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Drinking Coffee with Undergrads: Non-Traditional Approaches to Outreach, Reference Services, and Engagement in an Academic Library Setting.

Alex Boucher  
*University of Alabama - Tuscaloosa, taboucher@ua.edu*

Karlie Johnson  
*University of Alabama - Tuscaloosa, kljohnson12@ua.edu*

Kayla Johnson  
*University of North Carolina at Greensboro, kayladianj@gmail.com*

James Gilbreath  
*University of Alabama - Tuscaloosa, jngilbreath@ua.edu*

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Non-Traditional Approaches to Outreach, Reference Services, and Engagement in an Academic Library Setting

Kayla Johnson (The University of North Carolina-Greensboro)
Alex Boucher (The University of Alabama-Tuscaloosa)
Karlie Johnson (The University of Alabama-Tuscaloosa)
James Gilbreath (The University of Alabama-Tuscaloosa)
INTRODUCTIONS!

• Your name

• Your job and institution

• What is the most interesting outreach event you have either participated in or heard about?
A DEFINITION OF OUTREACH?

• Events or services offered by the library?

• The marketing of a library’s resources, events, or services?
“Draw a circle around the central or main library building—every library service, program, or library-related endeavor taking place outside that circle is outreach.”

-Scott Pointon (Public Libraries, 2009)
“Generally, an outreach librarian is responsible for ‘reaching out’ to a library’s clientele to actively educate them as to the services a library may offer, as opposed to passively waiting for them to come to the library.”

• Outreach should help to reduce the amount of library anxiety and uncertainty among students

• Outreach should help to raise student awareness about how academic librarians and the university library can contribute to academic success

• Outreach should help to establish the library as an important and integral part of the campus community
SIX TYPES OF LIBRARY OUTREACH

• Traditional Outreach
• Event Outreach
• Targeted Outreach
• Outpost Outreach
• Personal Outreach
• Non-Traditional Services Outreach
VENTURING INTO THE CLASSROOM IS STILL ONE OF THE MOST EFFECTIVE FORMS OF LIBRARY OUTREACH

- Doesn’t necessarily fit the current definition of “outreach”
- Still instrumental in reaching students
- Some universities are updating this model by offering for-credit, library-sponsored information literacy classes
EVENT OUTREACH

• Attend all-campus events as a library representative

• These include “Week of Welcome” events, club/organization fairs, camps, receptions, etc.

• Events like these familiarize students (and parents) with basic library services
TARGETED OUTREACH

- Determine a need/choose a group
- Form a working relationship with leader(s) of group
- Plan strategically so that both the library’s mission and the group’s mission are being met
- Examples: Student-Athletes, Student Support Services, Undergraduate Research Programs, etc.

Middle College at UNCG

- Made up of 9th-12th graders
- They are housed on-campus
- STEM/Health Sciences track
- Jackson Library IS their library
- Libguides
- Tours, information literacy classes, etc.
OUTPOST OUTREACH

• Take the library to the students!

• Liaisons set up weekly “office hours” in the department they serve

• Reference librarians set weekly hours at Starbucks

• Work with housing/RAs to set weekly on-site reference hours

• Teach workshops outside of the library, in places of interest or need
UA LIBRARIES AT RIDGECREST WORKSHOPS

- RefWorks & LibGuides
- The UA Career Center (and free professional headshots!)
- An Intro to the Hoole Special Collections Library
- An Intro to the Libraries’ New Website
- Photoshop Basics
- Advanced Photoshop
- Research Time Savers
- The Sanford Media Center
- Social Media and the Job Search
1. Think about some outreach events and activities that you’ve taken part in

2. Have you run into any issues with attendance, support, etc.? Briefly describe it

3. Have you come up with any solutions to the problems you’ve faced? Or can you think of any possible solutions now?

4. Share with the group!

AN INTERLUDE
PERSONAL OUTREACH

- A newer, more in-depth form of targeted outreach
- Highly dependent on student body size and library faculty size
- Focuses on promoting library resources by putting a face to the library, minimizing anxiety
NON-TRADITIONAL SERVICES OUTREACH

- Anything from therapy dogs to innovative research help services
- Usually fairly cheap services that could be adapted by libraries of almost any size
- Focuses on making the library a more approachable and integral space on campus

Humans vs. Zombies

Wake Forest University Library Event
Call for faculty volunteers

Groups go to designated dorms in order to greet first-year students

Goody bags provided by donations from housing and other campus groups

Promote liaison librarians when you talk to students
VOTER REGISTRATION IN THE LIBRARY
THERAPY DOGS IN THE LIBRARY
COLORING TABLES

Take a coloring break!

UNC-Greensboro

UA-Tuscaloosa
• Target the busiest weeks for students

• Target the busiest times after "business hours" where students need reference help

• Sit at the consultation space at the reference desk to provide immediate assistance to students

• Make sure that there is a student worker to answer all non-reference questions and avoid interruptions
1. Think about some outreach events/activities/strategies that you would like to pursue at your current institution.

2. Are there any issues that you would have to overcome to pursue this new outreach initiative?

3. Share with the group!
An example of an outreach program we’re interested in
“A personal librarian program is ridiculously simple. Each incoming student is assigned a librarian. The librarian contacts the student at the beginning of his or her time at the school and at regular intervals. Basically that’s it.”

A NEW IDEA?

• Sam Houston State University

• Cushing/Whitney Medical Library at Yale University School of Medicine

• University of Richmond

• Texas Tech University

• Yale University

• Drexel University

• Johnson & Wales University

• Wake Forest- Coy C. Carpenter Library
About the Personal Librarian Program

The Yale University Library is a fantastic resource, but its size and complexity can overwhelm new students. Your Personal Librarian is here to help you get the most out of your experience with the Library during your time at Yale.

Every Yale undergraduate is assigned a librarian who will:
- send you email updates about the library
- answer your library questions
- assist you in locating library resources
- help you when you are not sure where to start with research

Yale College Personal Librarian Coordinator: Emily Morning

Last modified: Sunday, August 28, 2016 - 8:35am

Susan Brady

Greetings!

I'm an archivist at the Beinecke Library where I process (catalog) manuscript collections, with a specialization in the performing arts. I also assist students, faculty, and researchers from around the world find library materials related to their research. I'm very eager to hear from you and look forward to meeting over coffee, a tour of Sterling or Bass Library, or just a quick chat. Please feel free to call or email me. While I don't have set office hours, I will be happy to meet with you at a mutually convenient time and place.

How can I help you?

I will:
- keep you informed with periodic e-mail messages highlighting new resources and programs especially for students, as well as notices and timely reminders, such as extended Library hours during Reading Week and finals
- answer your questions about Library policies, procedures and services, such as Bardonek workshops and Barrow Center
- assist with finding information for your research assignments, by helping you articulate your research question, identify the best resources and formulate your search strategy
- support you even when you're not around (on vacation, or away from Yale doing research)
- help you when you don't know where to start, or you can't think of what to do next

Things I don't do (but I'll help you find out who can):

I won't:
- set up your computer (e.g. NetID, VPN)
- do your research, make photocopies or write your paper for you (well, we won't find someone to write your paper - that part's up to you - but we can put you in touch with The Writing Center or a writing tutor)

Print-friendly version  Send by email
- Serves as a student’s point of contact for all things library-related

- Sends regular emails to their group of students throughout the year (first week of school, midterms, finals, etc.)

- Alerts their students to upcoming library events

- Offers research assistance to students
A personal librarian is a built-in facilitator for the student. This can help to minimize any library anxiety before the student even has a chance to develop it.
A personal librarian de-mystifies the role of a university librarian. From their first week on campus, students will know what the library and librarians can offer them.
How to Adapt This for Larger Schools?

- Pick a specific college within your university
- Pick a specific student demographic, such as first-generation or transfer students
- Work with undergraduate research cohorts
- Work with groups like college athletes, who tend to have more demanding schedules
HOW TO PROMOTE THE LIBRARIANS?

If you could take a trip anywhere, where would you go and why?

- gorgaslib
- ferndish, kayladian and emmazipf like this

ferndish: For day three of #LibrarianIntro, Gorgas librarian Alex Boucher tells us where he would like to go on his next vacation! #uaislibraries #clubgorgas
ferndish: #alexfromgorgas

Log in to like or comment.
HOW TO PROMOTE THE LIBRARIANS?
Thank you for coming!

QUESTIONS?