

## Agenda Document 7

**Subject: FOPL Executive Director's Report**  
**Prepared by: Stephen Abram Executive Director**  
**Prepared for: Board Meeting March 27 2015**

For every Board meeting cycle I provide a report on FOPL activities but it hasn't been long at since our OLA Super Conference Report. So I am updating that report since we have new board members.

FOPL was very active and productive in 2014 and I am very excited by our upcoming deliverables in 2015. The membership investments in research, marketing and advocacy on a collaborative basis are showing fruit at costs that would be unaffordable to individual library systems. The return on investment for membership in FOPL has never been stronger!

### **HIGHLIGHTS**

In Spring 2015 members will see:

1. **Board Training:** The release of the first two modules of an online learning program for trustees using the SOLS LearnHQ environment. This project will be free e-learning 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.
2. **Public Opinion Poll:** We have recently done a major field survey of Ontarians about their attitudes towards public libraries in our province. We have designed this as a representative sample and oversampled first nations, Francophones and new Canadians to ensure enough data.
3. **Public Library Statistics:** We will continue our analysis of the Ontario Governments 2001-2013 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.
4. **Marketing Campaign:** Lastly, we are in the planning stages of a major province-wide marketing campaign on the value and impact of libraries in Ontario based on the research we accomplished in 2014.

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.

More detail follows . . .

Our major accomplishments in 2014 were in ten areas:

- **Fundraising**
- **A Day at Queen's Park (Nov. 26, 2014) and Election Follow-through**
- **Culture Development Fund Library Board Training**
- **FOPL Statistics Project based on Ontario Ministry of Culture Data Collection**
- **Branding and Marketing Research**
- **Ontario-wide Public Opinion Poll on public library perceptions and usage**
- **Libraries 2025 Summit Planning Team**
- **Canadian Anti-Spam Legislation Legal Opinion and Template Library Policy**
- **Webinars, Symposia and Training**
- **Library Association and Agency Cooperation and Coordination**

## **1. Fundraising**

The good news is that we are batting 1000 in 2014 having received every grant we applied for. We received funding from SLA 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 have 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 2015 with the OLCF and beyond.

Membership grew at FOPL this year and we make good progress with the members' investments in our efforts on their behalf.

## **2. Library Day at Queen's Park (Nov. 26, 2014) and Election Follow-through**

FOPL sent formal congratulatory letters to appropriate MPPs and letters on the appointments to key cabinet portfolios for Minister and parliamentary assistants. We have met with many of them as the Legislature came into session.

Impact Public Affairs (Toronto Office) and Huw Williams was engaged by OLA and FOPL to organize a Day at Queen's Park on Nov. 25-6, 2014 with targeted meetings with the new government and senior civil servants. Impact Public Affairs Ottawa operations organized the very successful Day on the Hill in Ottawa for CLA that focused the messaging, trained the 'librarian' and 'trustee' participants in lobbying/advocacy and resulted in hundreds of touch-points in 2 days. We achieved great results in our first foray into this new majority

provincial government. We were recognized in the Legislature by our Minister Michael Coteau and met with dozens of MPPs, parliamentary assistants and cabinet ministers and continue to do so throughout early 2015. We are planning to do this again – hopefully during Ontario Public Library Week in 2015.

FOPL partnered with OLA on this project and we led the charge on public library advocacy as OLA focused more on school libraries and the college sector. We are continuing to cooperate on lobbying efforts on behalf of our sector throughout 2015.

### **3. Culture Development Fund Board Training**

This project continues the OLA/OLBA *'Leadership by Design'* and *'One Place to Look'* brands with continuous e-learning opportunities for Boards based on the 4 year cycle of board development developed collaboratively by the FOPL and OLBA boards. The FOPL and OLBA boards met jointly to plan and prioritize this training. We have engaged an instructional designer who has done good work for SOLS on our platform, the new LearnHQ e-learning system at SOLS. We have hired two professional online learning developers. We launched the initial phase at Trustee Boot Camp at OLA Super Conference and will release the first modules in spring 2015.

### **4. FOPL Statistics Project based on Ontario Ministry of Culture Data Collection**

We have released over a dozen reports on the performance of Ontario's public libraries from 1999-2010. In early 2015 we will be able to release an update with 2011-2013 data included.

The Ministry agreed to provide additional funding in January for FOPL to continue this project and begin the development of the FOPL Index of Community Engagement, to update the data, and to make some comparisons to the public libraries in US states and Canadian provinces as well as internationally.

The Ministry reports that we will get the 2011 and 2012 data in January 2015 before Super Conference and 2013 about 2 months after that. This is great and our sector will be current for the first time in years.

We are planning a FOPL Spring Symposium on Public Library Statistics in alliance with the iSchool at the University of Toronto [May 11-12]. We need to teach and train the community in the usage of statistics, measurements and other evaluation tools

I believe that that this project derives value for public libraries from the data we have provided for many years from our sector and underpins results that show the

Ministry, library boards, and the public the strong impact of public libraries from the long-term investment in us.

## 5. 2020 Branding Project and Public Opinion Poll

With special funding from 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.

The next phase, as recommended by the FOPL board and the project steering committee, is to repeat and update the public opinion polls done in 2000, 2006, and 2010. This contract was signed in early 2015 and the fieldwork is complete.

We dream about a major marketing push province-wide for public libraries in Ontario to promote our value and impact. How do we rise above promoting our branches, collections and programs and complement local marketing with a collaborative push? Can we raise awareness, library usage, and the number of cardholders of public libraries in Ontario? How do we turn these dreams into a reality?

In 2014, 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 made progress this year. For this project we:

- a. did a census of public library e-presences (websites, social media and social networking) This may be a critical channel for marketing libraries across our province.
- b. collected public library taglines from their websites. The word cloud below shows how we represent ourselves today.
- c. reviewed the research on major public library "value" branding campaigns in Canada and the U.S.
- d. held focus groups and interviews with key internal and external stakeholders including librarians, library staff, library board members *and* municipal administrators.

This Wordcloud shows the key terms from public library taglines (larger size indicates that this word is used more).



We found some interesting results from our small telephone survey of municipal administrators (CAOs). They were well aware of our good work with literacy, kids, seniors, and teens. They felt that we needed to engage more effectively with other municipal departments as well as develop and better communicate our role in business and economic development.

Should you want to read the summary report, here's a link:

<http://www.slideshare.net/stephenabram1/fopl-finalbrandingstudyreport1>

For our next step, FOPL issued an RFP to conduct a major Ontario-wide public opinion poll in early 2015 to gauge how things have changed from our 2003, 2006, and 2010 provincial polls about the views of the public about public libraries and hired Market Probe Canada.

So, in 2015 we should have all the pieces of the pie we need to plan some initiatives around marketing – one of your goals expressed in the Libraries 2020 Vision. To this end we will have much of the research and information we need to plan for future needs. We will have:

- Data on Ontario public library performance over time
- Data on our marketing channels, market positioning, and preparedness for a 'push'
- Insights from stakeholders in libraries, boards and municipalities.
- A new public opinion poll of Ontarians attitudes towards public libraries and how they've changed from our 2003, 2006, and 2010 polls.

It's an exciting effort and we're getting there. We're trying to be strategic and plan well.

## 6. Libraries 2025 Summit Planning Team

The executive directors of FOPL, OLA, SOLS, OLS-N and CULC met to start envisioning a Libraries 2025 Summit to repeat the success of the 2020 Summit that eventually delivered \$18 million in additional public library funding. The date is this spring (April 29-30) and the hotel is the Royal York. There will likely be 300-350 people expected to attend this event. We have 5 themes that were facilitated by a broadly representative group of public libraries and planning is underway. Watch for more news in 2015 and save the date!

## **7. Anti- Canadian Anti-Spam Legislation Legal Opinion and Template Library Policy**

FOPL contracted for a fulsome legal opinion on the impact of the new Canadian Anti-Spam Legislation on the public library sector. This was distributed to members followed by the template library board policy to serve as the model for the entire province. A webinar was offered to all members and recorded for use at any time.

## **8. 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. More are planned for 2015.

## **9. 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. We also communicate and coordinate AMPLO and ARUPLO. The executive director attends or sends reports to the SOLS Regional Trustee meetings

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.

Thank you to the FOPL Board for their support and leadership in a volunteer role supporting our entire community. My personal thanks to FOPL's executive assistant Monica Mixemong for her great work. We look forward to working with the new 2015 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.

As always, I'm just at the end of the phone or e-mail if you have any questions, comments, or suggestions.

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.*

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