

**AGENDA DOCUMENT 7**

**Subject: FOPL Executive Director’s Report**

**Date: May 31, 2016**

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FOPL continues to make great progress on our priorities this year as the “one voice for public libraries” in Ontario. We do this through:

* Marketing
* Advocacy and influencing the various levels of government
* Research and development

We do these through our part time staff as well as the work of our board and task forces (The task forces include Marketing, Advocacy, R&D and CELUPL). We also work closely to ensure that our efforts and communications are aligned and in synch with all of our key associates in our sector (CULC, SOLS, OLS-North, and OLA/OPLA/OLBA) and associate members like AMPLO, ARUPLO, and others.

**LOOKING FORWARD**

Our dream about a major marketing push province-wide for public libraries in Ontario to promote our value and impact is excitingly about to come into play!!! This is the number one priority of public libraries in Ontario as decided at the Libraries 2020 Summit and confirmed at Libraries 2025 Summit in 2015. At this Board Meeting we will be sharing with you’re the results of our planning and our plans for approval and investment. This has been developed in cooperation with SOLS, OLA, CULC, and OLS-North. Our goals is to have this program self-sustaining within two years.

* **Marketing Campaign**: The Board is now engaging in a decision to invest in a major province-wide marketing campaign on the value and impact of libraries in Ontario based on the research we accomplished in 2014/15. I hope to engage other private sector funders to enlarge the project based on the government’s vote of confidence. To summarize how we got here we used a funding grant from SOLS/OLSN to do a census of public library e-presences (websites, social media and social networking). This will be a critical channel for marketing libraries across our province. We have a full collection of public library taglines from their websites. We have reviewed the research on major public library "value" branding campaigns in Canada and the U.S. We have focus group results and interviews with key internal and external stakeholders including librarians, library staff, library board members *and* municipal administrators. Within the last month we did person-on-the-street interviews on proposed taglines for this campaign funded by SOLS and led by me. I’ll be sharing this process at our Board Meeting.
* **Statistics**: We are almost ready to distribute the 2001-2014 data set analyses in June! This was approved at your last board meeting and funded by FOPL. I now have the data in-house and we will be able to do cohort analyses on the fly for members. Combined with our recent 2015 public opinion poll of Ontarians attitudes towards public libraries and how they’ve changed from our 2003, 2006, and 2010 polls we now have a good and clear data for strategic planning for us and our members.
* **Training & Development**: We continue to offer webinars with one next week as well as planned ones this summer for the marketing campaign and the tagline launch. 2 Online library board training modules are released with 3 more on the way in LearnHQ. These are awaiting the development of videos by OLBA.
* **Communicating Results**: Investing time and effort in making sure our members get value out of our research through press releases, tweets, blog postings, webinars, and meetings. Monica is doing a good job populating our Twitter feeds with more to come. We now have FOPL accounts on all major social media in preparation for our marketing push. Follow us on Facebook or Twitter (@foplnews)
* **Lobbying**: We will continue to intensify our lobbying efforts with more ministries (sometimes opportunistically) as well as address funding issues and threats (PLOG, e-books, hubs, culture, legislation, e-resources, AODA, etc.)

Each of these activities supports one or more of FOPL’s strategic pillars. Members have input and priority access. Our association is led by a volunteer board equally balanced between library CEOs and board members. Progress is being made! Every member enjoyed a great return on investment for their investment in FOPL and the efforts of their staff and volunteer Board.

I have shared or will be sharing our activities with:

* First Nations Network Meeting
* CLA & CELUPL
* OLA Super Conference
* Saskatchewan LA
* Quebec Public Libraries Association Rendezvous
* Various library boards and communities including Guelph, Mississauga, and Hamilton
* Alberta and BC

On a collaborative basis our activities are now showing fruit at costs that would be unaffordable to individual library systems. The return on investment for membership in FOPL has never been stronger! When I started at FOPL almost 3 years ago, we asked ourselves, “What do we need to know?” We need to know a lot before we make an investment in a province-wide marketing campaign and we have made great progress. We now have:

Listed below are some of the highlights (this is not a full list of my activities) of the projects that I have led this year.

**HIGHLIGHTS**

1. **Government Relations:** We have made good progress over the summer.

* FOPL was consulted the development of the *first* CULTURE Strategy for Ontario. We provided advice and data on public libraries as culture hubs. This is a cabinet level initiative and I am assured that our research will be quoted in the cabinet report. We made a formal submission to the Task Force.
* FOPL, at our initiative, was consulted the development of the *first* COMMUNITY HUBS Strategy for Ontario. We provided a submission with detailed advice and recommendations on public libraries as culture hubs. This is a cabinet level initiative and our perspectives were quoted in the cabinet report.
* FOPL submitted a letter to the review commission on the Municipal Act and other legislation.
* FOPL submitted a letter to OLG Inc. (Ontario Lotteries & Trillium funding) and funding for libraries and their current major TV and media ad campaign highlighting their investments in libraries. We received a response that they cannot fund libraries and see the flow-through to municipalities.
* FOPL submitted a detailed letter and recommendations to the Minister of Culture about the sunsetting of the e-resources funding. OLA submitted a parallel letter to the Minister of Education. Many members submitted letters from their libraries and boards.
* FOPL, with OLA, wrote a submission to the Minister of Finance to influence the 2016 provincial budget process. Public Libraries were mentioned in the budget in many context this time which is great. We analyzed the 2016/17 budget and provided comments and advice to members.

1. **Strategic Planning**: The Board met with an external consultant and began the process of updating and renewing the FOPL strategic plan. This will be a key focus on early 2016 and our continued execution of our plan(s). The draft plan is now out for comment with members.
2. **Webinars, Symposia and Training:** FOPL continues to offer free webinars to its members and archive them on the FOPL.ca website for viewing and listening at any time. There is a ten part series on influence and advocacy as well as sessions on Statistics and CASL. In summer 2015 we offered three detailed webinars that were recorded. These included:

* FOPL Offered 5 sessions at **OLA Super Conference** on statistics and measurements, advocacy, and marketing as well as participating in OLA Trustee Boot Camp and holding our Annual Business Meeting.
* **Public Opinion Poll**: We have recently done a major field survey of Ontarians about their attitudes towards public libraries in our province. We have received the reports and are analyzing them now with our task forces! We communicated these results through symposia, webinars, press releases and more – including ED presentations to local library boards and the Marketing Think Tank. This is the 4th poll done by FOPL and this poll was updated to modern times while respecting the older data context.
* **Public Library Statistics**: We continued our analysis of the Ontario Government’s 2001-2013 open data provided by all library systems in Ontario. Major reports based on 10 measurements will rank all libraries in Ontario on their operational measures and community engagement are expected in spring 2015. This is the very first time this has been done in Canada and shows leadership from FOPL. This summer we released over a dozen reports on the performance of Ontario’s public libraries from 1999-2013 to all members. We did a recorded webinar in August on this topic.
* **How to Use Stats**: We did a webinar on how to use these data in your strategic and operational planning.
* A great session on March 2nd that highlighted a n innovative partnership for young adult programming.

1. **Board Training**: The release of the first two modules of an online learning program for trustees using the SOLS LearnHQ environment has occurred. This project is a free modularized e-learning course/program that can be integrated into your board meetings, assigned as learning activities to orient board members to their roles, and provide contextual access to the resources of ‘One Place to Look’ and ‘Learning by Design’. 3 future modules are in development and will be released in the next 6 months. We highlighted this at the Trustee Boot Camp at OLA Super Conference 2016.
2. **Fundraising**: The good news is that we have been batting 1000 in the past 2 years having received every grant we applied for. Our OLCF miss is disappointing but we will address that project in future board decisions. We received funding from SOLS and OLS-North to complete the 2020 branding study and distributed these results. We received funding from the Culture Development Fund in partnership with OLA and OLBA to build advanced e-training and beyond for Ontario library board members. In January 2015 we confirmed another grant from the Ministry of Culture to continue our work on the analysis of the Ontario Public Library statistics collection. We consulted with the Ministry on the 3 year, $10 million Ontario Library Capacity Fund to support innovation in public libraries. Let’s hope our grantsmanship success continues in 2016 and beyond.
3. **Library Day at Queen’s Park (Nov. 25, 2015):** We worked closely with OLA and planned this large initiative as one of the lead organizations. Impact Public Affairs worked with us and OLA again. FOPL hosted the lunch for Queen’s Park invitees and delegates. There is a lot of follow through on the many meetings with senior staff and MPs generating questions in the legislature and more meetings over 2015-2016. Plans for 2016 autumn are to build deeper relationships with meetings throughout the fall.
4. **2020 Branding Project and Tagline development:** With special funding from the SOLS and the Libraries 2020 project FOPL engaged a consultant to study the branding, communication and marketing status of Ontario Public Libraries. We have received the Phase 1, 2, and Phase 3 reports and have distributed a final report to SOLS/OLS-North and our members. In Fall 2015 we engaged Overlaps Associates to brainstorm and focus group test a tagline for libraries and our marketing efforts specifically to focus on the value and impact of public libraries, the value of a library card with– aimed at teens and 18-40 year old targets. This is a key component of our marketing plan.
5. **Libraries 2025 Summit:** The executive directors of FOPL, OLA, SOLS, OLS-N and CULC accomplished a (second) Libraries 2025 Summit to repeat the success of the 2020 Summit that eventually delivered $18 million in additional public library funding. The date was spring 2015 (April 29-30) and the hotel was the Royal York and about 350 people attended this event. It was MC’d by Valerie Pringle! Next steps include a Libraries 2025 Track at OLA Super Conference, webinars and distributions to members. We have the results of this and have meet to communicate these priorities in the Spring of 2016.
6. **Legal:** We continue to get requests for our legal work on:
   1. **Canadian Anti-Spam Legislation Legal Opinion and Template Library Policy**
   2. **Access Copyright Canada issues**
   3. **E-Book issues:** We continue to participate and formally support the eBook fairness in pricing campaign and participate in meetings and communication.
7. **Library Association and Agency Cooperation and Coordination Meetings:** We continue to make great progress on coordinating with the other associations and agencies in Ontario that support the needs of public libraries. OLA, SOLS, OLS-N, CULC and FOPL meet at least quarterly and we make sure to harness our energy and funds to ensure the biggest impact for our sector. I also communicate, meet and coordinate with other bodies such as our CELUPL and associate members, AMPLO and ARUPLO. The executive director attends or sends reports to the SOLS Regional Trustee meetings. I believe that this has been a major shift in the framework of cooperation in this province and that it is acknowledged by our partners that it is better than ever.

Thank you to the FOPL Board for their support and leadership in their volunteer roles supporting our entire community. My personal thanks to FOPL’s executive assistant Monica Mixemong for her great work. We look forward to continue working with the Board and members! Monica and I are only committed to FOPL work for about 12 days per month each so progress isn’t as fast as we’d like but we are making progress.

Cheers,

Stephen

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*The Federation of Ontario Public Libraries is a non-profit with a mandate to benefit Ontario public libraries through advocacy, research, and marketing.*