a while. Being monolingual can be difficult, though in the current environment it is possible to live on 'Brit privilege'. There are nevertheless increasing expectations of speaking other languages.

Quote 44

There is a definite benefit of international experience bringing in new ideas (though this would be the same in any job where the librarian is an external appointment), for example, consortial work; the faculty system; external promotion. I am used to going out and presenting so can act as an ambassador for the university.

Quote 45

Coming to the UK: the advice is to be ready for the bureaucracy, which can be daunting at first. But put yourself forward straight away; emphasise your different background and skill set, and do not be shy about that. Maximise the benefits of being on the professional services group where you will sit regularly with other senior university officers.

Quote 46

Americans are more mobile and therefore more likely to move between universities. There is less willingness to move in the UK. Family and community ties are strong and people are less likely to move. People move up more rapidly if and when they move.

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5. Professional support and development

Managing an international profile and global engagement is both necessary and rewarding. The need to create networks in the new country too is an important priority.

> *Quote 47*
>
> There are some important criteria:
>
> - be open minded
> - listen to others
> - be a good communicator, not just in public events but with small groups and encourage people to explain and talk
> - get people to prove how good they are.

> *Quote 48*
>
> Be confident that your professional skills are transferable, but don't compare and reference your previous experience over much.

> *Quote 49*
>
> Take your networks with you and work hard to develop new networks. At first you can feel quite isolated and it is helpful when your previous UK networks are still there for support.

> *Quote 50*
>
> I did not do specific leadership courses. It is very much down to the sort of personality and the wish to engage and improve, otherwise courses won't help.

For a number of interviewees, the completion of an MBA had been especially valuable.

> *Quote 51*
>
> In my case my MBA has served me well, as has attending a Harvard leadership programme for CIOs. It was necessary increasingly to put forward business cases and argue them in those terms.

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> *Quote 52*
>
> I did an MBA and as a result still look at management literature. Every morning over breakfast I scan reports, for example from McKinsey and Harvard Business Reviews. These help to ensure that I am able to think out of the box. I often save material and alerts to Evernote to be able to pull it back when I want to.

> *Quote 53*
>
> The best preparation for the new role was the part-time MBA at Warwick. That was critical in terms of giving confidence to be a leader.

In certain contexts, academic qualifications remained important.

> *Quote 54*
>
> It is more important to have academic qualifications [in Hong Kong] as a librarian than in the UK. Staff typically have a master's and some have PhDs. It is thought essential to have a master's in librarianship or a PhD (in related subject areas).

> *Quote 55*
>
> Be a generalist but have something to say (e.g. on a specialism). Having a doctorate doesn't necessarily help, at least if it is in LIS. But some study, where you can get across the institution as a result is good. But some Deans of Libraries in the States do require a doctorate. A doctorate does give you peer status; you can show that you have gone through the same mill as the academics.

> *Quote 56*
>
> In the Russell Group and its international equivalents, it is important to have academic qualifications as university librarian. It 'eases the way' in terms of academic acceptance of the librarian, but it is far from universal in terms of holding such qualifications. In the UK, it is less important than in other countries such as the US, but wherever the post, employers are more open to looking at other credentials, but a degree beyond the MLS is important.

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The majority of those interviewed had benefited from mentoring and coaching and recommended it at least when first establishing themselves in a leadership position abroad. In some cases, there was good-quality leadership training and support available, but this was not uniform. Provision varied from the individual university or a group of institutions to professional bodies.

> *Quote 57*
> It is important to have one or more mentors: it is useful to be 'adopted'. Gatherings of women together to talk and be part of a network or group have been very useful. Lunch and dinner clubs with other leaders (not just from the university) are also valuable. Either find a group to join or create one.

In some cultures, where the view of the library within the institution was more traditional, the opportunities for further career development were limited.

> *Quote 58*
> There are probably no real opportunities to move out of the library. There is a traditional view of the library and the librarian. In some places, there is still an academic as university librarian and this can be frustrating. There is also little or no convergence, though some librarians report to a CIO.

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6. SCONUL and other (library) professional bodies

The development programmes and activities provided by SCONUL were recognised and appreciated, although there was concern that it was dissipated by the fact that SCONUL does so much across so many agendas. It was also commented that the numbers of institutions involved across the UK was helpful, creating a viable critical mass. It was clear that SCONUL was envied elsewhere, although there are some other organisations supporting the professional librarian.

> *Quote 59*
> I admire what the UK has in SCONUL. The German Library Association still needs to find a way to drive the profession and move organisations forward.

> *Quote 60*
> There is a middle management programme run by the AURORA Institute, which has recently held its annual Emerging Leaders Institute with an agenda particularly focused on preparing leaders for an uncertain world using VUCA (Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, Ambiguous). This seems to be particularly important for emerging leaders at this time.

> *Quote 61*
> The Council of Australian University Libraries (CAUL) and AURORA are also looking at leadership support for senior and deputy-level staff with its more limited resources than SCONUL, but potentially would be interested in collaboration with SCONUL.

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Quote 62

A good organisation is LIBER. It fosters leadership at an international level and provides opportunities for senior leaders in libraries to work together in a group of not more than 20. This provides a fantastic opportunity to share problems and exchange experience. While this is good at a national level it can be better at an international level.

Quote 63

SCONUL does a lot (too much perhaps). It has a breadth of activities and members, but at times the involvement of members is less universal, whereas CAUL served a smaller number of universities and therefore could be more inclusive at all levels. The Canadian Association of Research Libraries likewise does a lot! However, the problem is that often work is done by groups that can't be inclusive and therefore there are those who do not feel engaged or who can't get involved for whatever reason. The result is that there are those on the inside and those on the outside, which is an issue that has to be constantly addressed by all associations.

Quote 64

SCONUL should run a programme (with Research Libraries UK?) like the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) programme. That programme made a big difference to the interviewee's career. Programmes like the ARL one helped the interviewee to get promoted. It should be noted that the ARL programme is mostly funded by the libraries.

Quote 65

There is no Leadership Foundation for HE equivalent, though one university library offers a one-week intensive action learning course for managers. There remains a big issue about management training and a need to develop professional librarians in areas such as leadership, team-building, etc. Change management is a challenge: a change manager has recently been appointed across the libraries involved in the shared ILS project to lead process re-engineering as part of the project.

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7. Advice to an intending university librarian

The interviewees had much advice to give to intending university librarians in general as well as in relation to moving abroad. It is important to note that as well as the professional and cultural / social dimensions of moving to a different country, the interviewees stressed the need to take account of personal and administrative differences, including elements such as the impact on the post-holder's family and alternative approaches to tax matters. Having said that, as noted earlier, much of the advice given would be valuable to those seeking a straight promotion to university librarian in the same country as well as an appointment to such as role abroad. In this context, significant advance preparation, detailed analysis of differences and regional variations, taking time to make moves and changes, building networks and alliances, identifying and maximising opportunities presented or made, and being flexible and adaptable were widely seen as the key attributes for success.

Quote 66
Get a good tax accountant on both sides! Listen, listen, listen! There is no harm in holding back – you don't have to weigh in straight away. Take the time to get to know the people that you are working with and to gain their trust, but don't take so long that you lose the freshness.

Quote 67
It is a transformative experience to work abroad, but you need to know that you have a lot of support from your family and that the university you are going to is open to a global approach. A lot of the senior librarians are from elsewhere. And some have moved elsewhere, for example to Australia. You need to go with your eyes open. It can be tough, especially because of the personal and cultural dimensions. Enjoy the experience of international work and life: it is not just about the job.

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Quote 68

Give yourself time, though that is hard if the university doesn't give you time. You have to try and see things from other people's perspective. Your assumptions may not be valid because of the cultural assumptions that you are making, for example, people being silent in meetings. I had an external facilitator to team build in my present role as a result of cultural differences, but it took time. Mentoring is a crucial element in senior staff development in general and moving to a different culture. This is happening more now.

Quote 69

Moving to the States you will have to be ready for the idea that library staff are considered faculty. How the library is placed within the university means that there are tenure track questions even for library staff: six years and you are out if you don't get tenure.

Quote 70

Institutions feel under great financial pressure, especially in the UK, so financial management is increasingly important. The same is true in the US. Then there is the political aspect of the role – keeping everybody happy… you have to be a good communicator and networker. Building relationships is crucial. There is an increasing emphasis on fundraising, both in the US and the UK.

Quote 71

Advice for the leadership journey: it is often not what you know but who – build your network so that your name can be put forward. You need to be involved in associations. Getting on a leadership programme is crucial (see also above): 80% of people who have gone on the ARL programmes have gone on to be chiefs. Consortial work also helps you to get known.

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Quote 72

Look for opportunities to expand your knowledge – serve on university-wide committees. Don't complain about things – volunteer to take things on. This gives you a broader experience provided that you do a good job and are therefore asked again.

Quote 73

You should be following some of the groups that are doing research in LIS; and getting out there, talking to think tanks, etc. Would it be worth writing a book about it? How to be the leader for your place and time will depend a lot, since contextual leadership is key. Being flexible is crucial; you can't decide on a particular type of leadership and go for that. Managing upwards will be important, as will transparency – be honest.

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8. Future strategies for libraries and librarians

As in 'The view from above' work, the interviewees were asked to reflect on how university librarians should position themselves and their libraries to best effect in the future. The results of this questioning gave a rich picture of the future challenges and opportunities, with many themes akin to those identified in 'The view from above' work. All the interviewees felt that there was much that was already established upon which new strategies could be built, especially in relation to support for student learning. Digital developments were seen to offer significant opportunities for the university library to remain central and vital.

There was also recognition that work is still needed to raise the strategic profile, most notably in ensuring recognition of the significant impact of the library on the research endeavour. The university library's support for research both now and more importantly into the future was emphasised in a number of the discussion with the interviewees, not least in regard to the comments made about the library within the university and the librarian's role. However, it was clear that in many contexts – as was the case with the first phase of this project ('The view from above') – the library needed to increase its profile significantly in terms of support for research.

Above all, the continued and continuing development of strategic leadership skills and embedding these in adaptive and agile leadership, were seen as being key imperative for university librarians in and of the future.

> *Quote 74*
> The library in the future will experience many challenges, including highly political ones, as well as those around staff recruitment and retention and type of staff skills and new roles. People are working hard to embed the library in research workflow; digital humanities library roles are beginning to take off. There are already challenges regarding library space and its redevelopment. Remote storage will help.

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Quote 75

The library as place is well done – especially for students – and that will not go away as an important element of provision and a key justification for the university library's continued existence. The next area where libraries will make their mark will be in support for research: librarians will teach the future academics how to do research and how to write papers. Already, some librarians go on the grant application much as the academics do. The States is probably further ahead currently, but it is also now happening in the UK. Medical work is probably the best example to date, where clinical librarians are included on medical teams.

Quote 76

The library is not about 'business as usual'. Always at the top of the leadership response should be communication and creativity in strategic thinking. This is about making time to look further forward rather than just plan within the current context. Look for ideas from different places, for example IT and business. Explore views across different disciplines and seek to embrace technology in different ways. The library leadership has value to add and needs to know enough and have the right conversations.

Quote 77

Digital library developments continue to be important. Libraries have tried to differentiate themselves from others with regard to special collections, but there remain issues: distributed systems; updating; standardisation. Digital Public Library of America type developments in the UK should be developed, with universities at the heart of initiatives. Support for Open Access (OA) is also going to be key, but a lot of the funding for OA is at risk.

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Quote 78
People know the direction that they want to go in, with an emphasis on research support as part of the changing role of the research library. Also support for teaching and learning in the digital sphere is becoming increasingly important. The library [in Hong Kong] is fundamentally digital now – more so than in the UK – so there is a growing struggle to define new roles for the library staff. However, the university librarian role is likely to change less than in the UK. Originally the university (and therefore the library) was very siloed; there is now a move to a more partnership approach within the university. Many of the levers and pressures that are in the UK such as the Teaching Excellence Framework or National Student Survey are not present so there is more flexibility in terms of what can be done.

Quote 79
There also needs to be a strategic regard for values around the provision and curation of information. Underpinning the library provision is an expectation that everyone has the right of access to information. There may be those with different needs and priorities. For the library, constant outreach and engagement of users is key to ensuring success.

Quote 80
The library in the future will have an important role to play in the management of knowledge – the whole lifecycle. All bets are off on the old-style approach to librarianship. Librarians should be striving to be recognised as partners in the academic exercise. You need to be aware of all the technical tools; you can no longer be a deep subject specialist. There are lots of skills – preservation, curation, legal, etc. – that can all be brought into play.

Quote 81
The library needs to be much more embedded in the research stream, etc. And there will need to be much more marketing of assets – collections, spaces, etc. – in a significantly more dynamic and outward-facing environment than before.

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Quote 82

Leadership is one of the biggest issues: how to turn leadership into something else that is understood at all levels. It is challenging throughout our institutions, moving away from command and control. It is not just about consensus management but it is about adaptive leadership and innovation. It is pushing through this agenda despite the perceived risks about radical change.

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Appendices

A1. Letter to interviewees

SCONUL Leadership Task Force

SCONUL's Leadership Task and Finish Group has been working to support new and existing library Directors in their development of the skills and attributes required to lead the academic library through a period of sector-wide change. As part of this work Alison Allden OBE and David Baker have been commissioned by SCONUL to explore perceptions of university leadership about the strategic influence of the library director within their organisation, using data from these interviews to inform leadership development.

A first phase of 'The view from above' work with UK higher education leaders is now complete and we have been commissioned to develop this further by bringing an international perspective and dimension to our understanding of the strategic impact of library leadership. Would you be prepared to contribute to this 'view from beyond'? This would involve an interview by me. Information gathered from the interview will be anonymized and added to the data collected during the view from above phase.

The interview would take about an hour of your time for a conversation about the following:

- perceived differences in the views of university leadership in relation to the academic library director and the strategic position of the library within the university

- exploring your experience of a move and perceived similarities and differences in how library leaders working in academic libraries are perceived

- your views about library leadership development in the context of continuous and rapid organisational, legislative and technological change, particularly as affecting the library within the organisation

- the benefits of an international experience and the advice you would offer to those library Directors interested in making a move of this kind

- your views on the structures supporting library directors, the differences in the support from sector organisations.

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If you are happy to be interviewed please would you confirm first point of contact for communication and the most effective channel for the interview to take place: Skype, conference call, etc., and I will confirm these details to our consultants who will be in touch directly to schedule an interview.

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A2   Consultant biographies

Professor David Baker

David Baker, MA, MMus, MLS, PhD, MBA, Hon FCILIP, FCILIP, FCMI, FRCO, FRSA has over 35 years' experience in higher education, including as Principal and Chief Executive of the University of St Mark and St John ('Marjon'), Plymouth (2003 – 2009) and as Deputy Chair of the UK's Joint Information Systems Committee (Jisc) (2008 – 2012). While Principal at Marjon he was Chair of GuildHE and Chair of Universities South West. Before moving to Plymouth, David was in turn Chief University Librarian, Director of Information Services and, from 1998–2003, Pro-Vice-Chancellor at the University of East Anglia. He is an alumnus of the Leadership Foundation's Top Management Programme. He has held a Chair in Strategic Information Management from the University of St Mark and St John since 2006. David led the university through the process of gaining its own taught degree awarding powers (TDAP). He chaired the Transition Board that turned Jisc from a public to a private sector organisation.

David has written widely in the field of library and information science (LIS) with 20 monographs and over 100 articles and book chapters to his credit, editing the peer-reviewed *Journal of Information and Learning Science* along with two major monograph series in the field of library and information provision. He has spoken at numerous conferences, led workshops and seminars and has undertaken consultancy work in most countries in the European Union, along with significant work in Ethiopia, Kuwait, Nigeria, South Africa and the Sudan and for organisations such as the Association of Commonwealth Universities, the British Council and the World Bank.

David has led a number of large technology-based projects in the LIS sector, both in relation to digital and hybrid library development and content creation for teaching and learning. His other key professional interest and expertise has been in the field of human resources, where he has been active in major national projects as well as providing mentoring and coaching to a number of senior managers within UK HE. He also has significant experience of working at CEO level with universities and colleges. In recent years, he has been employed by a number of higher education institutions as their lead consultant on gaining

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taught degree awarding powers, including Regent's University London, the British School of Osteopathy and the Anglo-European University College, Bournemouth.

David is also a Principal Consultant with SERO-HE of Sheffield, having been involved in several national-level Library and Information Services projects within higher education as well as major work with Russell Group and other universities on the development of library and information provision, research support and online and distance learning development. He is a member of the boards of governors of the Universities of Northampton and South Wales, and is Chair of the Board of Governors of Trinity Academy, Halifax.

Alison Allden OBE

Alison Allden, BA, MSc, FBCS, MCLIP, MIFA, offers a wealth of experience and know-how gained from senior experience in UK and international provision of higher education and the increasing focus on student experience. She recently retired from her role as the Chief Executive of the Higher Education Statistics Agency, which she held for six years. This charitable company collects data and creates an information base for UK universities, for use by the public, the universities themselves, students and policy makers. Prior to that Alison was on the senior executive of Bristol University as Deputy Registrar and Director of Information Services, with responsibility for all the student-facing services, including student administration, the library and IT, the residences, student welfare, sport and the Students' Union. Before that she was Director of IT at Warwick University and moved into the university sector in 1993 as Director of Computing for Goldsmiths College. Prior to that she worked in IT in the public sector, including in national museums, and began her career as a professional archaeologist.

In recent years she has sat on various national committees, including the Jisc Board supporting IT across the HE sector, concerned with data and information management, and the ESRC Research Resources Board and AHRC ICT initiative. Currently she is on the Board of Northumbria University and the Board of Regent's University London. She has also served as a school governor for two schools. She recently became a member of the Bar Standards Board. She is the external member of Cambridge University's Strategic Information Services Committee following a major review. Alison is a Principal Consultant with SERO-HE of Sheffield, and has undertaken various library and information services consultancies as well as providing coaching and mentoring for senior staff in these professional areas.

In the 2016 New Year's Honours List, Alison was awarded an OBE for services to Higher Education.

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