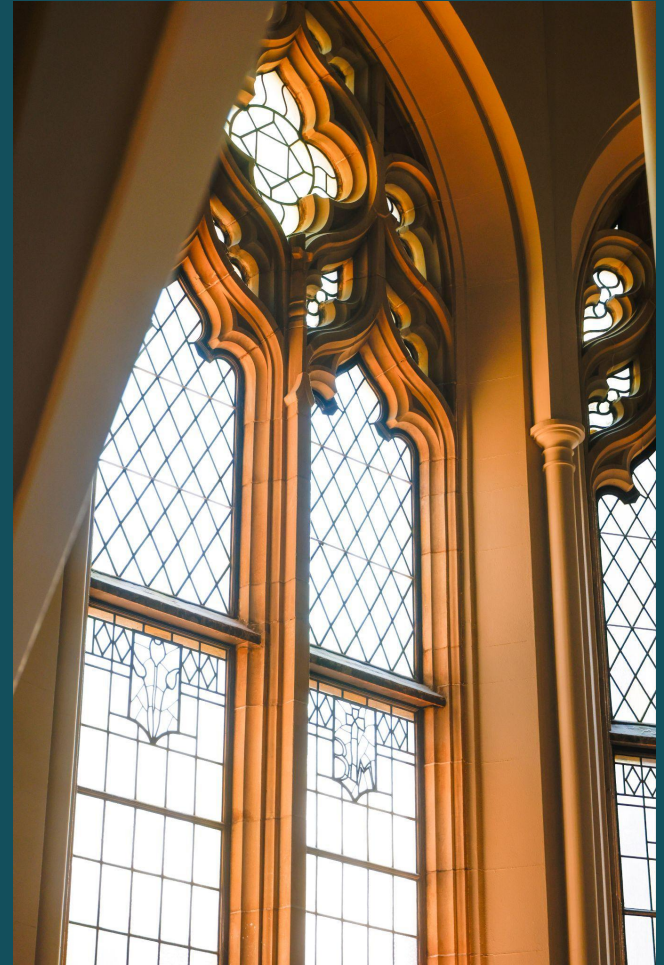


Library IT Governance in Practice:

Learning from Each Other's Experiences

CNI Spring 2026 Membership Meeting – April 13, 2026



Presenters

- *John Borwick (University of Washington) – virtual*
- Dale Hendrickson (Yale University) – virtual/in-person
- Ray Frohlich (Yale University) – in-person

Yale

W

UW LIBRARIES

AT A GLANCE

- A network of **15 Libraries** across **3** campuses: Seattle, Bothell, Tacoma; and San Juan Island (Friday Harbor Labs)
- The **largest library collection** in the Pacific Northwest; over 7.5 million titles
- **Staff:**
 - **296 Student Employees**
 - **334 FTE Employees**
 - 137 librarians
 - 198 professional and support staff

Seattle



W



Bothell



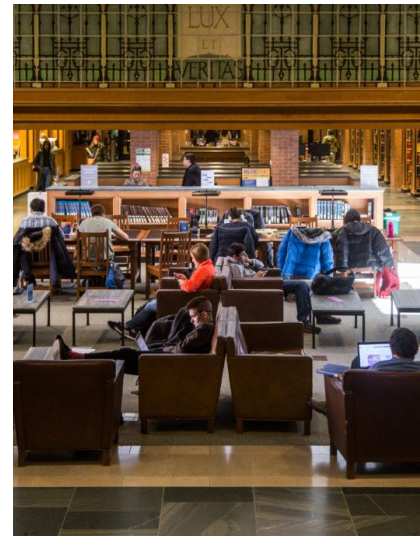
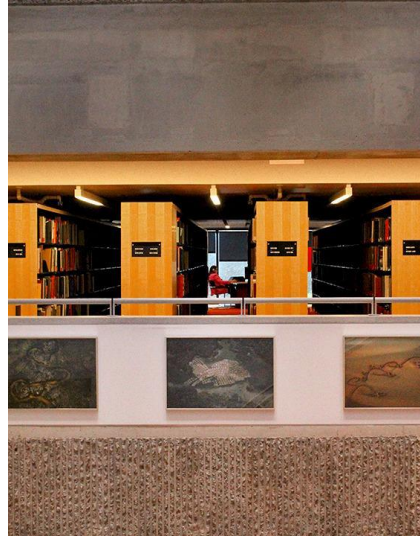
San Juan Island

Tacoma

Yale Library

Established 1701

- 13 libraries
- ~600 staff (~40 library IT)
- One of the largest university library systems
- Extensive holdings including many rare and historical collections
 - over 15 M volumes
 - over 190 K linear feet of archival materials
 - over 1.6 PB, 140 M files of collections data



Introductions

Introduce yourself: Name, title, and organization

Today's Session at a Glance

- Welcome & context setting
- Block 1 (~30 min) – Setting the stage: what ideal governance looks like
 - The four governance questions, three organizational models, the maturity framework
- Break/Q&A (~5 min)
- Block 2 (~30 min) – Zoom breakouts: barriers to IT governance
 - Peer discussion using 1-2-4-All at breakout rooms grouped by governance maturity level
- Block 3 (~10 min) – Planning forward: your next steps and community connections

Welcome



How This Session Works

- We are here to learn **with you**
- Chatham House rule applies: insights are shareable, sources are not
- Please no transcription/recording/AI chat bots. Video encouraged
- There are no right or wrong answers – honest reflection is more useful than flattering self-assessment
- Zoom rooms in Block 2 are grouped by governance maturity level – you'll self-select
- You will leave with at least one concrete next step

What Brought Us Here

- A thread of CNI conversations on Library IT governance:
 - Spring 2020 – IT Guidance at the Yale University Library (*Hendrickson*)
 - Spring 2025 – Yale Library Governance and Technical Infrastructure to Fuel Innovation (*Frohlich, Hendrickson*)
 - Fall 2025 – IT Governance in Academic Libraries: Insights from a Cross-Institutional Survey (*Borwick, Frohlich, Hendrickson*)
 - Fall 2025 – Table discussion: IT consolidation and library IT (*Joshua Gomez, UCLA*)
- Cross-institutional survey of 38 research libraries surfaced common pain points and shared language to name them
- Today's workshop is the next step: **peer learning** , not prescribed answers

What You Told Us

34 of 45 registrants shared what they're hoping to explore. Six themes emerged:

- Central IT relationships & consolidation – the most common thread
- Decision-making structures & authority – who decides, and how
- Limited staff & resource constraints – single points of failure
- Competing priorities & project management – balancing demands
- Ownership, autonomy & vendor accountability – role definition
- Emerging tech governance – AI tools, pilots, system sprawl

You're not alone. These challenges show up everywhere.

Block 1: Setting the Stage



What Is Library IT Governance?

- How your library makes and communicates decisions about technology
- Four questions every governance model must answer:
 - Who decides? (Decision rights)
 - How do we decide? (Process and structures)
 - How do we balance competing needs? (Prioritization)
 - How do we make work visible? (Accountability)
- Governance is not bureaucracy – it's intentional design for clarity, partnership, and strategic focus

	Organizational anarchy	Arbitrocracy	Just enough bureaucracy
Decision-making	Whoever acts first wins; no process	Process exists but outcome varies by who you ask	Authority at the appropriate level; outcomes predictable
Rules	Few or none; norms informal and unwritten	Rules exist on paper; enforced selectively or inconsistently	Minimal, purposeful, applied consistently
Accountability	Absent; no clear ownership of anything	Diffuse; blame flows to whoever enforced the rule this time	Clear and named; roles match authority
Staff experience	Uncertain; relies on personal relationships	Demoralizing; effort and compliance don't predict outcomes	Trust-based; autonomy within clear guardrails
Primary failure mode	Chaos; duplication; equity gaps	Cynicism; gaming relationships over merit or process	Calcification if not actively maintained
Scalability	Works only when small and high-trust	Worsens with scale; more staff = more inconsistency surface	Designed to scale; requires governance investment to hold

Governance as necessary overhead

What additional controls and risk management do we get from Library IT governance?

How do we balance *value*, *cost*, and *risk*?

Library IT governance should be *solving problems*, not creating a new problem.

Three Organizational Models

Without intentional governance

- Organizational anarchy: whoever acts first wins; no process; accountability absent
- Arbitrocracy: rules exist on paper but are enforced selectively based on who you ask; effort and compliance don't predict outcomes; cynicism grows with scale

With intentional governance

- Just enough bureaucracy: authority at the appropriate level; minimal, purposeful rules applied consistently; trust-based autonomy within clear guardrails
- Most libraries recognise elements of all three in their own experience
- The goal is not perfection – it's moving intentionally toward the right column

A Two-Phase, Dual-Lens Framework

- Governance maturity needs two scores: your Library and your Central IT
- They co-exist and are interdependent – their pairing shapes your strategy
- Phase 1 – Get your own house in order first
 - Library internal governance is the foundation
 - Without internal clarity, the Library lacks standing to effectively influence Central IT
- Phase 2 – Engage outward
 - As Library maturity grows, Central IT's governance level becomes increasingly relevant
 - A high-maturity Library paired with a low-maturity Central IT needs different strategies than a high/high pairing

DESIGN

RESEARCH									
PLAN		FUND	ASSURE		CONDUCT			IMPACT	
Research Opportunities & Planning		Research Funding	Research Assurance		Research Management	Research Delivery		Research Dissemination	
Research Opportunity Management	Collaborative Opportunity Management	Research Fund Sourcing	Research Ethics Management	Research Integrity Management	Research Funds Management	Research Data Management	Research Creation	Research Output Management	Research Outcome Management
Research Project Design		Research Grant Management	Research Performance Management	Research Quality Management	Research Programme Management	Research Infrastructure Management	Research Resource Management	Research Impact Management	Research Commercialisation Management

Strategy Management		Business Capability Management					Library Administration		Governance, Risk, & Compliance				
Vision & Strategy Development	Business Planning	Enterprise Architecture	Customer Experience Management	Business Process Management	Service Management	Library Collection Management	Policy Management	Risk Management	Compliance Management	Business Continuity Management			
Strategic Plan Management	Change Management	Portfolio & Programme Management	Project Management	Product Management	Benefits Management	Collection Access Management	Incident Management	Investigation Management	Internal Audit & Reporting	Complaint & Compliment Management			
Advancement Management		Marketing Management			Engagement & Relationship Management		Legal Services		Information & Communication Technology Management				
Alumni Management	Development & Fundraising	Advertising Management	Campaign Management	Market Research	Relationship Management	Outreach Management	Legal Advisory	Contract Management	Alignment, Planning, & Organisation	Build, Acquisition, & Implementation			
Donor, Sponsor, & Philanthropist Management		Marketing Planning	Merchandising	Communications Management	Engagement Management	Extension Management	Dispute Resolution & Litigation		Delivery, Service & Support	Monitoring, Assessment, & Evaluation			
Human Resource Management					Financial Management								
Organisational Design	Workforce Planning	Talent Acquisition	Workforce Training & Development	Remuneration & Benefits Management	Financial Planning & Analysis	General Ledger	Accounts Payable	Accounts Receivable	Price Modelling	Tax Liability Management	Payroll Management		
Workforce Resource Management	Workforce Performance Management	Workforce Relations Management	Human Resource Support	Health, Safety, & Wellbeing Management	Bank Management	Procurement Management	Project Accounting	Asset Management	Investment Management	Treasury Management			
Information Management				Facilities & Estate Management			Supporting Services						
Advanced Analytics	Artefact & Collection Management	Copyright Management	Data Management	Building & Facilities Management	Property Management	Campus Transportation Management	Housing & Accommodation Management	Gallery & Museum Management	Childcare Management	Healthcare Management	Membership Management		
Information Governance	Information Search & Discovery	Information Security Management	Identity & Access Management	Campus Security Management	Commercial Tenancy Management	Cleaning & Waste Management	Printing Management	Sport & Recreation Management	Venue Management	Food & Retail Outlet Management			
Records Management	Enterprise Content Management	Business Intelligence & Reporting	Digital Preservation	Groundskeeping Management	Environmental Sustainability Management	Space Utilisation Management	Travel Management	Intercollegiate Athletics Management	Event Management	Mail Management			



The Four Governance Pairings

The two aligned states

- Low Library / Low Central IT: mutual chaos – focus entirely on Phase 1; Central IT relationship is not yet the leverage point
- High Library / High Central IT: strategic alignment – both parties can negotiate, co-invest, and plan jointly

The two mismatch states

- High Library / Low Central IT – the advocacy gap: the Library has internal clarity but faces an unpredictable Central IT environment; protect autonomy, build the case
- Low Library / High Central IT – the borrowed structure trap: Central IT is well-governed but the Library lacks its own clarity; Phase 1 is still the priority

The 0–4 Maturity Scale

The same scale applies to both your Library and your Central IT:

- 0 – No governance: decisions ad hoc or informal
- 1 – Emerging: early attempts at process, but inconsistent
- 2 – Developing: basic structures exist; applied unevenly
- 3 – Established: consistent processes, clear decision rights
- 4 – Robust: mature governance; continuous improvement; strong partnership

Take 60 seconds: give yourself two honest scores – Library and Central IT. Note which governance pairing you're in.

What Ideal Looks Like in Practice

- Clear decision rights – who owns what, visible to everyone
- A single front door for requests – transparent intake and criteria
- Library leadership meaningfully engaged – not just informed
- A defined partnership with Central IT – not just an escalation path
- Regular rhythms and forums – not just reactive meetings
- Accountability you can see – project visibility, decision logs, service expectations

The goal : clarity, partnership, strategic focus. Not more bureaucracy.

Break/Questions?



Block 2: Zoom Room Breakouts



(Modified) 1-2-4-All approach

- Individual reflection
- Pairs
- Tables
- Whole group

(Modified) 1-2-4-All approach

- Individual reflection
- ~~Pairs~~
- Tables
- Whole group

Your Two Discussion Questions

Question 1: What barriers to IT governance exist within your **Library** ?

Phase 1 focus (“Get your own house in order”)

Question 2: What barriers to IT governance exist with your **Central IT organization** ?

Phase 2 focus (“Engage outward”).

Most relevant when Library maturity ≥ 2

Zoom Breakout Rooms

For each question:

- 2 minutes of individual reflection
- Join the relevant breakout room
- 8 minutes of discussion
- Identify who should report out
- We will regroup to report out

Question 1

Individual (2 min)

What barriers to IT governance exist within your **Library** ?

- Decision rights and authority
- Leadership engagement
- Staff capacity and structure
- Culture, competing priorities, technical debt
- Patterns of arbitocracy

Question 1

Table (5 min), select spokesperson

What barriers to IT governance exist within your **Library** ?

- Decision rights and authority
- Leadership engagement
- Staff capacity and structure
- Culture, competing priorities, technical debt
- Patterns of arbitocracy

Question 1

All (5 min)

What barriers to IT governance exist within your **Library** ?

- Decision rights and authority
- Leadership engagement
- Staff capacity and structure
- Culture, competing priorities, technical debt
- Patterns of arbitocracy

Question 2

Individual (2 min)

What barriers to IT governance exist with your **Central IT organization** ?

- Consolidation pressures
- Unclear service boundaries
- Communication gaps and lost library voice
- Resource constraints
- Your governance pairing combination

Question 2

Table (5 min), select spokesperson

What barriers to IT governance exist with your
Central IT organization ?

- Consolidation pressures
- Unclear service boundaries
- Communication gaps and lost library voice
- Resource constraints
- Your governance pairing combination

Question 2

All (5 min)

What barriers to IT governance exist with your **Central IT organization** ?

- Consolidation pressures
- Unclear service boundaries
- Communication gaps and lost library voice
- Resource constraints
- Your governance pairing combination

Block 3: Planning Forward



Your Action Plan

- Phase 1 – Library governance next steps
 - One action in the next 2 weeks
 - One structural or process change in 30 days
 - One larger goal in 90 days
- Phase 2 – Central IT relationship next steps (when Library maturity ≥ 2)
 - One conversation or agreement to initiate in 30 days
 - One structural improvement to work toward in 90 days
- Share one next step in chat – saying it aloud makes it real
- Stay connected: peer cohort calls, shared practice repository, community at heitgovernance.com, CNI #library-it-governance Slack channel

Stay Connected

heitgovernance.com



Session
Feedback

