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Collaboration with Faculty: What They Don't Teach You in Library School

Presented by: Sarah Jane Dooley
Session 1441: June 15, 12:30pm
ASEE/ELD Annual Conference 2009

Strategies for Preparing for Collaboration

- Get to know your teaching faculty.
 - Send an email, or drop by their office.
 - Make an appointment with appropriate department heads to discuss the possibilities, and get on his/her regular departmental meeting agenda.
- Familiarize yourself with subject specialties/faculty research interests/publishers.
- Foster two-way communication.
- Focus on the repeat customer, slowly expanding information literacy programs.
- Focus efforts on previously targeted programs, and expand those.
- Gain credibility with faculty through reference and research assistance-present yourself as the subject resource expert.
- Initiating is the key to creating opportunities.
- Never say no if someone else initiates.
- Start small, and don't take on too much too soon or expectations will run even higher.
- Realize that some connections will take time to establish and continue improving those.
- Experiment with collaborative web technologies.

Interpersonal and Communication Strategies

- Teach people to treat you as they would any member of their department. Establish peer relationships with teaching faculty.
- Give everyone individualized attention (includes faculty and students); become their go-to. This will increase the number of referrals for classes, and grad student visits.
- Maintain a positive attitude and enthusiasm for libraries, instruction and reference.
- Show genuine interest in students, and student success.
- Explore different avenues of communication, find out what individuals prefer.
- Take risks, and be persistent and assertive. Don't be afraid to say no, and then suggest alternatives.
- Establish boundaries with teaching faculty. Inform them how you would like to work with them. Find out what is mutually beneficial.

Creating Opportunities to Network and Collaborate

- Develop more in-depth relationships with faculty to open doors for instructional opportunities.
 - Assist in the development of assignments for information literacy courses.
 - Never turn down an opportunity to guest lecture.
- Attend faculty meetings, and student conferences.
- Participate in campus-wide activities and mingle.
- Invite faculty to contact you for research assistance. Be a “personal librarian.”
- Never say no to an invitation to an informal lunch, or coffee.
 - Socialize with faculty to foster a more collegial and peer-level relationship

Offline Presence

- Attend parties, campus events, extracurricular activities (lunches, drinks, student banquets).
- Attend a graduate student conference, or thesis defense.
- Get on the department meeting agenda every year to remind people who you are and what you do.
 - Approach new faculty members.
 - Educate faculty about what you do, and how you can work with them.
- Go armed with an elevator speech, and a business card-sized handout outlining what you can do for them and their students
- Always initiate conversation when you see your faculty members.
- Participate in campus-wide activities, and volunteer outside the library.
- Market your services to faculty outside the library with a pamphlet and follow up with an email or phone call.
- Invite faculty to your information literacy sessions.

Online Presence

- Increase your visibility through online collaborative environments such as *Facebook* and *Libguides*.
- Educate faculty about online environments, and alert them of new online features, for products such as *Libguides*.
- Send regular emails alerting faculty to new products and services.

Recommendations

Libraries

- Provide documentation for new librarians outlining the needs of the faculty, and include recommended readings.
- Create a set of guidelines and realistic expectations of new librarians.
- Remember that collaboration needs to happen among peers before it can be expanded outside the library. More experienced librarians should set a good example.
- If a mentoring program for new librarians does not exist in your workplace, consider formalizing one.
- Encourage new librarians to participate in a mentoring program through a national association such as ASEE-ELD, or SLA.

Library School

- Collaboration needs to be addressed in the curriculum, in the context of networking outside the profession and within the workplace.

Teaching Faculty

- Once a connection is established, make an effort to maintain it.
- Work with your subject librarian to establish expectations.
- Think about how you could expand existing library programs.
- Keep in touch with your librarian on a regular basis.
- Spread the word! Tell your colleagues about a successful connection with your subject librarian.
- Keep an open mind when it comes to incorporating collaborative technologies into your library programs.

Sample Business Card-Sized Handout For Faculty

Front

Sexton Design & Technology Library

Examples of special instruction sessions:

- Library tours & Novanet Catalogue overview
- Research Methods sessions by discipline
- One-on-one research assistance for undergraduate and graduate students
- Graduate student orientations
- Introduction to Refworks, web-based bibliographic software
- Plagiarism and academic integrity

Back

To arrange an instruction session, please contact me:

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