Rhodes University is recognized among the top six research-intensive institutions in South Africa and with new growth strategies in place set to strengthen its reputation and research enterprise, good library and information services are a critical underpinning of research, just as they are for teaching and learning. It is thus critical that the Library Services Management is proactive in identifying opportune times for new directions and takes responsibility for leading and managing the changes.

This self-evaluation is a serious attempt by the Library Director and Management Team to balance the strategic and planning imperatives of the University with the vision of the Library staff for a new integrated service model that will ensure more equitable services across the RU user constituency but, at the same time, being mindful of the University administration’s expectation to demonstrate cost-effective and optimal use of the existing fifty staffing posts (both Main and Departmental Libraries).

Three key drivers are behind the initiative to review the Library Services Division and organization structure at this juncture:

- 2010 will be a watershed year for Rhodes University when one of the most modern research libraries in South Africa will open its doors to and offer facilities, services and feature that rival international best practice;
- The RU Transformation, Equity & Institutional Culture Plan which requires Divisions to address staff development, succession planning, career pathing and organizational sustainability in terms of building expertise, experience and skills;
- The University Support Services Review process provides Terms of Reference that challenge the Division to interrogate existing practices, identify inefficiencies, evaluate resources and make recommendations for improved and cost-effective structures, services and staffing levels.

Section 1 of the report provides an overview of the Library Services Division and highlights significant key achievements.

In Section 2, an update is provided on the implementation of the 8 recommendations from the 2002 Administrative and the outcomes of the 2005 LibQUAL survey which were used extensively in proposals to the University to motivate and lobby for a new library facility to support teaching, learning and research.

Section 3 considers the strategic direction of the Division and the extent to which it has achieved its goals and those of the Institution. This section also details how performance reporting is done at the operational and institutional levels.

Section 4 covers structure and reporting relationships. The first part comments on aspects of leadership style, communication within the Division, implementation of policy & guidelines and extent of disciplinary action within the Division. For the Library Services, the management of change is a major dynamic in this self-evaluation and review period that cannot be
underestimated. With the opening of the new building extension in January 2010, research library facilities that do not exist currently are required to be “service-ready” together with trained teams of staff to manage new spaces e.g. Information Commons and Subject Librarian Services. Research shows that spaces are themselves agents for change and changes to space change practices. The changes to familiar library spaces and structures are instrumental in driving the urgency for major restructuring and configuration of the Division.

Change management at this level has required an extensive consultative process across the Rhodes University campus and within the Library Services Division, with the strategic workshops in late 2006. Details of the consultative process and support from the HR Division are set out in Section 4.5. The consultation process with the Rhodes University collective about the new library services and their information needs began in 2007 and is outlined in Section 7.

Section 4.6 explains the Division’s current management and staffing structure (Diagram 1-current organogram). An outline of each of the three sections (Public Services, Collections and Technical Services and Cory Library) is provided with comments to identify weaknesses and challenges to effective management. Section 4.7 sets out the current status of the management and staffing of the four Departmental Libraries with details of the physical facilities, collections and user groups. The status with regard to the International Library of African Music (ILAM) and the SAIAB Library is discussed as well a number of library collections purchased with Information Resources grants that are housed in individual academic departments.

Early in the review process, the Library Management recognized that the current organization structure is inadequate to manage the new Library and to support the demands and challenges of the University’s strategic size and shape goals to strengthen research and teaching programmes. Section 4.9 identifies the key weaknesses and challenges to effective management in the Library Services Division.

Section 4.10 addresses an important stage in the process of change management in the Division. It sets out the organization design principles agreed by the Library Management. Sections and Units across the Division, including the four Departmental Libraries, were required to undertake a complete rethink and reshaping of work streams, processes, staffing levels & training requirements to produce a set of proposals that fundamentally reshape the library services. In some areas where there were attempts to defend entrenched practices resulting in protracted discussions, the agreed principles have supported interrogating and unpacking purpose, practices, workflows and processes in the wider context of Library Services as a Division.

Section 4.11 sets out the proposed new organization structure for the Library Services Division. Two options are considered:

**Option 1:** Recommended organization structure (Diagram 3-recommended). This structure has 51 F/T posts and 41 temporary student assistants. It is recommended that the 4 Departmental Libraries are retained and become Branch Libraries. (Note: HR Expert System indicates 53 Library Services posts including Departmental Librarians).

**Option 2:** Reduced organization structure (Diagram 4-reduced). In this structure (only the Law Branch Library is retained and the other Departmental Librarians are transferred to the
Main Library) with 48 F/T posts and 41 temporary student assistants. The current structure is reduced by two posts.

Section 5 deals with an important aspect of the Institution’s planning and the long-term sustainability of the Library Services, namely Equity and Staff Development. The Library Management requests support for a “Transformation and capacity-building strategy” to address current inadequacies in this regard. The steps required to implement the strategy are the new organization structure, reallocation of posts across the grades and design of work units around streamlined processes & work flows. The Library proposes to optimize the existing 50 staff posts by placing 65 percent of the staff, both professional and administrative, in services that directly support researchers, academic staff and students, with the balance of the staff complement (35%) in work units that primarily support library functions but at the same time indirectly serve users.

Section 6 examines the effectiveness of the Library funding model and also gives feedback from an informal initiative undertaken by a Research Library Group from 5 South African research-intensive universities (RU, UCT, UP, SU and Wits) to gather data and attempt some rudimentary benchmarking in respect of budgets and collections. Whilst participants criticized aspects of the exercise, it did provide some useful indicators for the Rhodes University Library which show that we can be satisfied that our library funding model is competitively positioned among the other leading research libraries in South Africa. Section 6.4 deals with the Information Resources budget and makes a series of recommendations to review the IR budget management processes. The estimated resources needed for the restructuring of the Library Services Division are set out in Section 6.5. With the guidance of and figures supplied by HR, this report attempts to provide the Review Panel with some broad cost indicators for putting in place a research library structure with the right staffing levels.

Section 7 considers the working relationships with Faculties and academic departments including the varied information needs of the six Faculties and the capacity of the Library Services Division to support research, teaching and learning at Rhodes University.

Section 8 briefly discusses the working relations between the Library Staff and other administrative divisions.

Section 9 looks at the current status and a planned initiative to advance Community Engagement through the Makana Schools Project as a partnership between the Community Engagement Office, CSD, Library Services, IT Division, student volunteers and academic department service learning participants. A conceptual framework has been drafted and will be submitted to potential grant-makers.

Section 10 looks at barriers to being a modern academic library with facilities to take academic and research services to the next level of performance

Section 11 is a summary of the Library Division’s requests to the Review Panel. There are two categories of requests:

- **General Requests (as per the Review Terms of Reference)**
- **Specific Requests (as determined through the self-evaluation process).**
In conclusion, this self-evaluation report represents a revitalized way of thinking about the changing roles and new opportunities for the Library Services Division at Rhodes University. We believe that the Library Management has stayed within its mandate of right-sizing and restructuring within the existing staff posts but that we have also taken the bold step towards designing the future.

Gwenda Thomas
Director: Library Services
February 2009