

MEMO / NOTE DE SERVICE

To / Destinataire OPLB Trustees

cc: Library Senior Management Team (LSMT)

From / Expéditeur Sonia Bebbington, Chief Librarian / CEO
Alexandra Yarrow, Manager, Board & Strategic Services

Subject / Objet Intellectual Freedom Implementation update **Date:** January 25, 2023

The purpose of this memo is to advise trustees of a revised implementation date for intellectual freedom policy updates, subsequent to the October 11, 2022 Board report, “Intellectual Freedom Update” (OPLB-2022-1011-11.6).

Context

In June 2022, the Board approved the Intellectual Freedom report (OPLB-2022-0601), which included amendments to the Intellectual Freedom Position Statement (“the Statement”), and directed staff to align operations with the amended Statement no later than April 1, 2023 and provide the Board with status updates on implementation, along with a close-out report, no later than Q3 2023.

In the September Board report providing an update about the project, Table 1 delineated key tasks. The below table provides an update regarding activities since the October report.

Table 1: Intellectual Freedom Implementation: Key Tasks

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|--------------------|--|
| Completed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attended pilot session of intellectual freedom training offered by the Centre for Free Expression at Toronto Metropolitan University; • Initial activities regarding fostering community discussions about the importance of intellectual freedom such as OPL’s theme for Canadian Library Month, “Read between the lines /Lire entre les lignes,” and Media Literacy Week 2022 virtual programming about navigating online information and digital parenting; and, • Legal counsel regarding the draft revisions to the Public Network Access Policy package. |
| In progress | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Striking an internal working group to advise regarding revisions to the Display Space & Bulletin Board Use Policy (and related documents); |

- Development of intellectual freedom education program for trustees, OPL leadership team members, and all employees, as well as specific training based on roles (as required)
 - Additional opportunities to foster community discussions about the importance of intellectual freedom; and,
 - Legal counsel regarding the draft revisions to the Meeting Rooms Policy, and the Display Space & Bulletin Board Use Policy.
- Not started**
- Annual reporting on 2022 challenges to all aspects of intellectual freedom (anticipated February 2023).

Several challenges have emerged related to the revisions of administrative documents since the October 2022 update to the Board. These include:

- Additional documents related to each policy package have been identified. In the June 2022 report, staff identified 12 administrative documents requiring revisions to align with the Statement. An additional eleven documents requiring review and revision have since been identified; and,
- Operational pressures, including ongoing staff shortages across all levels of the organization, have delayed the process to launch staff working groups for the Display Space & Bulletin Board Use Policy package, and the availability of the subject matter expert for the Meeting Room Policy to provide input into the revisions of this policy package.

Given the above the implementation date for intellectual freedom will be extended from April 1, 2023, to Q3 2023. This will also allow for additional time for the new Board to familiarize themselves prior to launch.

Please feel free to contact Alexandra Yarrow at Alexandra.Yarrow@BiblioOttawaLibrary.ca for any additional questions.

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