

Personal Librarians:

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Building Relationships Across Campus

Beginnings of the Personal Librarian Program at Princeton: Overview

- Launched as a “pilot” in Fall 2017
- Modeled after Yale’s program
- Began with first/second year students, paired randomly
- Only reference/subject librarians involved at first
- Collaboration with PU registrar

Beginnings of the PL Program at PU: Technical

- Registrar sent undergraduate ids in August
- Each PL assigned a student roster of 50-100
- [Public facing page](#) in case students want to proactively locate their PL
- Each PL downloads student roster from .csv file
- PLs instructed to use Bcc for emailing

Early Pitfalls

BCC method of emailing yielded very low student response rate

Ambiguity regarding inclusion of juniors/seniors—some subject specialists felt we were treading on their turf and mutinied

PLs dropped out due to low morale

Initial improvements and progress

- Switched to Word/Outlook “mail merge”
- Separate emails to first/second years and juniors/seniors
- PL ranks “self culled” to those most interested
- [Internal PL website](#) with templates, documentation
- Inclusion of non-librarians
- PL program proved crucial during pandemic

Early Statistics

Total Undergraduates: 5353

First year:1357 Second year:1337 Juniors:1319

Number of PLs 2017/18: 36 2018/19: 24

Student contacts for one PL with 450 students:

AY2017-8: 12 AY2018-9: 103

Recent Refinements (staffing and technical)

- Training of non-librarians and catalogers who want experience helping students
- Mail merge proved cumbersome; consulted with other PL programs about email platforms
- In late summer 2021 discovered [Campus Groups](#) platform and ran with it
- Centralized statistics recording (rather than in 2 places) ([libinsight form](#) replaces [google sheet](#))

Features of new emailing platform

- Ability to share email templates and images with PL colleagues
- Ability to tag student netids (e.g., with PL netid, athletic teams)
- Can send reminder emails to PLs if they forget, etc
- Ability to send "personalized" email to all undergraduates at once (e.g., for events)

<http://my.Princeton.edu>

Recent Refinements to Mission/Vision

- Emphasis on “empathy” and “support” aspect of PL program
- Warm/fuzzy emails with graphics [[examples](#)]
- Lunches for PLs in which we discuss successes, ideas for further refinement
- Looking to support underserved populations on campus--
DEI

Long Night Against Procrastination (LNAP)

- Piloted this end-of-term outreach tied to PL Program
- Sent out one email from personallib@Princeton.edu to all undergraduates announcing the event
- Within an hour we hit registration cap [[advertising](#)]
- Omicron came and we had to switch to virtual because of high registration
- Solicited volunteers from PL ranks

First In-person LNAP (spring 2022)

- Over 300 students showed up; exciting, supportive atmosphere
- Advertised both by PL emails and via social media
- 6-11pm on a Sunday night 3 days away from Dean's Date
- Staffed by Librarians and Writing Center Fellows
- Ran out of food 3 times during event

Changes to Second LNAP event

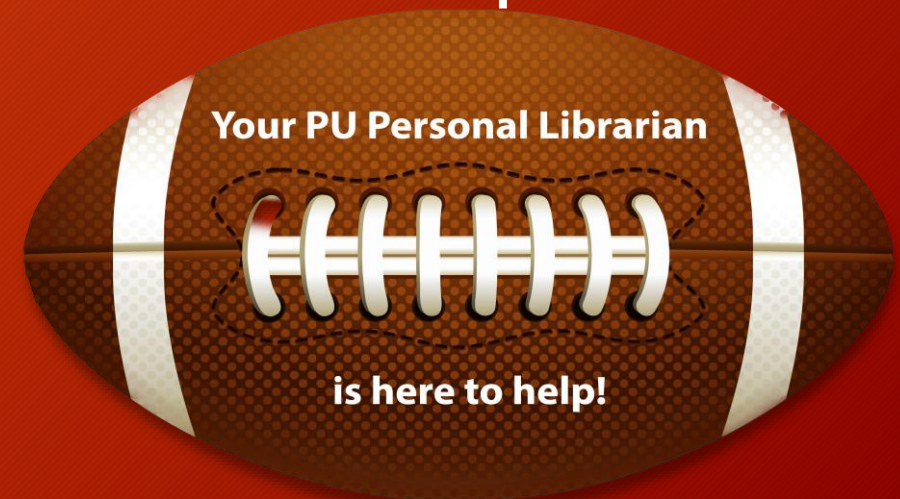
- Controversy about shaming effect of word “Procrastination”
- Expanded to two campus library locations—Main library and “collaboration hub” in Science Library
- Science library had popcorn maker with toppings—big hit
- Was not permitted to advertise globally using “personallib” account

Expansion of PL Program: Athletic Teams PL

- Dean of Student Services saw Instagram post about LNAP event—she'd never of the program. She reached out to Library Communications and they forwarded her to me
- She wanted to pilot a PL program for athletes
- We decided to start with Football team since many were struggling academically

PL Football Pilot

- I was invited to a panel for junior/senior football players. While presenting the PL program, I mentioned my 8-year old football-playing son and the coach invited us to a practice!
- Men's and Women's Bball teams learned of the FB pilot and "demanded" their own!
- DEI component



Fall 2023 Developments

- Athletic Teams expanded to Track & Field, Wrestling, and Hockey
- Creation of "Freshman Scholars Institute" Cohort (First gen, low income students)
- Using "badges" functionality in my.princeton.edu so that students can proactively discover who their PI is before ever receiving an email

A Few Student Testimonials

From a junior: *I now realize how much time and effort I wasted in the past...all Princeton students should take full advantage of this resource.”*

From a senior who had never contacted a librarian (due to fear and stress):

“My personal librarian not only pointed me to resources and a subject specialist, but talking to her gave me confidence that I can do this!”

Future Developments

- Adding more athletic teams next year
- First generation, low income students (“Freshman Scholars Institute” which prepares students over the summer for rigors of Princeton)
- Graduate students

Questions?

I'd love to hear from you!
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