

The Role of Librarians Today: The Liaison Librarian

“If librarians are to thrive as indispensable players, it will be necessary for them to be visible participants in the life of their Universities....Creative partnerships forged with all facets of the University community: faculty, IT departments, students, will allow the library to function as a key player at the heart of the life of the academy.” –Gromatzky, S.E. (2003). *Academic librarians 2012: Researchers, technologists and proactive partners*. Retrieved from <http://www.dlib.org/dlib/may03/marcum/05marcum.html>

Goals of the Liaison Librarian Program of the University Libraries

The Liaison Librarian Program supports the mission of the University Libraries and the University of South Dakota as it deploys Liaison Librarians to meet the reference, instruction, collection development, and outreach needs of the campus population and the community. The goals of the Program include:

- Build effective working relationships and collaboration between the University Libraries and the faculty
- Cultivate two-way communication between the University Libraries and academic departments
- Increase awareness of and use of library resources and services
- Inform planning for future library initiatives

Roles of Liaison Librarians

Two-Way Communicator

A Liaison Librarian is a professional, subject specialist who fosters two-way communication and collaboration between the University Libraries and an academic department. Liaisons connect with faculty, students, and others through personal communications (phone, email, listservs, mailings, presentations), department meeting attendance and presentations, office hours (in academic departments, libraries, or commons), appointments/consultations, committee involvement, collaborative projects, curriculum development, grant proposals and participation, joint research projects, publications/presentations, social and arts events and exhibits, search committees, and accreditation visits.

Partner and Collaborator

All of these efforts combine to create a new role for the Liaison Librarian as a partner with faculty. Liaison Librarians are uniquely qualified to bridge the gap between scholars and researchers in different disciplines because of their knowledge of the structure of information and knowledge of a wide variety of resources. Hence, Librarian Liaisons serve as a connector and supporter of faculty in different disciplines who want to work together on interdisciplinary research projects and grants. Liaison librarians can educate faculty on research practices in other disciplines. Liaison Librarians should become fully-integrated into the work of an academic department or program.

Outreach Specialist

The Liaison Librarian spends increasing amounts of time outside the University Libraries on campus and in the community. Liaison Librarians collaborate with external organizations including public and academic libraries and K-12 schools. Liaison Librarians connect with

potential incoming faculty during campus interviews and by serving on search committees for faculty and administrators. Liaison Librarians participate in new faculty and graduate student orientations or welcome sessions, as well as provide research orientation sessions for doctoral students who are working on their dissertations.

Technology Early Adopter and Integrator

Liaison Librarians develop new areas of expertise to assist and collaborate with the entire campus, including scholarly communication, copyright, institutional repository, digital library, eScience, academic honesty, citation management, information literacy modules and tutorials, web content, blogs, library study space design, digital media, etc. As early adopters of emerging technologies, Liaison Librarians work with and support ITS and CTL to test and implement new technologies (including mobile computing) on campus.

Reference and Research Expert

Liaison Librarians provide in-depth reference and research assistance to topical researchers as well as the campus and community in person, by phone, by email, through chat, and in consultations. Liaison Librarians also provide office hours in the University Libraries, in campus buildings, and in the Muenster University Center. Specially-trained librarians provide reference service from the Reference Desk in the I.D. Weeks Building.

Teacher

Liaison Librarians provide general information literacy instruction (English 101, Speech Communication 101, etc.), as well as instruction in how to conduct research in specific curricular areas upon request. All instruction is structured to assist students in learning to locate, evaluate, and apply information to solve problems and make decisions independently. Liaison Librarians and library staff provide sessions on services and systems, such as EndNote. Instruction is presented in face-to-face sessions, as well as through online LibGuides, tutorials, and Blackboard Collaborate sessions.

Collection Development

Liaison Librarians are responsible for selecting, managing, evaluating, and providing access to a balanced set of library resources in specific areas in support of USD's academic and research programs. Liaison Librarians collaborate with faculty in academic departments to ensure the appropriate materials are purchased each year with their allocated funds.

Values of Liaison Librarians

- Commitment to librarianship and higher education
- Commitment to developing, providing and maintaining high quality services and programs
- Valuing knowledge, and life-long learning
- Fostering collaboration and teamwork
- Engagement in professional development
- Regard for diversity of ideas and people
- Furthering internal and external communication
- Adherence to professional ethics
- Fidelity to intellectual freedom
- Integrity, competence, effective stewardship, and service to the profession as well as to the public
- An enterprising spirit reflecting flexibility, adaptability, intellectual curiosity, creativity, initiative, persistence

Competencies of Liaison Librarians

- Comprehensive knowledge of, as well as skill in interpreting and promoting, the University Libraries' resources, policies, and services
- Knowledge of the subject matter of and teaching and research conducted by the specific disciplines and academic departments they serve
- Understanding of the information needs of the disciplines and academic departments they serve
- Ability to collaborate with faculty to ensure development of appropriate information access skills are incorporated into the curriculum at all levels
- Knowledge of instructional technology and design to create learning objects that assist the population in learning how to access and manage scholarly information

Liaison Librarian Activities

- Work with faculty to design course-integrated assignments that use library services and resources and help students develop information literacy skills
- Collaborate with faculty on research projects, publications, presentations, and teaching
- Participate in the establishment of or planning for new academic programs
- Participate in writing of grant proposals or completion of grant projects
- Assist with academic department or campus self-study or accreditation reviews
- Assist in the planning of or participate in conferences or workshops related to the discipline
- Survey and document faculty research interests
- Meet with the academic department head, dean, and/or Departmental Library Coordinator periodically to learn about plans for the department
- Provide office hours in the academic department
- Prepare and distribute library information updates (electronic and/or paper) targeted to the academic department
- Notify faculty about new library materials of potential interest
- Send new books' list to faculty
- Write and maintain web-based subject and course guides (LibGuides)
- Teach a course or a course component in the academic department
- Schedule individual orientation meetings with new faculty and adjuncts
- Ask search committees to schedule a tour of the library and review of services during candidate interviews
- Work with Departmental Library Coordinator and other faculty to review the collection and subscriptions and select the best set of resources to meet current curricular and research needs
- Ensure the Libraries have a balanced collection in the discipline
- Create or update collection development plans and statements in cooperation with the Departmental Library Coordinator
- Determine and address needs of remote and nonresidential students and faculty