

Facilitators' Notes

[ASERL – ARL Library Liaison Institute](#)

Friday, April 27 - Saturday, April 28, 2018

Klaus Advanced Computing Center, Georgia Tech
266 Ferst Drive, Atlanta GA

Keynote: Liaison Futures, Anne Kenney

- Game changers: economic and digital realities; global imperatives; collaboration imperative (often worldwide); 21st century info professionals who need to get there but are not there yet.
- We are challenged to explain our value, so the challenge is to make the case and deliver services, resources, that benefit the academy
- Most liaison programs remain informal, fluid, no dedicated budget; turf issues (domain vs functional); inside-out; communication challenges. No one liaison can do it all. Liaison is important but individual labels may not be. Maybe move to team approach rather than individual approach
- Outside-in - we depend on them to come to us. But we have to meet them in their spaces. (Stakeholder map from OSU for research lifecycle)
- Communication - last mile is the hardest, weakest link. Bottleneck of a liaison program and its intended audience. Libraries focus on production of content, but users are unaware of services and expertise
- How to move forward:
 - Focus on university indicators (impact factors, analytics, dashboards, AAUDE, IPES, etc) - what are indicators that are important to institution suggesting about library involvement. Look at areas which may benefit from library intervention
 - Partner on campus - understand how your university organizes itself administratively for research, student services, teaching etc.
 - Develop intervention strategies at points of pain and need - not just what, but when and where to do it.
 - Scale labour-intensive efforts - move from one-offs to impacts at dept or disciplinary level; using online tools; mining data to target specific actions (example: data management planning tool with 28K users and plans)
 - Quantify goals and progress: track liaison activity as baseline; focus on outputs not inputs; monitor and measure university requirements that library can advance (e.g. NIH public compliance monitoring system)
 - Build iteratively - identify goals, figure out enabling prerequisites (what you need to have in place to move forward); develop measurements and yardsticks; define success
 - Move beyond the institution - collaboration; shared core understanding and practices - maturation requires collaborations
 - Key questions: what does the library do to promote academic productivity?; how does our engagement improve student, faculty lives?

Icebreaker: what is your favorite part of your job and why?

Liaison competencies mashup

Imagine you would take these eliminated/added competencies back to your home institution - how would you share this and what do you think the replies would be and how would you respond to critiques?

- Tie to library and institutional strategies/strategic plans
- Unpack the resistance to individual problems, and see how you can solve them one by one - break down the problem to individual issues and address those.
- Use this event to your benefit i.e. that you heard this at an important institute with dozens of your colleagues -- but be careful with that, because deans do that and it doesn't go well.

ARL Scenarios vis a vis Competencies

- Question came up about finding new sources of money - many are focused on finding alternative sources of funding to make up for lost funds/stagnant budgets from the state - we noted that mostly the search for new money is for collections, although there were one or two exceptions. There was no discussion about reimagining current costs and redeploying funding elsewhere (question: perhaps it's possible that state mandates separate labour and collections money, making it hard to flip between the two?)

Round Robin/Birds of a Feather

Open discussions on the following topics:

- What can we stop doing?
- Subject and functional liaisons working together
- Libraries and student analytics
- Identifying and engaging new library partners
- Liaison communications (strategies for marketing and PR)

Wrap up/Topics for the next day

Facilitators' Observations:

- We were struck by how easy you found it to agree on ways that you could shift the balance from traditional activities to new forms of engagement.

- We were struck by seeing a lot of agreement on reducing collection related activities and at the same time a feeling of real urgency to find funds to support collections.
- We've noticed that terms like **high impact** and **return on investment** and **customer** are easier to bring into the conversation now than when we started these institutes.
- We hear a lot of storytelling, empathy around how to engage with these topics when you return to your libraries.

What are your reflections?

Several comments on how valuable this was, how this was a rare opportunity to look at liaison holistically; one comment about how almost nothing was devoted to instruction, which is important (please put on unconference list, which we did); how do we now take what we have learned and bring it back to our institutions for reflection and discussion?; suggestion that nothing we talk about is being discussed in library education, could we bring an institute to a library education program?

Unconference suggestions: Thanks for great suggestions, we'll review & merge some if necessary into topics for tomorrow

Feedback - if there anything you'd like to share anonymously, please write it on a sticky note and leave it on the table & we'll find it when we tidy up

John will share list of participants w/ email addresses on Monday [done]

Unconference

Report-outs on Unconference topics:

Leveraging students and faculty for engagement, outreach, & research support

- Giving out library swag, having library table at campus events
- Partnering with other depts to bring events into the library e.g. celebration of student writing held in the library; librarians help judge poster event
- Utilizing students as peer research consultants
- Setting aside part of library as Scholars' Corner - partnership w/office of undergraduate research
- Panel discussion of faculty and grad students targeted towards u'grads thinking about grad school in a particular field

Rita adds suggestions on sustainable activities that did not come out of feedback:

- Curriculum integration - being part of curriculum development, committees, to work w/faculty within depts to determine where info lit might best be deployed
- Work w/centers for teaching support to advance faculty and TA ability to inject information literacy into assignments, courses, programs

New organizational structures to advance liaison work

- Lots of difficulty coming up w/org structure that works well for liaisons; rather, the group commiserated about silos, varying reporting structures
- Ideas included organizing by function, interdisciplinarity, user base

What can liaisons do to sustainably advance student learning outcomes?

- Challenges: word sustainability is operative word - what's meaningful but won't take up extreme amount of time and still mean something? Assessing every single student's learning outcomes = not sustainable; how do we look at sustainable scale: sample/focus on one class
- Suggestion: moving things online: tutorials, assessments; working w/core faculty
- Targeting particular student learning outcomes + institutional learning outcomes - do they match up with what you're trying to do?

How can liaisons engage w interdisciplinary/global/collaborative research teams?

- Univ of Miami becoming hemispherically focused - engaging with Latin America & Caribbean, making presence more known there physically and by figuring out who univ and library already working with - collecting data, developing MOUs, creating collaborative research proposals; NB faculty can be v protective of their relationships
- With pan-university institutes, lots of opportunity b/c faculty from different disciplines can be brought to same table to talk about resources, tools for collaboration, library services, student learning systems; advocacy for interdisciplinary collections and licenses - making sure all members of a research team can access, use the resources

Added by Rita: broad liaison teams can help support interdisciplinary research teams

How can liaisons self-assess their impact?

- Surveys, emails, but also: how to avoid survey fatigue?
- Suggestion: Finding a partner in a liaison area to send a survey on your behalf so it doesn't look like 'just another library survey'
- Controlled randomized trial mentality for collecting data - making sure you're comparing apples to apples; including more qualitative rigor
- How more doesn't equal better - qual v. quant; don't make people dependent on you to boost your stats
- Keep customer profiles
- Coffee dates w/faculty
- Getting embedded in dept curriculum and pedagogy conversations

Rita adds: We've always quantified what we've done, now we're thinking about assessing relationships; may be small ways to figure out how successful we are in advancing relationships

How will administrators need to adjust performance criteria to support 21st century liaison work?

- Lots of talk about job descriptions, making sure they're reflective of changing times
- Avoid very fluffy, vague job descriptions

- Invite liaisons to write out what their job will look like in 5 yrs, help them get there
- Clearly articulate performance criteria + how you're going to assess/measure those
- In re: working as teams, colleagues - questions of territoriality, turf may come from corporate creep
- Tension b/w quantitative vs. element of reflection between admin and liaison
- Be in tune w/people you work with - admins need to be aware of their team, when they're becoming overwhelmed, when to delegate - your job is to help people succeed, be mindful of that in assessment of work

Final Wrap Up: What ASERL can do for you?

- Listserv, possibly by cohort
- Access to ARL job description job bank is available through ASERL
- Cohort conversations via a future conference calls
- Evaluation criteria specific to liaisons - ARL (Rita) developing this
- Try to prompt get-togethers or sessions at state library conferences
- Can we also hear from folks at community colleges and other places that have liaison programs?
- ASERL webinar, blog appreciated - put out a call in 6 months to ask for success stories and host a webinar to share that
- Rita had an idea to invite sharing from organizations outside of libraries (industries) that have customer representatives