

CHAPTER 9

Tackling a Reorganization as an Interim Administrator

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Introduction

Reorganizations are typically complex and stressful endeavors with long-term implications—a task some undoubtedly believe should not be undertaken by an interim library administrator. In spring 2018, soon after being appointed interim associate university librarian, I became responsible for managing a reorganization spanning two-and-a-half years. Concurrently during this period, the university librarian changed from an interim to a new, permanent appointee, a major collection move transpired, and a global pandemic took hold, resulting in the state legislature eliminating numerous vacant positions. This chapter describes the challenges and opportunities in carrying out a reorganization through the lens of an interim administrator, including an overview of the process, with insight into the skills and effort that can contribute to success.

Institutional Context

Library Services is the official organizational title of the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa's research library. When the reorganization began, the library consisted



of two buildings, a collection of 3.1 million titles, an operating budget of \$17.1 million, and a permanent staff count of 131 positions. Staff is used broadly to refer to all four employee classifications: (1) executive/managerial, (2) librarian faculty, (3) administrative, professional, and technical, and (4) civil service. The executive/managerial classification included three administrative positions (university librarian, associate university librarian, and assistant university librarian), all filled by individuals with little formal administrative experience. The university librarian was an interim appointee of a few months who moved into the role after serving as the interim associate university librarian for one year. I moved into the interim associate university librarian position from a faculty division head role of three years. The recently hired assistant university librarian came from a mainland institution where she had served as a department head.

Campus administration initially postponed searching for a permanent university librarian as other executive searches on campus took priority. Due to the unknown time frame for a permanent appointment, library projects were expected to continue moving forward and not pause pending recruitment of new leadership. One of these endeavors, the review and alignment of several collection and service functions, required a reorganization to resolve.

The reorganization process at UH Mānoa was multi-phase, requiring discussion and consultation internally with the unit's staff and externally with several unions and senates. Campus administration gave library administration approval to begin the process in January 2018, but work did not start until May 2018 due to an unanticipated personnel situation. During this four-month delay, the campus administration decided the music, audiovisual, and reserve collections housed in the library's second building would be permanently relocated into the main building. The space this collection formerly occupied would be renovated and reassigned to another campus unit. This was a noteworthy move in which library operations would be leaving a building it had occupied for over sixty years. The space in the other building had slowly been reassigned to other campus entities over time. This final reassignment and move would result in the consolidation of all library staff, collections, and services into one building. While completing this sizable collection move would require a huge effort and cause stress for some library staff, it also provided clarity and further incentive to reorganize. The staff coming over from the second building needed to be integrated into the main library building's departments.

Approximately halfway through the reorganization, the university librarian changed from an interim to a new, permanent appointee. In January 2019, seven months into the reorganization, campus administration initiated recruitment for a permanent university librarian, with the intent to fill the position within the year. I presented the first-draft reorganization proposal to library staff in summer

2019. In early fall 2019, three external candidates for university librarian were interviewed on campus, and by late fall 2019 campus administration announced the name of the new university librarian. A month following the announcement, I presented the second, revised draft reorganization proposal to library staff. When the new university librarian began in January 2020, he was provided a draft reorganization proposal that had undergone sixteen months of internal library preparation and review.

In March 2020, under the direction of the new university librarian, the final reorganization proposal moved from the unit preparation phase to review by campus and system administrative offices. A few months later in May 2020, the proposal moved on to the consultative phase with the unions and senate. Concurrently during the reorganization proposal's advancement, the coronavirus pandemic overwhelmed the world, impacting local, national, and global economies. The state of Hawai'i responded to the fiscal crisis in part through a legislative supplemental appropriations act that eliminated many vacant state positions. All the library's vacant positions were lost—17.5 percent of the total position count. This included vacant positions in recruitment and vacant positions pending approval of the reorganization to be re-described and filled. In July 2020, during the consultative phase with the unions and senates, an addendum was added to the proposal to address the abolished positions connected to the reorganization.

Value of Institutional Knowledge

Lack of formal administrative experience can be a weakness for any leader, and particularly for an interim appointee. In addition to having to learn the responsibilities of a new position, the interim may not have a wealth of previous administrative experience to draw on. Irwin and de Vries in their article on interim library leaders explain, "A librarian appointed to an interim dean or interim university librarian position may have less experience and fewer skills compared to permanent leaders."¹ Munde, reflecting on her time as interim director at East Carolina University, notes she did not feel suitably prepared as only having served eighteen months as associate director.²

Appointing an interim from within the organization can sometimes offset a lack of administrative experience. An interim internal to the unit will likely have a depth of institutional knowledge that a newly appointed, permanent administrator external to the organization will not. For some projects, such as a reorganization, this institutional knowledge can be advantageous. At the time of my initial appointment, I did not have much formal administrative experience. I did, however, have management experience and extensive institutional knowledge as a member of the librarian faculty for over twenty years. My years of experience as a librarian faculty member included active involvement with

the union. This established relationship helped when interacting and consulting on the reorganization.

My years as a faculty division head included work on numerous endeavors, including meaningful engagement with some of the concerns and issues being addressed in the reorganization. This background knowledge and understanding helped when considering how to address these issues through the reorganization.

In an interview with Florence Doksansky, the former interim university librarian at Brown University, she discusses becoming interim university librarian in the middle of a reorganization and contract talks with unionized employees.³ Doksansky had served twenty-one years as associate university librarian prior to the interim appointment. The interview notes, “Fortunately, years of training and experience had prepared Doksansky to make decisions and lead the staff during a period of upheaval.”⁴ I would presume it was not simply Doksansky’s administrative experience but her years working at Brown University Library that helped in undertaking this work. It is not clear from the interview if Doksansky had prior reorganization experience. Because reorganizations are not routine, the experience of implementing one is not commonly held by many administrators.

While this was the first reorganization I managed as an administrator, I did have experience engaging in one as a member of the librarian faculty when the library last attempted a reorganization. A former interim library administration had initiated a 2008 reorganization proposal that ultimately failed and was retracted due to a lack of support by the staff, unions, and senates. A number of the current library staff remember this past reorganization proposal, and the experience left many weary and cynical of the process. The campus reorganization procedures had changed in the ten years since the library last attempted a reorganization. There was little documentation on the 2008 reorganization proposal, and no one internal to the library to provide direction or guidance on the process. The administrative team that initiated the previous, failed reorganization proposal was no longer part of the library. During this interval between reorganization attempts, the administrative support staff had turned over due to retirements. The new staff came from units external to the library and did not have reorganization experience. I had to turn to connections outside the library for support and guidance. A benefit of having institutional knowledge is familiarity with campus offices and individuals who can help guide you on assignments. These external colleagues were instrumental in the ultimate success of the reorganization. In retrospect, a contributing factor to the failure of the prior 2008 reorganization proposal could have been that the interim associate university librarian at the time had little institutional experience within the library or university.

Projects with Enduring Ramifications

Interim appointees should consider more focused, bite-size approaches to tasks with enduring ramifications. A contributing factor to the failure of the UH Mānoa Library Services 2008 reorganization proposal could have been that the interim administration at the time attempted too expansive a reorganization, given their lack of legitimacy as permanent administrators. A middle-of-the-road approach offers a reasonable solution to the paradox many interim administrators encounter: you have the authority to make long-term decisions but recognize the limitations of a temporary appointment. UH Mānoa campus and library administration agreed the reorganization would focus on specific areas and not include the entire organizational structure. This approach meant addressing immediate organizational concerns with this reorganization and holding off on broader, more visionary changes for a second reorganization at a later time. This two-part reorganization also meant a permanent university librarian (when hired) would not feel rushed to initiate a single, major reorganization of the entire structure devoid of strategic visioning simply to solve specific structural issues requiring immediate attention. Dewey, in her article on transition and leadership change, reviews common mistakes of new library leaders found in the literature.⁵ One of the common mistakes is not taking time to understand the environment before making changes. Dewey's research reiterates the value of allowing a new, permanent university librarian time to learn the organization and set priorities before launching a major reorganization.

This middle-of-the-road strategy, between forgoing a reorganization to simply keep the administrative seat warm until the appointment of permanent leadership and engaging in a comprehensive review to restructure the entire library, was at times met with resistance. Some staff thought the reorganization offered an opportunity to address larger or additional changes beyond the narrow areas of concentration. For example, some believed that changes to technical services functions, such as updating functional statements and combining departments, should be considered, despite these not being in the areas of focus. One staff member expressed the following sentiment on the need for a more expansive approach:

My understanding is that the purpose of the proposed re-org plan is to update the outdated organizational chart. However, it is short-sighted because the current re-org is inadequate to address the needs of a 21st century academic research library.

Other staff felt nothing should be done until the hiring of a permanent university librarian. The sentiment of doing nothing became more pronounced after campus administration launched a search for a permanent university librarian. One staff member stated:

Since we are in the process of hiring a new University Librarian, we should put a hold on this reorganization until after the UL is hired since that UL will probably want to do another reorg after they are hired. We would be pretty much wasting our time going through all this effort for nothing.

Ultimately, the reorganization was not put on hold. A new, permanent university librarian external to the institution was hired halfway through the reorganization process—after the presentation and review of the two draft reorganization proposals to the library staff. The newly hired university librarian did not halt the reorganization but embraced the multi-staged approach. He reviewed the second draft proposal and, following discussion with library staff, determined what proposed changes would move forward in this reorganization and what would wait for a second reorganization following strategic planning.

The reorganization proposal's executive summary and narrative explicitly described this two-step approach, noting areas that were considered but not moving forward and would be addressed in a future reorganization following strategic planning. In the last stage of the reorganization process, the campus faculty senate questioned this approach, noting, "Seems like this might be a reorganization in preparation for another reorganization, which doesn't seem very efficient." This concern was answered with an explanation that the approach is judicious as it enables the library to move forward with needed changes the library staff support, resolves positions currently in limbo, and offers the new university librarian time to work through larger, more contentious structural questions. Ultimately, the campus faculty senate endorsed the reorganization proposal, and their official resolution appeared to support the multi-step approach with the inclusion of following statements: "There is a recognition among University Library leaders that additional organization changes are necessary but require the creation of a strategic vision" and "the reorganization will place Library Services in a better position to create a strategic vision for long-term success." Despite some of the tensions that emerged at different times throughout the process, a focused, incremental approach can be an effective reorganization strategy for an interim administrator.

Resolving Long-standing Issues

In their national study on interim administrators in higher education, Huff and Neubrandner note that 67 percent of interim leaders surveyed agreed "that interims have the advantage of being able to resolve long-standing issues before a permanent administrator is hired or begins."⁶ The library reorganization was launched with this view in mind. The reorganization focused on five specific areas with the goals of (1) determining responsibility for special collection material; (2) integrating branch library functions into the main library; (3) addressing

changes in circulation and interlibrary loan functions; (4) resolving inconsistencies in the faculty division structure; and (5) modifying the information technology unit, given migration to a cloud-based library services platform.

1. **Determining responsibility for special collection material.** Responsibility for some of the library's special collection material had been in flux for several years. Since the retraction of the 2008 failed reorganization proposal, the library had been deliberating on how to reverse changes implemented prematurely. Responsibility for several special material collections (archives, manuscripts, and rare books) was transferred to a new unit in anticipation of a successful 2008 reorganization. With the retraction of the 2008 reorganization proposal, the new unit did not exist and responsibility for this material was unclear. In the process of considering solutions, it became apparent a reorganization was necessary.
2. **Integrating branch library functions into the main library.** Another long-standing issue included the relationship of the audiovisual, music, and reserve collections (housed in another building) with the departments and units in the main library building. The location of these collections in another building required a separate service point, despite declining physical circulation numbers. Additionally, there continued to be an expectation that library staff would manage the second building's operations (facilities and security) even though more and more of the space was reassigned to other campus units. Through the years, continuing to maintain a separate service point and manage a second building operations became challenging—especially as library staff numbers in the second building dwindled. The decision to move these collections into the main building offered an opportunity, through a reorganization, to merge units with similar functions.
3. **Addressing changes in circulation and interlibrary loan functions.** The reorganization proposal would integrate the circulation, reserve, and stack maintenance functions of the branch library into the main library's Access Services department. This integration offered the Access Services department an opportunity to revise lines of authority and responsibility for improved coordination and collective participation in department functions. It also provided an opportunity to update position descriptions and functional statements to accurately reflect current areas of responsibilities.
4. **Resolving inconsistencies in the faculty division structure.** UH Mānoa Library Services has a unique and somewhat misleading organizational structure. There is a Public Services division and a Collection Services division, each composed of several departments. Librarian faculty

members chair the departments and head the divisions. The organizational chart displays the divisions and departments as a hierarchy, with supervisory relationships between the division heads and all personnel in the division. This is misleading. In practice, the division heads do not perform supervisory or other personnel functions. These tasks, in accordance with campus procedures and the faculty union contract, are assigned in part to faculty department chairs and the first executive/managerial position. The division structure is further complicated by its dissimilarity with the Library and Information Technology unit (inconsistently referred to as both an office and a division). The Library and Information Technology unit is headed by the assistant university librarian, an executive/managerial position that, unlike the faculty division heads, does have supervisory responsibilities for the staff in the unit. The faculty division structure has created difficulties throughout the twenty years I've been at the library. It was hoped recent changes and clarification with the union on the terminology and the role of department chairs would offer direction on what to do with division heads in the reorganization. Ultimately, there was a lack of agreement on how to proceed, and the new university librarian decided to wait on changes and engage in strategic planning to consider various approaches.

5. **Modifying the information technology unit given migration to a cloud-based library services platform.** When the reorganization began, the library was in the process of migrating to a new cloud-based library services platform. The library had two technology units, and it was felt that merging these would offer greater flexibility following migration. There was a lack of agreement on this focus area, mostly due to the dissimilarity between the responsibilities of the assistant university librarian and division heads. The new university librarian decided to also wait on this area and consider other approaches through strategic planning.

While all five focus areas had unique nuances, one common theme was reduced staffing. In 2009, the library had 148 positions on the organization chart. In 2019, ten years later, this number had decreased to 129. The reorganization needed to be cost-neutral, which allowed for vacant positions to be reassigned but no new positions established. During the final phase of the reorganization process, the state legislature passed a supplemental appropriations act in response to the coronavirus pandemic that eliminated numerous vacant state positions. This act resulted in the abolishment of 22.50 vacant positions from UH Mānoa Library Services. Eight of these 22.50 vacant positions were to be re-described and filled as part of the reorganization. To demonstrate continued commitment to the reorganization implementation, I drafted an addendum clarifying how the eight lost positions would be addressed. One of the vacant positions eliminated

by the state legislature was the assistant university librarian heading the Library and Information Technology unit. The individual filling this position at the start of reorganization had moved to another institution. A librarian faculty member served as the interim assistant university librarian for a year. At the time of the legislature supplemental appropriations act, the assistant university librarian position was vacant. The UH Mānoa Library Services now has only two administrator positions. It is unlikely in the coming years, with the anticipated budget challenges due to the pandemic, that the third administrative position will be restored. Coincidentally, the elimination of this administrative position offered, perhaps, some clarity on the two focus areas in the reorganization that could not be resolved.

Knowledge Transfer

The interim title, by definition, is short-term. At the University of Hawai'i, administrative positions are filled on an interim basis for up to one year. An interim can have multiple reappointments, but each is only for a duration of up to one year. Initially appointed in October 2017, I have been renewed four times. Despite the successive renewals, there is an uneasiness to the interim status that makes me regularly consider the longevity of the position and how recordkeeping should be done on various in-progress projects. What is the best way to document and share the current status, varying perspectives, and decision rationale for those that might follow in the position? Agarwal and Islam, in their article on knowledge retention and transfer, explain that “with librarians and student workers leaving and joining, libraries struggle to prevent loss of organizational knowledge due to staff turnover, and transferring this knowledge to new employees.”⁷ While knowledge transfer should be an important consideration for all staff, it is surprising given the transitional nature of interim administrators that it is not addressed in the literature on this topic. Articles on interim administrators routinely focus on the appointment process, type of decision-making, and perceived value of the position. I could not find an article that addresses how knowledge from an interim administrator is passed on.

Knowledge transfer and documentation of the reorganization were of great importance. I was not sure if my appointment as associate university librarian would continue through the duration of the project. A successor would need to understand the details of the reorganization to draft the final proposal narrative and participate in the consultative process. Even if I remained in my interim position, a new university librarian, external to the institution, would be joining the reorganization midway through and need to understand the progression and decide on what to move forward.

The establishment of a clear arrangement of numerous documents was integral to recordkeeping on the reorganization. This material needed to clearly show sequential changes made throughout the process and the varying perspectives. I had a large binder divided into the following sections: overall guiding documents (current organization chart and functional statement, campus policy), working documents (finalized drafts, feedback, committee notes), and focus areas (draft charts, functional statements, meeting notes, email correspondences). For the reorganization, summarizing and succinctly describing potential changes helped not only staff with understanding and visualizing a change but aided the new university librarian who needed to comprehend and review the progress. The formal documentation of charts and functional statements was supplemented with staff reactions through feedback. The presentation of the first draft proposal to library staff included a discussion that was recorded and transcribed and an after-presentation survey for comments.

The various supplemental documentation (emails, surveys, meeting summaries, and historical memos) helped in drafting the formal narrative. The campus guidelines require the narrative to provide a detailed rationale (background and historical information, explanation of conditions or factors prompting the reorganization, alternatives explored, groups impacted, and benefits) and a comprehensive explanation of resources impacted (budget, operational, and space). In this situation, the supplementary documentation also made it easier for the new university librarian to understand the sequence of revisions and consider how best to proceed. The supplemental documents took foresight, effort, and a great deal of time to compile. Going into the project, I realized it was necessary to maintain a record of dates, participants, drafts, timelines, etc. Having been involved in some of the issues preceding the reorganization, I was aware of historical memos of relevance that could help someone understand the background and larger situation. Table 9.1 lists the documentation required in a UH Mānoa reorganization proposal while table 9.2 itemizes various background documentation that helped in drafting the official proposal and in the knowledge transfer to the new university librarian.

Table 9.1

Required Documentation

- Action memo
- Executive summary
- Narrative
- Current and proposed organization charts
- Chart articulating changes to positions impacted by the reorganization
- Copies of letters and responses to unions and campus senates

Table 9.2
Background Documentation

- Meeting summaries with dates and participants
- Sequential drafts of organizational charts and functional statements
- Historical memos relevant to the reorganization
- Position descriptions highlighting potential revisions
- Staff feedback on various issues and drafts
- Timeline highlighting the stages of the process and significant events
- Overview summary explaining the intent and areas of focus
- Email correspondences
- Committee meeting minutes that included discussion of the reorganization
- PowerPoint presentations

Unions and Senates

An overarching challenge when managing a reorganization as an interim administrator is the appropriateness and legitimacy of this work being carried out by a temporary appointee. Some staff will inevitably question if the interim is steering the reorganization in a way that would improve the interim's chance to fill their temporary position on a permanent basis or benefit the home unit where the interim will likely return when the temporary appointment ends. This perception is ever-present, even if it is not voiced. At the start of the UH Mānoa Library Services reorganization, this concern was twofold since the university librarian position also included an interim appointee. The significant amount of library staff consultation carried out as part of the reorganization may have reduced some of the conflict-of-interest concerns. Consultation was not only a necessity per the reorganization procedures but was an expectation of campus administration. If the majority of the library staff did not support the reorganization or if there was strong resistance from the unions and senates, then campus administration would be reluctant to approve the proposal.

UH Mānoa Library Services is a unionized environment. The library profession and the state of Hawai'i both have high union numbers. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the occupational groups with the second-highest unionization rate (35.9 percent) in 2020 were in education, training, and library occupations.⁸ This same report notes the state of Hawai'i's union memberships (23.7 percent) was the highest in the nation, more than double the national average.⁹ The majority of library staff are represented by one of two unions. The University of Hawai'i Professional Assembly is the exclusive bargaining agent for

faculty in the University of Hawai'i System. The Hawai'i Government Employees Association is the exclusive representative for the administrative, professional, and technical employees and civil service employees. There are only a few library positions (administrative, personnel, fiscal) and types of appointments (temporary, part-time) that are excluded from collective bargaining and therefore not represented by a union. Hawai'i state law, specifically Chapter 89: Collective Bargaining in Public Employment of the Hawai'i Revised Statutes, requires union consultation on matters affecting employee relations. The employer is required to consult with the unions (exclusive representatives) and consider their input. While the unions do not have a vote on a reorganization, their perspective is significant, especially if the union identifies potential violations of the collective bargaining agreement. Not addressing concerns raised by the unions could result in grievances and prohibitive practice complaints with the Hawai'i Labor Relations Board. In addition to the unions, there are several campus senates (faculty, staff, graduate student, and undergraduate student) that have a formal, though not legal, role in the reorganization consultation process.

Genuine consultation requires not only the sharing of information but soliciting and sincerely considering feedback. The third and last phase of the UH Mānoa reorganization process requires formal consultation with the various unions and senates. The formal consultation at the final phase is generally smoother if thorough consultation occurs with unit staff in the preparation and design of the proposal at the first phase. Consultation enables one to understand and address concerns by revising the proposal or responding to the concerns in the reorganization narrative. While consultation, in the long run, is valuable for the reorganization proposal's success, it can be a time-consuming activity that is occasionally difficult.

Prior to the presentation of the first draft proposal, more than fifty meetings spanning fifty-nine weeks were held with various combinations of staff to discuss discrete sections of the reorganization. Even after all these meetings, the library staff had a mixed reaction to the first draft proposal. I anticipated some opposition to the distribution of special material and audiovisual responsibilities to all selectors. Some felt positions specializing in these unique formats (a rare book librarian or a video librarian) should be incorporated. Given the campus administration requirement for the proposal to be cost-neutral, the addition of positions could not be considered. Even if new position counts could be added to the reorganization, the majority of the faculty and staff prioritized technology-focused positions or a collection development officer over a rare books librarian or video librarian. One surprise following the presentation of the first draft was the negative reaction by a few to the proposed combination of two departments with collections focusing on Hawai'i. I had been working closely with librarians in these departments on writing the functional statement for the

combined unit and had not heard strong reservations. However, feedback on the first draft proposal revealed that librarians in one department were concerned with losing their independence in determining their own collection priorities. These separate departments had been combined in the past and were divided many years ago in part due to personalities. While most of the previous staff were no longer with the library, it appears some of the past concerns lingered. This reaction surprised not only me but librarians in the other department, some of whom were looking forward to the merger. Instead of pushing the first draft proposal forward, another round of approximately twenty meetings over ten additional weeks were held to revise the proposal in parts. I presented a new draft proposal in December 2019.

After staff consultation in the unit preparation phase, the final reorganization proposal moved on for review by campus and system administrative departments followed by formal consultation with the senates and unions. The consultation with the unions was not adversarial. Neither union raised concern about the proposal but simply sought confirmation on the employer's commitment to fill specific positions as described. The library administration confirmed this was the intent, subject to the availability of position counts and funds as appropriated by the state legislature and in accordance with budgetary priorities, processes, and guidelines. Prior to the formal consultation process, I did meet with the associate executive director of the faculty union, with whom I had an established relationship, to provide an overview of the reorganization proposal and answer questions. The consultation with the faculty union took longer than with the other unions. This was a result of the faculty senate not being in session during the summer months. The faculty senate had a committee review the reorganization proposal based on a checklist and provided a formal resolution to the full senate for a vote. The committee met with the university librarian and me to discuss the proposal. The committee resolution supported the reorganizational proposal with reservations. The reservations appeared to be over a desire to see draft position descriptions (which are not done until after a reorganization is approved) and some confusion over the impact of the positions lost as a result of the pandemic. The full senate vote was unanimous in support of the resolution.

Concurrently with the reorganization, I was helping coordinate the move of collections, services, and staff from the branch to the main library. The move required a separate, formal consultation with both the faculty and staff unions.

Does Interim Status Matter?

Did it matter that my appointment status was interim rather than permanent? There were no fewer or more tasks required than if I had permanent status.

And because the same interactions were required, the project would be equally complex. Further, in all likelihood, neither an interim nor permanent associate university librarian would have the experience or training to manage a reorganization in a large, public, and highly unionized academic library. A variety of organizational characteristics likely have a greater influence on the effort and complexity of a reorganization than an administrator's appointment status. Institutional experience is a more important administrative characteristic than appointment status. Maybe my thinking would be different if I were serving as interim university librarian. As the interim associate university librarian, I was not the decision-maker about which areas of the reorganization proceeded. I simply influenced, facilitated, and guided the process. Ultimately, not all the changes I supported advanced; some are to be considered through upcoming strategic planning.

Reorganizations require change—in reporting lines, responsibilities, and workflows. Many people are uneasy with change. Apprehension about change likely had a bigger impact on staff resistance to the reorganization than my interim status. Although some staff raised concerns about the legitimacy of a short-term administrator managing a project with long-term implications, they would likely have raised different concerns if I had permanent status (e.g., not being in the position long enough, inadequate administrative skills, etc.). If staff are not happy with a change, they can attribute it to whatever shortcomings sound plausible.

The notion of interim appointment is relative. The appointment duration of an interim appointee is not universally defined. A recurring assumption appears to be that interim administrator appointments are of short duration. Huff and Neubrandner note in their survey that 39 percent of interims had served six months to one year and 43 percent were in the role over a year.¹⁰ Irwin notes in her survey, "In most cases, the interim period extended longer than expected."¹¹ So far, I have served as the interim associate university librarian for over three-and-a-half years. I am currently the longest of both permanent and interim appointees to serve as associate university librarian at the library for the last seventeen years. Over this period, seven different individuals have filled the associate university librarian position; only one of the seven was a permanent appointee who served a year. There is currently no search underway for a permanent associate university librarian. The current campus hiring freeze will delay recruitment even longer. Given the fiscal challenges many universities are experiencing, it is possible there may be more interim appointees with longer terms of service. This may alter views such as Munde, "The brevet status forces the interim to deal with the short-term and emergency needs, but not to make decisions that will have long-term or permanent effect, or commit the budget much beyond a fiscal year."¹²

Conclusion

In December 2020, two-and-a-half years after starting the process, the UH Mānoa Library Services reorganization was approved. This length of time is not unusual given the multi-phase process and required consultations with various senates and unions. In conclusion, there are several recommendations that may help an interim administrator achieve greater success in overseeing a reorganization. First, consider your depth of institutional knowledge. Someone who understands the organizational structure and history is likely to have an easier time with a reorganization. Second, contemplate if a focused approach on select changes are possible rather than broad, visionary changes better undertaken by permanent administration with greater legitimacy. Third, engage in extensive consultation within the unit at the proposal design phase. These discussions will not only make any formal consultation with senates and unions smoother but demonstrate the changes are not based on personal motivations. Fourth, maintain detailed and thorough documentation. This will help when drafting the formal proposal and for knowledge transfer if the interim appointment ends or another administrator joins the process.

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