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Academic Libraries and Non-Academic Departments: A Survey and Case Studies on Liaising Outside the Box

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Abstract

Partnering with non-academic departments allows academic libraries to create new programming ideas and reach more students. According to the results of a national survey, academic librarians at institutions of all sizes are partnering with many different types of non-academic departments. These partnerships offer efficiencies through shared cost and staffing and offer additional benefits to all groups involved. This article identifies the non-academic departments that these libraries are partnering with, highlights potential events to raise awareness of services, and describes ways in which these partnerships help engage with students.

Keywords: collaboration, partnerships, campus partners, liaisons, academic support services, outreach, academic libraries

Introduction

Academic libraries are increasingly working with non-academic departments on their campuses to form partnerships that benefit both groups. In order to find out how and why academic libraries are collaborating with non-academic departments, the authors surveyed librarians across the United States. Libraries of varying sizes are partnering with non-academic departments; these partnerships create new ways to offer and promote services to students, and in many cases, help to save time and money. In this article, the authors examine the types of partnerships that libraries are creating with their campus communities across the country and present the findings from their survey.

While it is clear from the literature that libraries are partnering with non-academic departments to create programs and support students through co-curricular activities, most of the literature refers only to collaborations in very narrow instances such as one-time partnerships for

single events or within the construct of an information or learning commons. This article attempts to broadly identify current academic library partners, what types of programming and activities come from these partnerships with non-academic departments, and why libraries value those partnerships.

Recently, colleges and universities have been moving support services into campus libraries for multiple reasons, but regardless of co-location, libraries are positioned to leverage partnerships to aid student retention.¹ Libraries are establishing partnerships with student health and wellness divisions, counseling centers, writing centers, career services, and advising centers, among others. Sometimes these partnerships are based on physical proximity of services points, sometimes they are based on existing librarian liaison relationships, and sometimes they stem from librarian expertise.

Reasons for Collaboration



Collaborations between libraries and non-academic departments may begin for a variety of reasons. In some libraries, partnerships begin with solid planning and forethought in order to reach a broader audience with students. Libraries may partner with non-academic departments in these circumstances to utilize referrals and co-location to raise awareness of available services for both partners.² In related circumstances, partnerships are often born from identifying student needs and a desire to align the library to new strategic goals.³

Libraries are viewed as neutral spaces or a “third place” on college campuses. Introducing the concept of the third place in *The Great Good Place*, Ray Oldenburg identifies the first and second places as home and work respectively.⁴ Although these places are not regularly discussed in library literature directly, if campuses are a microcosm of the models Oldenburg is examining, these might map to residential spaces like dorms or Greek housing (first place) and classrooms, academic departments, and lab spaces (second place).⁵ Third places are neutral ground where patrons can gather with social equality.⁶ Libraries are unaffiliated with specific departments, offer equity of access, and are open on the traditionally off-hours, making them ideal partners for student support services. Other examples of third places on a campus could be student unions, cafes, dining halls, and other open meeting areas.

As a third place, the library is regularly identified as an appropriate location to combine student support services. In these circumstances, the planning to create an information commons or a learning commons may focus on the dedicated audience already utilizing the library.⁷

With Digital Humanities programs, libraries are often chosen as a partner because of how libraries support open access to information and their dependable knowledge of the organization of research and data.⁸ In “Collaboration Success in

the Dataverse,” about Deakin University Libraries and the creation of the Humanities Networked Infrastructure project (HuNI), the authors attempt to pin down why the library’s partnership is necessary, and conclude that, “For humanities researchers, libraries are valued as partners due to their reputation for providing robust services that are ‘always on,’ and for their stewardship in providing trusted safe keeping of the human record.”⁹

Public libraries often work in ways that are different than academic libraries; however, in many ways their reasons for partnering outside the library would apply to academic libraries. In “Reaching Beyond Library Walls,” Adrienne Strock defines types of collaborations and partnerships and the events that could result from these relationships, and notes that, “Partnering can relieve us of the burden of being an expert in all things as we push the realm of library services to provide more dynamic opportunities for teens in order to provide them with necessary 21st century skills.”¹⁰ Although this article is aimed at teen librarians, the same idea applies on college campuses. Partnerships between public libraries and community organizations can often fill an information need. Public libraries benefit by saving staff time and energy, building stronger ties to the community, and providing services that would possibly be unavailable otherwise.¹¹

Collaborations in Practice

Library buildings are increasingly becoming spaces to provide additional support services to students. As previously mentioned, this is often accomplished through the creation of learning commons within libraries.¹² While the particular components of the learning commons can vary among libraries, the general idea is that a range of academic support services are co-located in one convenient space in the library; specific support services are chosen at each institution to best serve local student populations and often to



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solve other campus space needs. The addition of writing center services for students is another common route to provide co-curricular activities in the library.¹³ Some schools find it beneficial to their student population to partner with student affairs.¹⁴ Often this relationship is one that benefits the student on a holistic level while opening a new route for marketing of library services.¹⁵ Libraries also purposefully collaborate with offices that are dedicated to disability or diversity to create stronger connections and ensure that all students are receiving the support they need.¹⁶

A well-established space in many academic libraries is the information commons.¹⁷ Though this space may look slightly different depending on the campus, one commonality is that many information commons are home to campus information technology services. In these spaces within the library, students may get technology help, use elaborate technology, and attend workshops for specific technology needs. Information commons, similar to the learning commons mentioned above, are meant to take advantage of the “third place” of the library and provide support for multiple services in one location.

At Jacksonville State University, the library partnered with two non-academic departments to form new relationships that benefitted both parties. In one relationship, the library partnered with the Services Photographic department, alumni relations, and the marketing division to organize, scan, and house a collection of old negatives, images, and yearbooks to preserve them for use and allow better access to this collection. This collaboration increased staffing and helped the library purchase essential equipment, and thus allowed the library to complete this project.¹⁸

Outcomes of Collaboration

Libraries are often sought after as partners to support student retention. One form of this is librarian integration with First Year Seminar classes. In “The Library as an Academic Partner in Student Retention and Graduation” Jesus Sanabria writes of the ways that Bronx Community College of the City of New York began integrating faculty and services from across campus, including the library, and in this way, the library was able to position itself as a strong contributor to student retention.¹⁹ Similarly, efforts to create embedded librarian activities directly relate to student retention.²⁰

There has been a recent focus on High Impact Practices (HIP) in higher education, a concept originally conceived of by George D. Kuh. In “High-Impact Educational Practices: A Brief Overview,” Kuh defines HIP as “...practices that educational research suggests increase rates of student retention and student engagement.” These practices can include “First-Year Seminars and Experiences, Common Intellectual Experiences, Learning Communities, Writing-Intensive Courses, Collaborative Assignments and Projects, Undergraduate Research, Diversity/Global Learning, Service Learning, Community-Based Learning, Internships, and Capstone Courses and Projects.”²¹ When used effectively, these practices often positively influence students to stay enrolled and earn better grades. Libraries contribute to identified HIP through an emphasis on providing strong student services and offering a collaborative learning environment.²²

Libraries are often proactive in efforts to recruit and retain students. According to a study conducted by Southern Illinois University librarians, most librarians are encouraged by the university to engage in recruitment efforts and many do so on their own.²³ This tie to the office of admissions is an important relationship that highlights how libraries can play an active role on campus in enrollment.



Methods

In order to comprehensively determine what collaborations between academic libraries and non-academic departments look like, the authors developed a survey in Qualtrics and distributed it mainly through listservs. The listservs used serve the ACRL University Library Section, ACRL Library Marketing and Outreach, and the ACRL Instruction Section. These listservs were chosen based on the types of questions and discussions that regularly occur between their subscribers. The survey was also distributed through the Facebook groups ACRL Library Marketing and Outreach, Programming Librarian, and Libraries and Social Media, which were identified as the main hubs of conversation about creating events and marketing services.

The survey was anonymous, potentially with up to 78 questions depending on certain conditions. Respondents were not required to answer all questions if they were not applicable to their experience. The questions were both qualitative and quantitative and fit into four main categories: basic institutional information, current non-academic department partners, and general information about these partnerships, with the last section consisting of in-depth questions about each departmental partnership and its benefits. Respondents had the option to leave the survey whenever they felt necessary. The survey received 180 complete responses. The authors coded the answers to open-ended questions to ease in analyzing the results.

Goals of the Survey

Both of the authors of this survey create programming and provide services with non-academic departments on their campuses, but were unable to find relevant research on this particular area of library partnerships. This survey was created to discover what other librarians were doing in this regard and to dispense information

to those that may need inspiration and guidance. Coming from different sized institutions, the authors could see from their experience that creating partnerships and the resulting programming activities could vary greatly.

The questions in this survey addressed needs that librarians performing outreach might find important. One question sought to ascertain the balance of power in the relationship between the library and the non-academic department, and was designed to determine how often the library is in control of the partnership. Another question asked about funding since librarians may often have to conduct outreach without a dedicated budget. The survey included questions about institution size and asked if the respondent’s library has a position that is dedicated to doing outreach/liaising with non-academic departments (compared to having the outreach responsibilities dispersed informally among the librarians). Finally, the survey attempted to determine what sorts of assessment programs these librarians use.

Results

The respondents to the survey were evenly spread in size of institution, with roughly one third in each of the smaller two categories and another third in the largest sizes (see Table 1).

Table 1. Institutional Enrollment

| # | Field | Choice | Count |
|---|-----------------|--------|------------|
| 1 | < 5,000 | 35.00% | 63 |
| 2 | 5,000 - 15,000 | 30.56% | 55 |
| 3 | 15,000 - 30,000 | 21.11% | 38 |
| 4 | 30,000+ | 13.33% | 24 |
| | | | 180 |



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Dedicated Librarian Position

A question about whether the library has a position whose duties specifically involve working with non-academic departments shows that close to two-thirds of respondents (62%) work at an institution that has a position dedicated to working with non-academic departments, which means that many libraries do not have a position dedicated to this important role. As seen later in this article, libraries benefit in many ways by dedicating time and energy to building relationships with campus partners. When there is no identified librarian in this position, communication may be haphazard and not strategic, and the relationships may be inconsistent. Keeping the results from Table 1 in mind, it is possible to make some correlations between the size of an institution and whether there is a dedicated outreach position. At all but the smallest schools (less than 5,000 FTE) 73% of respondents reported having an outreach position on average. At that smallest FTE, 55% of respondents in this category do not have a position dedicated to outreach to non-academic departments. Therefore, it is possible that at smaller institutions, librarians will often wear many hats and are unable to focus on this specialized area of librarianship.

Non-Academic Partners

In order to determine the most common partnerships, the survey provided a list of specific departments from which to choose (Academic Advising, Accessibility Office, Athletics, Career Services, LGBTQ Support Services, Office of Fellowships / Grant Support, Residential Life, Student Affairs, Student Health / Counseling Services, Veterans Support, and Writing Center). Respondents were also able to select "Other" and submit additional non-academic departments. These partnerships vary widely. Partner departments are likely dependent on the structure of each individual institution. The responding libraries are partnering with roughly fifty

different department types. The three most common departments were not unexpected: Seventy-eight percent of our respondents partner with a writing center, 57% partner with student affairs, and 41% partner with career services. Some schools had unique partnerships; for example, with a community garden, food services, and campus museums. Though there was only one mention of each of these partnerships, they offer insightful suggestions of places libraries might look to form partnerships on their own campuses.

All non-academic departments that had only one mention were grouped together in the "Other" category in Figure 1. Some departments were duplicated in the responses. A respondent might indicate they do not work with the "Writing Center," but they do work with the campus "Writing Place." In these cases, we coded these data as the same department. In some cases, differing campus structures could lead to varying responses, and some departments not being indicated as partners. For example, Instructional Design may not be a distinct department on every campus, and in some cases, may be a part of a faculty teaching and learning center. The authors made an attempt to stay as true to the respondent's answers as possible. In the remainder of this article, we examine only the eleven most commonly referenced departments.

The shape of these partnerships also differs among campuses when it comes to how long libraries have worked with their partners. Most of the partnerships (36%) between campus libraries and their non-academic departments are more than five years old, while only 5% of respondents reported that they were working with non-academic departments for less than one year. The majority of respondents reported that they partnered with departments for one to five years. This question was not asked for each partnership within a library, so it is possible that librarians partnered with some of the most popu-



lar departments (Writing Center, Student Affairs, Career Services) for more than five years, but only recently began partnering with others.

Our respondents reported a fairly even split between whether the partnerships with non-academic departments felt evenly balanced or not. Librarians reported that there was an almost even split between having even or uneven partnerships. Fifty-four percent reported that their partnerships were even, while 46% reported that they felt that the relationship was uneven. This question was intended to find out how much each partner put into the relationship; whether that is staff time, funding, or administrative support. Some participants were not sure how to respond to this question, or what qualified as an even partnership; one librarian responded to this question with, "Does it mean 'an equal return for both parties?' Hard to evaluate that."

Programming and Services Offered

As shown in Table 2, libraries are offering a wide variety of services in partnership with non-academic departments. With some variation in the department that the library is working with, the most popular services offered are events or satellite services sponsored by the non-academic department held in the library, events hosted by the non-academic department outside of the library with the library as a participant, and library-offered workshops. As mentioned in an earlier section, there are also unique services offered jointly between the library and the non-academic department. For example, libraries host and participate in orientations and resources fairs, workshop with academic advisors and administration, provide referrals to appropriate departments, offer research assistance to specialized groups, create displays and art exhibits, and provide a home for game nights, wellness programs, and student write-in events.

Librarians are partnering with athletics departments in ways that stand out from other departments. While other partnerships lead to a number of workshops and instruction sessions, respondents indicated that they often offered training or information sessions for their partnered department to teach about general library services, but rarely teach instruction sessions in particular to other departments. Respondents repeatedly mentioned personal librarian services created for athletic departments. Librarians meet directly with athletes and offer instruction sessions just for this group – their collaboration is keyed to athletes as students, rather than to athletes as athletes.

Benefits of Partnerships

Respondents reported many different types of benefits, as shown in Figure 2. The top three benefits mentioned from partnerships with non-academic departments are a broader awareness of library services (35% percent of respondents mention this), positive reputation (21%), and a better ability to break down campus silos and build relationships (20%). Other benefits included shared funding, higher door counts, and increased referrals. This question is perhaps one of the most important aspects of this survey. When librarians are gathering information to tell their stories to campus administration, the benefits of working with non-academic departments can help strengthen their argument.

Funding for Partnered Services and Programs

The answers to a question about funding for services revealed that overwhelmingly, most libraries do not need to create additional space in their budget for these collaborative events and services (See Table 3). Fully 51% of all partnerships have no cost for the collaboration. Only 12% indicated that funding came entirely from the library. While programming for students can reap large rewards, most events do not require a high financial cost in order to be successful. If a



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librarian is able to identify a few key partnerships to pursue, and protecting the library's budget is an issue, respondents reported that partnerships with Writing Centers, Career Services, and Academic Advising tend to be the most cost effective.

Assessment Methods

Librarians emphasize the importance of assessment in other aspects of the profession; however, the results of this survey demonstrate that most libraries are not assessing their partnerships with non-academic services (see Table 4). Sixty-one percent of the responses indicate there is no assessment of the services or partnership. And in cases where assessment is conducted there is relatively little variety in methodology.

Analysis of Results/Discussion

Institution Size and Non-Academic Partnerships

As shown in Table 5, the pattern of partnerships is relatively similar regardless of institutional size. Although larger institutions represent a smaller number of respondents, they are partnering with more non-academic departments. It is possible to make some inferences from this. It could be that the organizational structures of larger institutions are more granular creating more opportunities for partnerships; smaller institutions may collapse these same departments or functions under a larger organizational umbrella.

Length of Non-Academic Partnerships

Table 6 provides evidence supporting the theory that partnering with non-academic departments is no longer a new idea, despite the lack of focus in the literature. There are some identifiable trends in the growth of these partnerships. Most likely, Writing Centers, Student Affairs, and Career Services were where most librarians created partnerships and then branched out from there. From these data, it does appear that Student

Health, Veterans Support, and LGBTQ Services are the newest departments for library partnerships. This appears to follow a general trend in higher education of identifying which students are vulnerable populations and needing additional support.

Case Studies

John Carroll University

John Carroll University is a small (roughly 3,400 FTE), private, Jesuit, Masters-granting institution just outside of Cleveland, Ohio. There is no First Year Experience or other cross-major landing course, nor is there otherwise an obligated meeting time with the library. Most instruction happens in one-shot sessions. The library's doorcounts continue to increase and students regularly ask for more seating in feedback surveys; the Grasselli Library is one of the busiest and most-used places on campus for undergraduate students. While students may or may not meet with a librarian as part of a class, many students will use the library in some fashion during their years on campus.

By 2014, when the position of Outreach and Student Engagement Librarian (Outreach Librarian) was created to replace a marketing librarian, Grasselli Library and Breen Learning Center already had established partnerships with some non-academic departments on campus through the newly formed Learning Commons. The Learning Commons was established in the fall of 2012 as a place to support students holistically. Previously, many academic departments held tutoring sessions, but they were scattered across campus. The library was identified as a third place for students and the Learning Commons was brought to life with a new campus strategic plan and funding through a student learning initiatives budget. The Learning Commons was started with only a few bare-bones pieces in



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place: study tables for Biology, a satellite Writing Center space, and the first of a series of wellness programs - Yoga in the Stacks.

The Outreach Librarian job description has a strong emphasis on student engagement. In the past, the Marketing Librarian position's main focus was on marketing library services and had other traditional subject liaison duties. In the newly formed Outreach Librarian position, developing relationships with students and non-library collaborators are just as important. The Outreach Librarian is in charge of Grasselli's Learning Commons, and is dedicated to maintaining and creating partnerships outside of the library.

Before the Outreach Librarian position was created, the library had established partnerships with the Writing Center, Student Health and Wellness, and the Career Center. These partnerships varied in how they worked with the library. The Writing Center contributed funds to the remodeling of a study room and designated that space as a satellite Writing Center space during specific times. Student Health and Wellness created a series of bi-monthly events in the library called "Wellness in the Stacks" that were meant to be both a safe alternative to off-campus partying as well as healthy study breaks. The Career Center used a study table one night a week that functioned as a satellite space and did résumé checkups.

In the years since the creation of the Outreach Librarian position, new partnerships formed and there is a new effort to align growth with both library and university learning goals. The library has partnered with Counseling Services, Academic Counseling, Veterans Services, and Student Diversity and Inclusion. Each of these new partnerships has a slightly different relationship with the library and they are each still growing and changing their services. Counseling Services received a grant to create a Relaxation Room in the library to alleviate student

stress. Counseling Services often holds workshops and creates programs that are held in the library. Academic Counseling offers students who are having academic difficulties a chance to work one-on-one with Graduate Assistants to create better study habits and homework plans. The Graduate Assistants have a satellite office in the library and occasionally hold drop-in events for students who need additional help. Student Diversity and Inclusion co-hosts film screenings and works with the library to create study halls and displays for cultural groups on campus. Unlike the previously mentioned departments, Veterans Services does not often hold events in the library. Instead, the Outreach Librarian meets with groups of veterans to talk over services and offer research consultations when necessary.

Each new partnership is assessed to consider how it fills gaps in the Learning Commons goals and whether underserved students' needs are met. In order to coordinate these partnerships, assess current relationships, and identify areas of potential growth, the Outreach Librarian and Learning Commons Graduate Assistant created an inventory to map the various partnerships. This spreadsheet tracks basic information for each department including: event type, location, how often the library partners with the department, which learning goals are being met, and the assessment of that event or partnership. After completing this inventory of services, the Outreach Librarian was able to identify unmet learning goals and departments that could help the Learning Commons be more complete. Tracking programming and services has created a more successful and purposeful method of communication with departments and creation of new programming.

John Carroll has four main Learning Goals - Character, Intellect, Service, and Leadership - with sub-categories under each Learning Goal. Through the development of the inventory, the library discovered that the Learning Commons does not offer any opportunities for reflection,



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which is one of the components of the Character Learning Goal and is an important part of Jesuit learning. The library has begun a new partnership with the Center for Service and Social Action to offer new programming to fill this need.

An unexpected outcome of the many campus partnerships was an invitation to join the university's Programming Working Group, a committee that includes many of the campus collaborators who plan and market events. This invitation allowed the Outreach Librarian to share ideas from the library and form new collaborations. Cross-promotion increased attendance at events and these partnerships helped to fill unmet needs. As a result of working with this Programming Work Group, the library has been able to tie in displays to other events happening outside of the library and offer space to host programming when it was requested.

Northwestern University

Northwestern University is a private institution of 21,000 enrolled students, roughly split between undergraduates and graduate students. The university's mission articulates a commitment "to excellent teaching, innovative research and the personal and intellectual growth of its students in a diverse academic community."²⁴ Northwestern is on the quarter system, and has no institutionally required library instruction as is often seen in First Year Experience classes and programs at other institutions. All library instruction is at the discretion of the faculty and with only ten weeks of classes, faculty members can be somewhat reluctant to commit class time to library instruction. Roughly 15-20% of courses include a librarian giving an instruction session during class time.

In 2012 the University Libraries' Public Services Division reorganized in order to streamline and consolidate existing services to be more intuitive and fill in areas where services were either lacking or effectively non-existent. The library was

particularly concerned to better understand how to reach students. Prior to the reorganization, librarians approached students primarily through the traditional subject liaison relationship – reaching students through faculty and instruction, and through interactions at the reference desk. The library did have a Public Relations director, whose focus most often needed to be on bigger picture issues - donor and Board of Governors relations, exhibits, and publications.

Events, such as fall orientations, were ad-hoc and not centrally coordinated. Relationships with non-academic departments and programs were equally ad-hoc and inconsistent. The liaison to the English department had an established relationship with the Writing Place because it was part of the Composition program. However, there was no formal relationship with the campus department that organized the fall orientation week (Wildcat Welcome) for new students.

The reorganization created positions focused on student outreach and engagement. Informally known as the engagement team, the Campus & Community Engagement Librarian and the Undergraduate Engagement Librarian were given two primary tasks. The first was focusing on outreach, engagement, and marketing the library, its services, and resources to students regardless of their major or area of study. This meant, for example, formal responsibility for developing programming around the university's new student week and the library's annual fall orientation event. The second was building a liaison relationship between the library and all non-academic departments, programs, and services on campus.

The Engagement librarians started by identifying campus partners that the library had existing informal relationships, or which had the potential to turn into strong relationships. The broad focus allowed these partners to be divisions, departments, programs, or teams. This was done



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very simply – printing out a series of organizational charts from around the university and highlighting potential partners.

Each partnership was built in the same way: first, by identifying connections or services that the library could offer, and then by reaching out to set up a meeting. Through these meetings, the librarians could learn more details about the department's function, identify the student clientele, and determine what sorts of programming they had in place. Conversely, the partner was also informed about the library's role on campus for both students and staff. Often these conversations focused on the services the library provides, specifically around research support, as well as the library's role as a third place on campus open to all students regardless of area of study.

Early programming from the engagement team involved updating current practices around fall orientation. New Student & Family Programs (NSFP) coordinates Wildcat Welcome, the orientation for new students in the fall; during the introductory meeting, NSFP pointed out that students were heavily scheduled during the week-long program. This mirrored the library's observations. In years past the library offered hour-long tours throughout the week, covering two entire libraries, as much information as possible, and a demo of the catalog, but already overscheduled students were reluctant to take part.

The engagement librarians worked with NSFP to schedule a time in the student schedule with no other conflicts where students could take a "library primer". The primer was designed as a ten-minute introduction intended to bring student groups inside the building while friendly staff gave them the most fundamental introduction to the library that covered basics such as library hours, the types and locations of spaces the library offers, printing, and places to get assistance.

Since its inception, the engagement team has developed a network of over forty partners across campus. Some of those programs naturally lend themselves to a one-on-one format. For example, the engagement librarians worked with Athletics to fold a library session into their First Year Experience orientation, and Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) now offers drop-in "Let's Talk" hours in the library. Some programs can bring together multiple partners for a broader student experience. Working with Student Enrichment Services to develop a workshop for low income students on academic support, the librarians reached out to their partners in the Writing Place and in the Center for Learning and Teaching to include information on their respective tutoring services. Developing a finals prep event with Residence Life, the library reached out to the Writing Place and CAPS to highlight the variety of support services on campus. With the two engagement librarians working as liaisons to all of these partners, it has allowed them to naturally join those individual partnerships together.

Not every partnership requires or immediately calls for an event or an activity. Many partnerships hinge on sharing information and promoting services to our respective users. Departments like the International Office, Off Campus Life, and Residence Life share information with their students using regular newsletters. The engagement team has developed a calendar of "blurbs" covering each quarter arranged by month. Collection development is also a natural service for a library to share with these partners. The librarians select titles for the collection relating to the services in Writing, Career Advancement, and Social Justice Education and Diversity and Inclusion.

In order to coordinate with such a large group, the engagement team created a spreadsheet of contacts, which includes a calendar that indicates times to check-in with that department or person, past events and programs, and key



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pieces of information that may be relevant to the relationship.

The Northwestern engagement librarians often develop these activities with the support and input of staff from across the library, which has led to a more targeted and relevant experience for students. Rather than a standing committee to help guide activities, groups are pulled together on a case-by-case basis, which means that they are composed of staff most qualified to give input relevant to the goals of the event. The engagement librarians serve effectively as facilitators and coordinators, ensuring events are not in conflict with one another and, whenever possible, complementary to other activities. With the potential for programs to recur from year to year, the engagement librarian's position as coordinator allows for the tracking of event goals, success, and growth.

Despite various departments being spread out across campus and focused on different areas, conversations between the engagement team and partners revealed a recurring theme. Multiple campus departments have the same issues and concerns, particularly a lack of student awareness of their services and their own lack of knowledge about the other activities that happen on campus. The engagement librarians identified a need to have these campus departments brought together through a library-organized campus Student Engagement Group that meets quarterly. The various campus groups come together and discuss the issues that arise, share plans for the year, and work together to come up with new program ideas.

Further Studies

This survey and the accompanying research introduce a new direction for potential study. Many academic libraries are redefining how the role of the liaison librarian functions on campus, with that role often expanding to include official liaison duties with non-academic departments.

This survey demonstrates how inconsistently librarians are assessing the services and programming events resulting from these partnerships. This holds true in the authors' experience as well from other interactions with librarians in the areas of outreach and student engagement. Based on this survey and previous experience, it appears that librarians are predominantly utilizing only basic participation and surface-level surveys for attendees, but not a deeper strategic structure or plan for assessment. Future studies may consider examining what the goals of these programs are and what success means in those cases.

After analyzing this survey, the authors also feel that more consistent, comprehensive reporting on partnerships and activities would be beneficial to librarians working in outreach. Many of the partnerships identified in this survey were already established, stable relationships. In the future identifying new partnerships and trends in programming would be helpful.

Conclusion

Although this was a general survey attempting to cover a broad topic, overall, academic librarians of all sizes reported that they are partnering consistently with non-academic departments. There are a few non-academic departments that are regularly partners, namely, Student Affairs, the Writing Center, and Career Services. This article offers a roadmap for librarians who may be looking to reach out to campus partners for the first time. Librarians who may be ready to expand the partnerships on their campus should look for new departments suggested by their peers in this survey, such as Diversity & Inclusion or Undergraduate Research.

Librarians who are active in the field of outreach and engagement may find collaborating with non-academic departments to be a reliable way to build and maintain a steady schedule of programming throughout the year. Librarians can



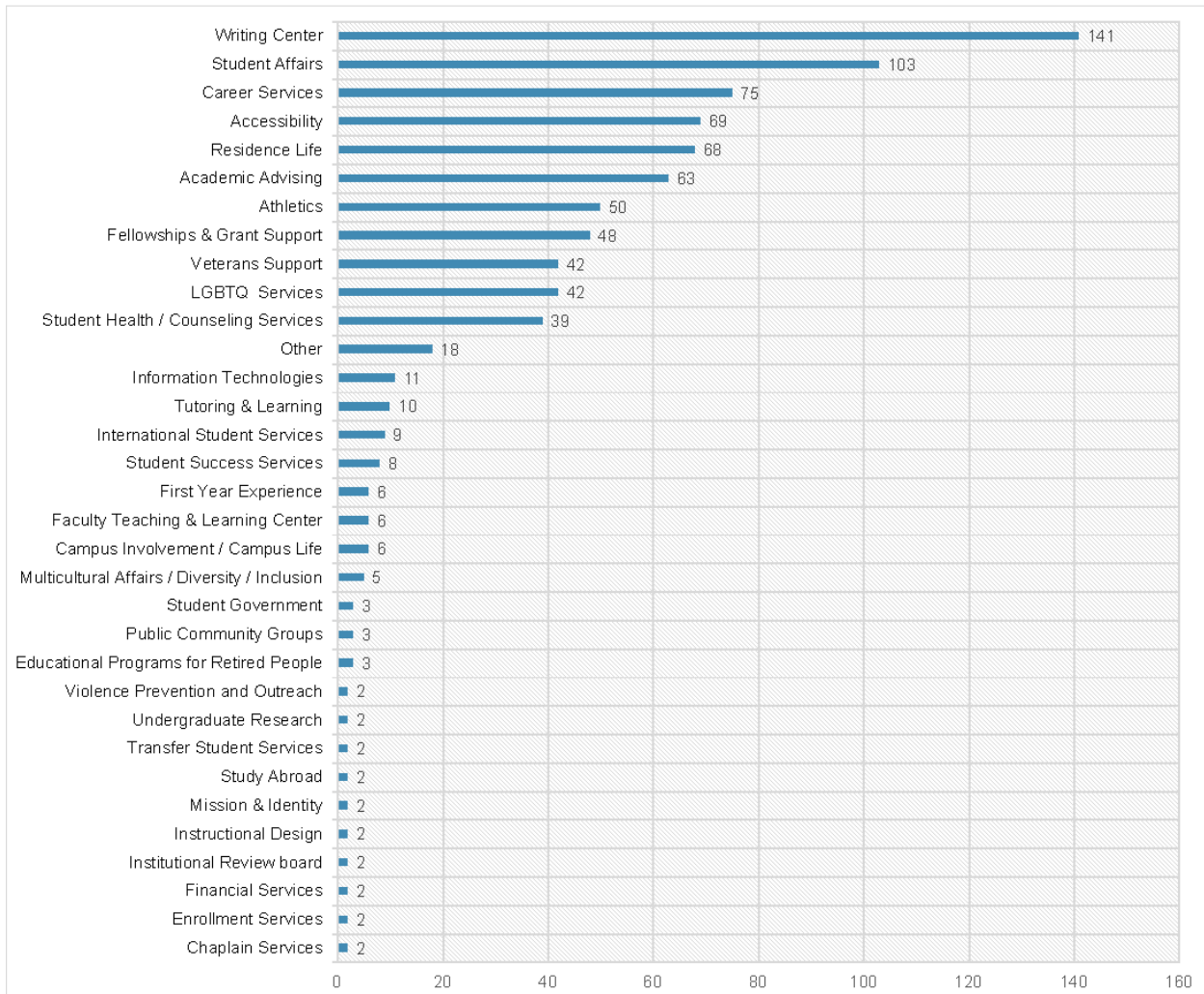
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seek out partnerships on campus with new departments in order to create a more extensive plan to engage students and feel confident that their library will reap the rewards of these collaborations.

Consistently, librarians express the value of these partnerships, reporting better campus relationships, a wider understanding of library services, and more promotional opportunities.

These partnerships are often low-cost for the library and end up benefitting all parties involved. Given the many advantages, library administrators should consider formalizing these roles in their strategic efforts to raise the library's profile on campus and reach users that they are not reaching through traditional means.

Figure 1. Libraries' Non-Academic Partners



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Table 2. Variety of Services Libraries Offer in Partnership with Non-Academic Departments

| Services | Academic Advising | Accessibility | Athletics | Career Services | LGBTQ Services | Fellowships & Grant Support | Residence Life | Student Affairs | Student Health | Veteran's Support | Writing Center | Total |
|---|-------------------|---------------|-----------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|-------------------|----------------|-------|
| Partner sponsored events / services held in the library | 14 | 16 | 16 | 10 | 11 | 3 | 0 | 14 | 10 | 4 | 49 | 133 |
| Workshops / Information Sessions | 7 | 5 | 16 | 19 | 4 | 10 | 14 | 13 | 5 | 13 | 18 | 117 |
| Participation in Partner Hosted Events | 4 | 3 | 4 | 9 | 5 | 4 | 13 | 31 | 6 | 4 | 2 | 81 |
| Cross-Promotion | 16 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 6 | 9 | 9 | 2 | 12 | 58 |
| Library Presents to or Trains Partner Department | 8 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 11 | 4 | | 3 | 20 | 47 |
| Collection Development or Displays of Material | 2 | 11 | 1 | 11 | 8 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | | 50 |
| Partner Participation in Library Hosted Events | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | | 2 | 14 | 7 | 1 | 6 | 41 |
| Partner Presents to or Trains Library Staff | 2 | 9 | | 1 | 4 | 1 | | 5 | 1 | 3 | 7 | 31 |
| Shared Web Resources | 2 | 2 | | 10 | 4 | 3 | | | 1 | 3 | 5 | 28 |
| Library Events Held in Partner Spaces | | | 1 | | 1 | | 16 | 3 | | 3 | 5 | 29 |
| Co-teaching | 2 | 2 | | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | | | 15 | 24 |
| Referrals | 2 | 5 | | 2 | 3 | 2 | | | | | 10 | 22 |
| Co-Hosted Events | 5 | | 4 | | 4 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 1 | | 5 | 23 |
| Partnered Consultations | | | | 3 | | | | | | | 1 | 4 |

Figure 2. Perceived Benefits of Library-to-Non-Academic-Department Partnerships

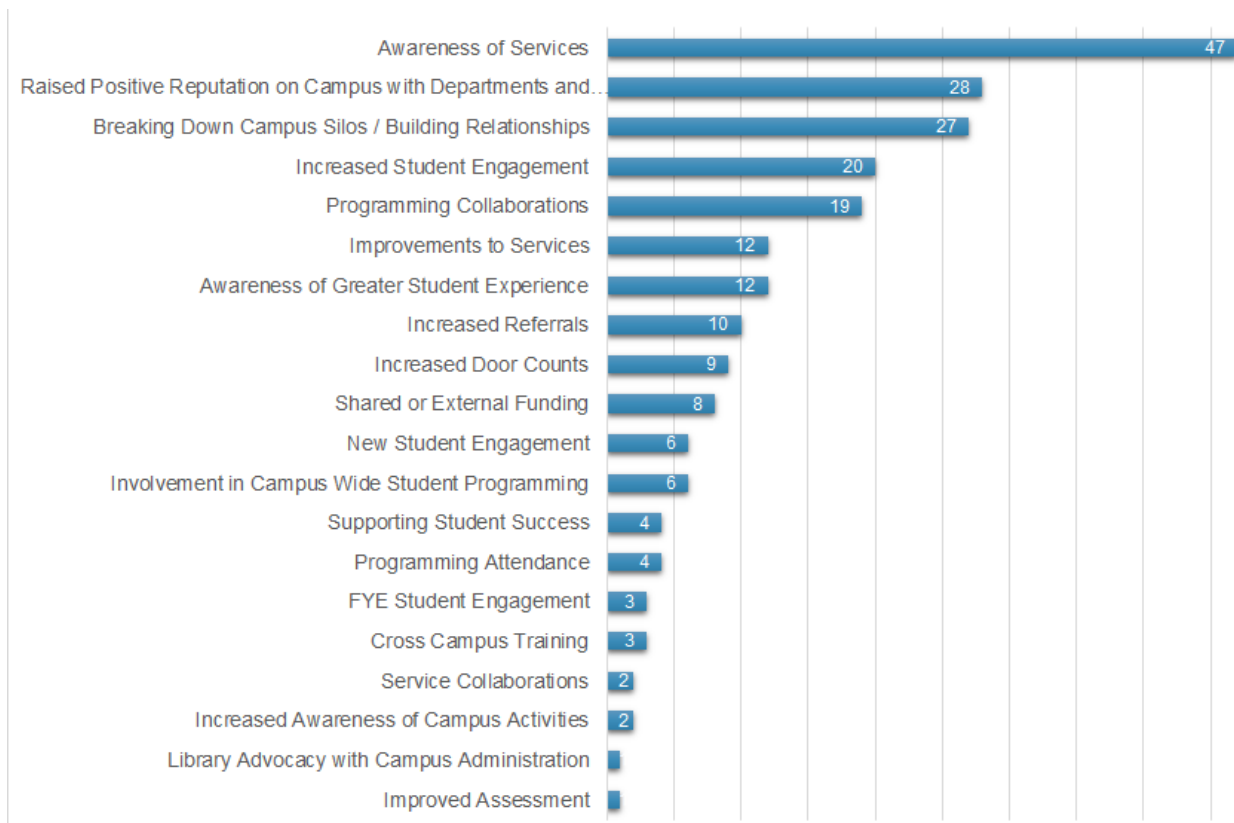


Table 3. Funding for Partnered Services & Programs

| Funding | Academic Advising n=45 | Accessibility n=48 | Athletics n=37 | Career Services n=51 | LGBTQ Services n=27 | Fellowships & Grant Support n=30 | Residence Life n=47 | Student Affairs n=67 | Student Health n=26 | Veterans Support n=30 | TOTAL n=507 | |
|------------------|------------------------|--------------------|----------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-------------|-----|
| The library | 9% | 10% | 24% | 10% | 19% | 17% | 15% | 18% | 8% | 13% | 5% | 12% |
| The partner | 13% | 15% | 0% | 6% | 7% | 27% | 4% | 12% | 23% | 3% | 9% | 10% |
| Shared funding | 24% | 23% | 3% | 24% | 30% | 17% | 38% | 40% | 31% | 17% | 29% | 27% |
| There is no cost | 53% | 52% | 73% | 61% | 44% | 40% | 43% | 30% | 38% | 67% | 57% | 51% |



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Table 4. Methods Used to Assess Library Partnerships with Non-Academic Departments

| Assessment Methods | Academic Advising | Accessibility | Athletics | Career Services | Fellowships & Grant Support | LGBTQ Services | Residence Life | Student Affairs | Student Health | Veterans Support | Writing Center | Total |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|---------------|-----------|-----------------|-----------------------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|-------|
| Participation Count | 5 | 4 | 6 | 9 | 5 | 2 | 10 | 12 | 7 | 2 | 15 | 77 |
| Participant Survey / Feedback | 4 | 2 | 3 | 7 | 3 | 1 | 7 | 11 | 8 | 6 | 15 | 67 |
| Assessment of Learning Outcomes | 2 | 4 | | 3 | | | 2 | 2 | | | 4 | 17 |
| Anecdotal Feedback | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | | | 1 | 9 |
| Social Media / Web Analytics | 1 | | | 2 | | 2 | 2 | | | | | 7 |
| Partner Survey / Feedback | 3 | 1 | 1 | | | | 1 | 1 | | | 1 | 8 |
| Reports | | | | | 2 | | 1 | 1 | | | 3 | 7 |
| Event Frequency | | | | 1 | 1 | | | 1 | | | | 3 |
| Student Portal Data | 1 | 1 | | | | | | 1 | | | | 3 |
| Referral Counts | 1 | | 1 | | | | | | | | | 2 |
| Reflective Writing | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | 1 |
| None | 30 | 39 | 27 | 33 | 18 | 22 | 30 | 37 | 11 | 18 | 58 | 323 |

Table 5. Institution Size and Library Non-Academic Partnerships

| Fulltime Enrollment | Academic Advising | Accessibility | Athletics | Career Services | LGBTQ Services | Fellowships & Grant Support | Residence Life | Student Affairs | Student Health | Veterans Support | Writing Center | Total Respondents |
|---------------------|-------------------|---------------|-----------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| under 5,000 | 32% | 32% | 24% | 43% | 21% | 19% | 43% | 48% | 24% | 11% | 79% | 63 |
| 5,000 -15,000 | 25% | 35% | 27% | 27% | 18% | 22% | 27% | 56% | 15% | 25% | 69% | 55 |
| 15,000 -30,000 | 50% | 50% | 32% | 50% | 34% | 32% | 39% | 66% | 29% | 34% | 82% | 38 |
| 30,000+ | 38% | 42% | 29% | 58% | 25% | 46% | 42% | 71% | 21% | 33% | 92% | 24 |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | 180 |



Table 6. Length of Partnership between Library and Non-Academic Department

| Length of partnership | Department | | | | | | | | | | | TOTAL |
|-----------------------|-------------------|---------------|-----------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|-------|
| | Academic Advising | Accessibility | Athletics | Career Services | LGBTQ Services | Fellowships & Grant Support | Residence Life | Student Affairs | Student Health | Veterans Support | Writing Center | |
| Less than 1 year | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 19 |
| 1 - 3 years | 16 | 13 | 16 | 18 | 11 | 13 | 18 | 29 | 9 | 11 | 39 | 193 |
| 3 - 5 years | 14 | 22 | 15 | 19 | 14 | 13 | 17 | 26 | 9 | 9 | 37 | 195 |
| 5 or more years | 25 | 28 | 11 | 31 | 15 | 18 | 26 | 37 | 20 | 16 | 50 | 277 |

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