

University Libraries Liaison Librarian Best Practices

Approved 12/15/2016, Updated 10/17/17

Introduction

Library liaison roles at the University of Northern Colorado (UNC) vary. Some liaisons work with a single department or program, while others work with multiple departments, programs, schools, or entire colleges. Liaisons may also work with university support services, co-curricular offices, or other entities both on and off campus. With the changing roles and responsibilities of UNC Liaison Librarians, this best practices document is intended to provide guidance for liaison work.

Library liaison work encompasses a wide range of activities that can be categorized into the following focus areas: Collections, Public Relations, Research Support, Scholarly Communication Services, and Teaching and Learning. Each focus area of liaison work is followed by examples of best practices. Liaison Librarians should use the document when setting work-plan goals. The lists provided are illustrative options and are not exhaustive. Liaisons may have goals beyond what is mentioned in this document. Just as the work of Liaison Librarians differs, so too will the best practices employed by each liaison.

Liaison Librarians are most effective when they share their practice and learn from others. UNC Liaison Librarians are expected to share effective practices and communicate and collaborate with each other.

Assessment is essential to the improvement of teaching, learning, and service. Liaisons are expected to assess work in each focus area to ensure continuous improvement and quality.

Mark Anderson

Lyda McCartin

Jennifer Mayer

Stephanie Wiegand

The document is adapted from the Ohio State Libraries' *A Framework for the Engaged Librarian: Building on our Strengths*.

Focus Areas

Collections

Liaison Librarians develop collections by contributing to the selection of content and tools that support campus curriculum, research, and student and faculty success. The core activities of collections may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Manage funds and advocate for resources to support the acquisition of content and tools with the most value for UNC's curriculum, research, and student and faculty success
- Work effectively with other library faculty to enhance acquisition, access, discovery, and use of the library collections
- Develop and maintain an approval plan where appropriate¹
- Assess use of collections to manage resources and increase the value of collections for users
- Regularly review collections to ensure that they reflect current research and scholarship at UNC and appropriate formats for current technologies
- Keep abreast of new tools and content that advance research and teaching at UNC
- Consider budgetary implications when advocating for new tools and content
- Expend funds effectively and in a timely manner
- Review donated materials for inclusion in the collections
- As appropriate, apply for and expend fundraising and endowment monies to support faculty and student needs and supplement current collections

Public Relations

Liaison Librarians strategically communicate with liaison areas, build mutually beneficial relationships with teaching faculty and other UNC constituencies, and, as possible, partner with faculty in research and teaching. The core activities of public relations may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Communicate strategically with members of assigned areas
- Develop and maintain partnerships between library faculty and assigned areas in collection development, teaching and learning, scholarly communication services, grants and research projects, and other areas of mutual interest
- Develop and improve programs and services that respond to identified needs and priorities of students and faculty and to strategic plans of the campus and library
- Facilitate problem-solving for assigned areas in relation to library services and collections
- Publicize library collections and services and promote the library as an intellectual meeting place for programming, conversation, and inquiry
- Respond quickly to inquiries from the campus and surrounding communities

¹ Following the book acquisition guidelines as adopted on 10/20/16

- Assess efforts using appropriate techniques and use assessment data to improve public relations
- Seek opportunities to support or serve on departmental search committees; for example, work with departments to be a part of the on-campus interview for new faculty (e.g. provide a library and/or campus tour)

Research Support

Liaison Librarians support university research activities and initiatives by providing specialized services to faculty and students. The core activities of research support may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Proactively engage with researchers
- Monitor department and university communications to develop current awareness of information needs, initiatives, programs, and activities
- Provide timely research support and research consultations that involve subject or other in-depth specialized areas of expertise
- Provide research support to interdisciplinary programs and strategic priorities at the library and campus levels
- Offer regular, virtual, and in-person office hours in departments and other campus spaces
- Provide research guidance for students pursuing long-term projects, such as capstones, theses, or dissertations
- Identify products that support research endeavors and request trials as needed through library channels
- Create and regularly update online research guides, tutorials, research portals, blogs, and other resources as needed
- Pursue opportunities to be a member of a faculty research team
- Regularly assess research support services using data from library software, website and database usage, and feedback from constituents

Scholarly Communication Services

Liaison Librarians share expertise on the traditional and emerging systems by which research is conducted, disseminated, evaluated, and preserved. University Libraries aspires to be the nucleus of a campus wide structure that promotes and encourages research and interdepartmental collaborations. The core activities of scholarly communication services may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Promote the institutional digital repository to faculty and students and inform them about other relevant digital repositories
- As possible, put one's own research into the digital repository
- Provide tools and advice for students and faculty on citation management
- Explain libraries' policies regarding reproduction of copyrighted materials for educational purposes

- Monitor developments in copyright law and refer interested parties to standard interpretations of copyright law
- Assist in identifying copyright owners and obtaining copyright permission
- Advocate for author's rights
- Monitor and communicate developments in open access and public domain resources that may be useful alternatives to published texts in curricula or for student and faculty research
- Partner with Technical Services librarians to make resources more discoverable; where appropriate, create access tools for open access resources to increase discoverability
- Be familiar with departmental publishing requirements for tenure and promotion
- Offer impact analysis support

Teaching and Learning

Liaison Librarians collaborate with colleagues within and beyond the libraries on developing, delivering, assessing, and improving information literacy initiatives across campus in support of institutional and program outcomes. The core activities of teaching and learning may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Practice basic principles of instructional and assignment design appropriate to information literacy instruction
- Communicate with faculty/instructors about expertise in information literacy instruction to negotiate the best use of time and learning outcomes for a library session
- Employ a variety of teaching techniques such as active learning, problem solving, or gaming
- Provide alternative learning opportunities, such as online synchronous/asynchronous instruction, online modules, or research consultations
- Collaborate with program faculty to integrate information literacy into degree programs through curriculum mapping
- Support faculty on assignment design to encourage scaffolding information literacy throughout a degree program
- Engage in professional development in teaching and assessment to improve curriculum design, assessment, teaching, and learning
- Assess library instruction using appropriate techniques
- Use assessment data to improve teaching and learning
- Assess teaching through regular self-assessment and regular peer evaluation