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Creating a new Library for Macquarie University: are we there yet?

Maxine Brodie, University Librarian, Macquarie University,
Maxine.Brodie@library.mq.edu.au

Meredith Martinelli, Manager, Library Development, Macquarie University,
Meredith.Martinelli@library.mq.edu.au

ABSTRACT
This is a case study documenting the long-term, transformational change strategies we are using to create a new Library at Macquarie University. These strategies are explained using the metaphor of a journey, with a roadmap, or guiding principles, the milestones we have reached and our next steps for the future. Our strategies are discussed in the context of University and Library strategic planning and with reference to the concepts emerging from Library 2.0 discussions.

During 2005/06 we transformed the design of jobs and structure to build a more flexible Library that is agile, resilient, informed, connected, successful and responsible. These changes are being implemented during 2006/07, supported by extensive training and new approaches to planning, team building, performance monitoring and governance.

We are making two significant changes to our physical presence. One is the construction of a new library building to reaffirm our centrality to research and learning. This single, central library will utilise automated storage technologies to maximise client space. We are also implementing strategies to maximise the visibility and use of physical resources in this new environment.

We are designing a new technical architecture to underpin all of our activities. In this new electronic environment we aim to become “invisible” – by making our services and resources available in a seamless fashion within research, teaching and learning workflows.

Our aim in creating a new Library is to make our services client-centric rather than library-centric. This paper documents for the first time how we are going about making this fundamental change.

KEYWORDS
Library Planning; Library Restructure; Library Design; Quality, Technical Infrastructure; Library 2.0
INTRODUCTION
In Australia, children frequently annoy their parents during long road trips by asking them repeatedly “Are we there yet?” For children, the destination is more interesting and important than the journey. At Macquarie University, we have recently begun a long journey to create a new Library. In response to changing client expectations and to our University’s new strategy we are making significant changes to service delivery by redefining staff roles, our organisational structure and by rebuilding our physical and electronic presence. Our destination is clear – we need to build a new generation service that is client-centric rather than library-centric. To achieve this, considerable effort and resources will be needed over time to make enduring change to both our service philosophy and our service delivery. To sustain us over our long journey we need more than just a destination, we also need a roadmap to guide us and some milestones to celebrate. This paper explores our change strategies, our roadmap and some of the milestones we have reached. We also explore the relevance of the concepts emerging from the Library 2.0 discussions (Casey & Savastinuk, 2006) to our journey.

BACKGROUND
Macquarie University is Australia’s innovative university located on a single campus at North Ryde in Sydney, NSW. Macquarie was founded in 1964 as a second-generation Australian university with a focus on conducting interdisciplinary research and teaching in the sciences, social sciences and humanities. About one-third of our 30,000 enrolled students are postgraduates and 30% are from countries other than Australia. An overview of the University’s new strategic focus under Vice Chancellor Steven Schwartz can be found in Macquarie@50 (Schwarz, 2006). In essence, our aim is to be among the top eight research universities in Australia and the top 200 in the world by the time the University is fifty years old in 2014. This new focus makes the Library’s vision and mission clear. Our vision is to be a world leader in the provision of information services to the university community. Our mission is to provide the services and resources that will allow Macquarie University to reach its target. Our vision, mission, values and major strategic goals for the next three years can be found in the Library’s Strategic Plan 2007-2009 (Macquarie University Library, 2006a).

The Library operates from a single building at the centre of the campus. The Library has 124 staff positions and an annual budget of A$16 million. As the result of an aggressive 10-year strategy to make resources and services available to clients wherever and whenever they need them, we have now become a true “hybrid” library, offering a blend of physical and virtual services. In 2004 we reached the tipping point, with just over 50% of the Library Acquisitions Budget spent on electronic resources. At the end of 2006 this percentage had risen to 64%. Over the three years 2004-2006 the total Acquisitions Budget rose by 7%, so this percentage increase is indicative of a real shift in spending. In 1999 we held 2,500 electronic journals. By the end of 2006 we licensed access to 32,000 electronic journals and 22,500 eBooks. During 2006 there were 5,564 physical visits and 5,460 website visits to the Library each calendar day – in other words almost half of our business is now electronic.

Our Client Satisfaction Survey underlines the significance of this shift. In 2002, two of the top ten issues of most importance to our clients were related to the delivery of electronic resources and services. In the 2006 Survey results these issues make up five of the top ten. The Survey results consistently show that there are actually three areas of core
library “infrastructure” that are important to our clients. These are our staff, our physical facilities and resources and our provision of electronic facilities and resources. Over time, the Survey results also show that there are significant gaps in the Library’s performance in all three areas. The extent of these gaps indicated to us that “quick fixes” or action in just one area were not going to be enough – we really needed to create a completely new Library for Macquarie University – a complete makeover of all parts of our infrastructure. An extensive review of the Library in 2003 indicated that we needed to implement some long-term change strategies if we were to deliver a vastly improved client experience in both the physical and virtual environments, supported by staff with the skills to work in this “hybrid” library.

So where did we start? In our view there is only one place to start and one place to finish and that is with people – our clients and our staff. To achieve our vision and mission we needed to develop the capacity to deliver new client experiences by shifting our mindset from library-centred to client-centred. We had to take a fresh look at our core infrastructure or capabilities – and the most valuable of these for the long-term was our staff. Discussions of Web 2.0 (Miller, 2005) and Library 2.0 (Casey & Savastinuk, 2006) had not begun in 2003/04 when we started our journey towards a new Library. It is fair to say that most of these discussions still do not focus on the transformative strategies needed to reskill and refocus library staff. However, many writers had identified the need for academic libraries to become more client-centred to meet the changing expectations of new generations of students (Abram and Luther, 2004; De Rosa, 2004; Oblinger, 2003). We contend that there will be no enduring move towards a client-centred organisation in most libraries unless there are also fundamental changes made to staff skills and structures. To achieve any sustainable changes to service models, our staff skills and performance need to be aligned to the University’s and the Library’s goals. Therefore, at the beginning of 2004, we chose the creation of new staff roles and team structures as our first strategy for long-term change.

STRATEGY 1: A NEW ORGANISATION

In 2004 Macquarie University identified ten key factors which provided its distinctive edge and comparative advantage. In all aspects of its academic programs Macquarie aimed to be innovative, research-based, entrepreneurial, interdisciplinary, postgraduate, borderless, international, collaborative, diversified and client-focused. These factors, coupled with changing client expectations and changing patterns of publishing, implied that any new organisational structure in the Library should facilitate:

- connection to our community
- innovation and change
- development of services and resources tailored to specific client groups, delivered at the point of need
- a research approach to our own development and decision-making
- delivery of services any time, anywhere to support the “borderless” university.

However, in 2004 we had 120+ out-of-date individual job descriptions (JDs) that were task-based rather than role based. Several staff had also been acting in positions for some time. We could not draw a workable organisation chart because of overlaps in functions. We had jobs that were focused only on physical resources and services and we had too many jobs where the “knowledge” was held by only one person. While we had jobs at each Higher Education Worker (HEW) level from 2-10 we had significant gaps in the organisation between the middle and top job levels, as shown in Figure 1:
This seemingly insurmountable “chasm” between levels 6 and 9 frustrated staff and limited their career and developmental opportunities. With an aging profession, this gap was also going to create problems for us in succession planning. In short we had a traditional “doing” organisation, not the “thinking and doing” organisation we needed to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing environment.

Our Roadmap
Our destination was clear – we needed to create a flexible structure that would assist us in achieving our goals, but how would we know that we were heading in the right direction, given that durable organisational change takes a long time? We decided to develop a set of principles, a roadmap which would guide our thinking and also be able to be used to test our change proposals. Six guiding principles were derived from our strategic planning process from an analysis of our external and internal environment and from the library and management literature (Kotter, 1995; Kaplan & Norton, 2005). To realise our vision, we believed the Library needed to be:

- **Agile** – able to innovate and be flexible, by creating a focus on service development, staff development and strong project management
- **Resilient** – able to renew and sustain itself by focusing on career structure, management and team “span”, entry level positions, investment in staff and their development, job satisfaction, creation of “future-proof” positions
- **Informed** – making decisions on the basis of reliable data, focusing on the collection of appropriate data, research, feedback, evaluation and review
- **Connected** – having close links within its teams and with its community, by focusing on understanding needs and expectations; defining services and service outcomes from a client perspective; good internal & external communication & marketing; representation on key internal & external committees
- **Successful** – delivering excellent, quality service by focusing on: refreshing our quality approach, establishing measures of success from a client perspective, conducting ongoing evaluation of projects and services
- **Responsible** – being ethical, professional, and accountable for providing resources and services that are value for money.
These principles became the basis for our first long-term change strategy to support our vision and mission as described in our *Strategic Plan 2005-06* (Macquarie University Library, 2004):

*To achieve excellence by implementing a flexible organisational structure which encourages innovation and allows us to be agile, resilient, informed, connected, successful and responsible*

**New Organisational Structure**

Using these principles, we have developed a new organisational structure and recast all 120+ Job Descriptions over a period of two years. The new organisational structure was based on core concepts from the balanced scorecard approach. It consists of six Departments and a Project Office, grouped according to whether the primary focus is on delivering services or on providing capability:

The **Library Services Group** comprises those functions that are our “core business”, making us a library rather than any other kind of organisation – *Information Access* (find, evaluate and use information); *Resource Access* (get access to documents in all formats); and *Information Resources* (manage the life cycle of documents in all formats). This Group reports to the University Librarian.

The **Library Capabilities Group** provides essential support for our core business operations and would be found in some form in organisations of any size. Without these capabilities the Library cannot function – *Library IT* (client support, infrastructure and application support); *Library Development* (staff and organisational development, communications and marketing, community engagement); *Library Business Services* (facilities, compliance, financial and risk management). In our environment these functions also provide direct client services in their own right: IT Training, Student IT Help, access to photocopying and other equipment. The **Library Project Office** also forms a part of this group, providing us with a focus and process for turning ideas into action. This Group reports to the Deputy University Librarian.

The University Librarian reports to the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Provost) for academic affairs, placing the Library where it belongs at the heart of the academic enterprise. The Library Committee of Academic Senate meets quarterly and advises the University Librarian and the Vice-Chancellor on the present and future needs of the Library. Each academic Division has a representative on this Committee and each academic Department has a Library liaison officer.

**Our First Milestone: Implementation of the New Structure**

In the first stage of the change we appointed the six Managers of the new Departments from within our existing pool of managers. Each Manager then used the guiding principles to propose a team structure, roles and required staff numbers for their Department, in consultation with each other and the Library Executive. A consultative process was established with staff, unions and University Human Resources under the terms of our Enterprise Agreement. Feedback was sought from staff on the first draft of the proposed changes and this feedback was incorporated in the final Change Proposals wherever feasible. We engaged a specialist external consulting group to assist us with the management of the change process and to write the new job descriptions for each Department, so that there was consistency across functions and job levels. Instead of 120+ individual task-based job descriptions we now have only 58 role-based, shared job
descriptions. We also negotiated a set of implementation principles, so that it was clear to individual staff how they would “translate” to a new job in the new structure.

After eighteen months of hard work the Departmental Change Proposals were lodged with the University’s senior management and the unions on 28 April 2006. The proposed changes were signed off on 29 May and we began implementing the new roles and teams within the Departments on 1 June 2006. In Phase 1 (June 2006) 84 staff translated to a new job at their substantive level and 14 staff translated to a job one HEW level higher. In Phase 2 we advertised 36 vacant positions within the Library, starting at the highest HEW levels and working down. This process was completed at the end of January 2007 and has resulted in 24 staff achieving a promotion and the resolution of another 4 long-term acting/grading issues. In Phase 3 the vacancies left by the internal recruitment process are being advertised externally. Recruitment to these 31 positions is expected to be completed by June 2007. In all, 42% of the staff in place during Phases 1 and 2 achieved a promotion or confirmation in a higher position, we will bring in one third new staff during Phase 3 and there was only one voluntary redundancy.

Did we follow our Roadmap?
How are the guiding principles reflected in the new structure and job descriptions? Here are some examples:

To encourage agility we have established the Library Project Office. We have two permanent programs within this Office – the Service Innovation Program and the Planning and Evaluation Program. Projects within these Programs are decided annually as part of the operational planning and budget process. Any member of Library staff with a passion for implementing one of these projects can apply for a secondment to a project position. Their substantive position is then backfilled for the duration of this secondment, giving other staff a developmental opportunity. Training in project management techniques is provided to Project Office staff and the language of project management – project plans and milestones – helps staff to identify with our organisational journey. In 2007 we are introducing the Eoin H. Wilkinson Service Innovation Grant, in memory of the second Macquarie University Librarian. The Grant will be offered annually on a competitive basis to encourage staff to submit ideas for service innovation. The successful applicant will then be attached to the Project Office for up to three months to develop a Project Proposal in more detail and will have access to travel and conference funds if applicable.

Our new structure has already proven that it is resilient. We deliberately chose to organise our teams of liaison librarians according to the patterns of use of the literature by different disciplines, rather than following the administrative structures of the University. Recent changes in the University’s structure have vindicated this decision and the teams will be extensible in the future with proposed additions to the University’s teaching and research interests. Our role-based, shared job descriptions were also designed to provide resilience so that we do not have vital knowledge and skills residing with a single individual. Positions are designed to deal with information resources in all formats and we have deliberately designed our entry level positions to attract those studying information science, IT and related disciplines. We are committed to developing the knowledge and skills of our staff to support the delivery of services and resources. We invest a sum equivalent to at least 1.5% of our total salaries budget each year in staff development. The first stage of this development program has been focused on building the knowledge base of our staff in relation to strategic and operational planning.
In addition, a number of our team leaders and Managers have attended the inaugural “Leaderships Essentials” program: a University initiative consisting of 3 modules covering core activities of the University, people and performance and an introduction to financial management.

The Planning and Evaluation Program within the Project Office provides the framework to encourage us to make decisions and service improvements on the basis of evidence and information. This work is discussed in more detail under Strategy 2.

Becoming better connected with our community, our profession and within the Library is the most important principle for achieving a client-centred service. From our Client Satisfaction Surveys we knew that our community had limited awareness of our services. In the new structure we have established a team within Library Development to coordinate our marketing and communication via physical and electronic channels. The new job descriptions identify key stakeholder relationships. Staff are encouraged to establish links in their stakeholder communities in as many ways as possible such as Committee memberships, discussion lists and informal chats. We deliberately structured our Information resources and Information Access teams in the same subject groupings to encourage the sharing of knowledge and skills. The Departments in our Capabilities Group are active in operational and project planning with all Departments in the Library. This supports the “connectedness” that is essential in planning and implementing services for our clients. Our plans to revitalise our quality service approach are discussed under Strategy 2. Our application of this principle of “connectedness” is now being influenced by discussions of Library 2.0, because “the heart of Library 2.0 is user-centred change” (Casey & Savastinuk, 2006). We now need to establish more frequent and meaningful participation by our clients in the service improvement process.

We took a responsible approach to implementing the new structure by containing costs to the available budget. These changes were funded from the existing operating budget after a realignment of expenditure, for example, conversion of a large casual staff budget into permanent and fixed term positions. There was no impact on the Acquisitions Budget, which is separately funded. One of our core values is that “We apply professional and ethical principles in all of our activities” (Macquarie University Library, 2004). We applied these principles during 2006 to the Academic Senate debate on academic freedom to ensure that “freedom to read” was reinforced in the new Senate Statement on Academic Freedom (Macquarie University Academic Senate, 2006). We have also created a focus on risk management and legislative compliance in Library Business Services.

Have we been successful in changing the structure to address career planning and to enable us to become the “thinking and doing” organisation? Figure 2 shows the new organisation superimposed over the old one:
In the old structure only 13% of the jobs were above HEW 6 – in the new structure 24% are above HEW 6 (the grade of an experienced librarian). This has been achieved by getting the balance right for HEW 5, 6 and 7. The new HEW 7/8 roles are team leaders and specialists with roles focused on evaluation and service improvement. We believe this change will encourage “thinking and doing”. The new role-based job descriptions focus on the “why” and “for whom” the job is being done – rather than the task-based: “what” was being done in the old job descriptions. This focus is an integral part of our second strategy - to create a new client experience based on a quality service approach.

Are we there yet?
So, are we there yet? We believe these changes show that we have put the fundamental building blocks in place for staff to begin their own journey towards a new organisation. Staff are beginning to document their personal journeys and the journeys of their teams (Pearson, Kelly & Martinelli, 2006) and the organisational change process has been commended by the University’s senior management. There is also clear evidence that our staff are engaging with the changes and there is a new energy in the Library. Clients noted an improvement in staff performance during the 2006 Client Satisfaction Survey.

Over the next three years the changes to roles and structure will be supported by extensive training and team building and by new approaches to quality service, planning, performance monitoring, governance and administration. During 2007 we are also reorganising internal spaces to bring the members of the new Departments together wherever possible. We have completely redesigned our planning process, starting with the vision and strategy of Macquarie@50 and cascading these goals through our Library Strategic Plan, annual operational plans and our individual performance plans. The University is introducing a new performance management system in 2007 and we are implementing this alongside a fresh approach to development and training based on the knowledge and skills documented in our new job descriptions. We will also run a benchmarked library staff satisfaction survey as an adjunct to the University’s Your Say Staff Survey. Our next milestones will be in these areas and the changes will be evaluated regularly and are already being fine-tuned where necessary.
STRATEGY 2: A NEW CLIENT EXPERIENCE

To be informed and successful in the future, we need to continue to move from a library-centric to a client-centric view of service development and delivery. Delivering a new client experience will blend our new structure and roles with a revitalised approach to quality, a new physical Library and a new technological infrastructure.

Quality Framework

We have a long-standing commitment to a quality service approach, which we continually refresh. Our services and quality assurance approach have been commended by a number of independent quality audits in the past 15 years. In 2002 we shared a Good Practice Award from the Universities and Colleges Information Systems Association (UCISA) with the London School of Economics for the Follow the Sun Student IT HelpDesk Service, providing 24x7 support on a reciprocal basis. We have conducted regular, benchmarked Client Satisfaction Surveys since 2001 and use our website to provide feedback to clients on our proposed action plans in response to the issues raised. We run a permanent Planning and Evaluation Program in the Project Office to manage our articulated set of strategic, operational and individual performance plans. During 2007 we are implementing a cycle of service reviews as part of our annual operational plans.

Up until 2004 we followed an approach based on the Total Quality Service methodology as articulated in Towards Quality 2002 (Carnaby, 2002). In 2004 we evaluated additional frameworks that would help us to develop and manage our emerging “hybrid” library service. We chose the IT Service Management Framework (ITIL) and have been working since 2004 to implement this where relevant across the library’s operations. Our rationale for and progress with the adoption of ITIL have been described in two previous papers (Fletcher & Peasley 2005; Peasley & Fletcher, 2005). In 2006 we also introduced our first Client Service Charter (Macquarie University Library, 2006b).

Our goals for improving service delivery for 2007-09 are to:

- simplify and integrate services for clients to encourage self-sufficiency in finding and using information
- develop and tailor services for specific client groups.

So far in 2007 we have reduced the number of service points and improved our signage to help clients navigate their way around the Library building more easily. We are about to undertake a web usability study so that we can simplify online access to services and resources. We are aiming to increase self-service loans to at least 60% of total loans and we are exploring resources and services that can be delivered using mobile communication devices. We are simplifying loan rules and have introduced an online tutorial for EndNote in collaboration with the University of Newcastle. In 2007 we will also introduce a new framework for quality assurance and benchmarking, including the establishment of client-centred measures of success. This new framework will incorporate the relevant concepts from Library 2.0 in a more explicit way to make sure that we maximise client participation to make us more “connected” in the development, evaluation and improvement of our services.

A New Library Building

A completely new client experience in the physical environment requires spaces designed for client needs. Rather than renovate and extend the existing Library, the University Council has approved a budget and site for the construction of a new central Library to meet the University’s research and learning needs for the next 40 years. The
core design concepts for the new building are “light” and “connection” - to provide a “strong, harmonious sense of place” with a focus on people and their interaction with knowledge. The Library will contain a range of flexible spaces to facilitate learning and research in association with the Library’s print and electronic resources and its physical and virtual services. The design of client spaces will draw on the work of experts in learning space and library design around the world (Oblinger, 2006) and on input from different client groups. The design will also need to meet the required targets for environmental sustainability.

Our guiding principles from our roadmap prove just as relevant here – flexible spaces (agile); a forty year life span with low maintenance costs (resilient); a design guided by best practice (informed) and by client input (connected); and environmentally sustainable (responsible). The success of the building will need to be measured by its use and by our ongoing evaluation and improvement of our services over time. As we expect to move into this new building at the end of 2009, this will be a task for 2010 and beyond.

There is another significant way in which the new design will be responsible. Our physical collections have now reached a size and level of usage that make it uneconomic to continue to make them available on open shelves. We have three choices – to discard print material in large quantities, to move lesser-used material to offsite storage or to build a more economic storage solution onsite. We have chosen the third option and will implement an automated storage and retrieval system (ASRS) onsite for 1.8 million volumes. Over the forty-year life of the building 80% of the physical collection will be stored in the ASRS and 20% on the open shelves. The ASRS requires 1/7 of the floorspace required by open access collections and the system acquisition cost is roughly equivalent to the cost of new library shelving.

Why have we chosen this option? There are three reasons – we are able to focus on designing spaces for clients rather than books, we believe that print is still a very important format for the future and this option has the cheapest life-cycle cost. In Library 2.0 terms there is evidence from other libraries that the system will help us to increase the use of our print collection over time by making access to it more convenient. How? Academic librarians are familiar with the “missing book” problem – items can be missing because the client does not know how to find them, a client has hidden them, or they are shelved in the wrong place. Use of an ASRS linked to the Library catalogue solves these problems. The client finds an item in the catalogue and then asks the ASRS to “get it”, with the typical delivery occurring within a few minutes of placing the request. This also improves convenience of retrieval, for example, the client can ask for an item to be retrieved from their office or home before they come into the Library.

The major reservation clients have about these systems is that it makes browsing much more difficult. However, large open access collections are not easy or comfortable to browse either and time is becoming a scarce commodity for academic staff and students. We are exploring a variety of ways to augment the online descriptions of books and journals to maximise their visibility and use in both electronic and print formats.

Library 2.0 concepts are relevant here, particularly those discussing the “long tail” (Dempsey, 2006). The ASRS allows us to reduce the cost of storage, aggregate the supply of physical material and improve convenience of use (i.e. reduce the transaction cost). If records for print materials are augmented and included in online search engines, then we are also starting to aggregate demand. The evidence already suggests this will increase the use of books in particular.
We are very fortunate to be starting a new journey in 2007 to build a new Library and to explore new ways of delivering our services in a new physical space designed to meet our clients’ needs. In the meantime we are making as many changes as are possible and reasonable to the existing building to improve the client experience. We are also using these changes as learning experiences to guide the design of the new building.

A New Technical Infrastructure
We believe we have implemented our last Integrated Library Management System (ILMS) at least in the form that we now know these systems. Why? Miller (2005) explains the core concepts of Web 2.0. These concepts are helping us to define change strategies for the Library’s technical infrastructure and applications which underpin the delivery of our electronic resources and services to clients. In this new electronic environment we aim to enhance self-service for clients and put our services and resources “in the paths of our clients” – by making them available in a seamless fashion within the workspaces used by researchers, teachers and learners. In other words our goal is to be “in your face, in your space”. This will require the design of workflow tools, including those described by Miller (2006) that can access services and resources wherever they reside.

As foundation infrastructure steps in 2007 we will replace our staff and client PC fleet and replace our aging infrastructure with a consolidated, virtualised server and storage environment that is compatible with the University’s central systems. We will invest in skilling staff to manage this new environment and will then assess and plan to implement a new range of tools that will help us move towards our goal.

Our approach to rebuilding our technical infrastructure also utilises our roadmap. Our implementation of a virtualised environment will allow us to be both agile and resilient. Our goal is to be connected in our clients’ workspaces; our choices are informed by best practice and we are being responsible in following a strategy that is compatible with central University IT. Implementation of a new client-centric toolset is a long-term strategy and our success will need to be evaluated over time.

CONCLUSION
Over the last three years we have built a more flexible organisation by redesigning our jobs and teams to anticipate and respond to the changing needs of our clients, the changing nature of information resources and our new strategic context. Over the next three years we will assist staff to make the transition to their new roles and to deliver on our strategic tasks each year. We will continue to evaluate our performance and to focus on service innovation and improvement, incorporating the relevant concepts of Library 2.0.

So are we there yet? In one sense we will never reach a final destination because there will always be new client needs and new challenges and opportunities in the environment. That is why we believe it is so important to have a roadmap to guide us and milestones to celebrate. These make our journey to create a new Library for Macquarie University far more interesting and valuable to us than any final destination. In the words of Constantine Cafavy (1911):

“When you set out on your journey to Ithaca
pray that the road is long,
full of adventure, full of knowledge…”
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