Advancing Faculty-Librarian Collaboration: A New Library Services Guide for Faculty

By Steven Bell, Associate University Librarian for Research and Instructional Services

When asked what they most want from their college or university library, most faculty at research universities, in survey after survey, point to much the same thing. They want content. Faculty want to know that when they need an article, book or video, that they can count on their academic librarians to have it readily available or have the ability to quickly acquire through purchase or loan. The last time that the Ithaca S&R, a higher education strategic consulting and research service, surveyed faculty in 2012 this was a major finding. The results clearly indicate that for many faculty, regardless of discipline, their interaction with the library is primarily focused on the procurement function. At doctoral institutions, 65% of faculty said the primary function of the library for faculty is to facilitate their access to scholarly content in print and digital formats while only 40% of faculty said the primary function should be to support undergraduate learning (see fig. 42).

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That's Not All

Faculty want something else too. They want their students to have a robust, discovery-filled educational experience. That includes their students being exposed to research, primary and secondary resources in the discipline and developing the appropriate skills for critical thinking, research and writing. I am reminded of a presentation by David Watt, a faculty member in the Temple University History Department, delivered at the June 4, 2008 RLG Programs Symposium. He spoke to the common goal that faculty and academic librarians shared for our students. Watt wisely observed that faculty may be resistant to concepts such as "information literacy" but that faculty and librarians share a common goal of "helping students learn more about how to make careful and sophisticated use of the wealth of sources—physical and electronic—that are contained in the many great university libraries to be found in the United States." In order to achieve that common goal it will help Temple University faculty to be fully aware of all the resources the Libraries offer to them and their students.

Gap in Communication

Temple University would most certainly look forward to achieving deeper level collaboration with faculty in supporting undergraduate and graduate students in and beyond the classroom, as well as using their skills to support faculty research. A new survey conducted by Library Journal and Gale, a part of Cengage Learning that produces research databases, delivers some new findings that should help to promote the value of closer collaboration between Temple Libraries staff and faculty. "Bridging the Librarian-Faculty Gap" is the report from a survey of 547 faculty and 499 librarians who responded to a survey to better understand how academic librarians feel they are serving faculty clientele and how faculty members feel they are being served by their libraries. While 98% of librarians believe there is a need for better communication with faculty, only 45% of faculty believes better communication is needed with librarians. There are many areas where librarians and faculty are out-of-sync on identifying the library services that are most essential for students and faculty. For example, 96% of librarians believe their essential service includes one-on-one consultations with students, but only 75% of faculty see that as essential. Faculty tend to identify less collaborative and educational services, such as adding faculty articles to repositories, as essential library services. A good starting point for increasing and improving collaboration between librarians and faculty would be better communication about the research and learning services that Temple Libraries staff offers to faculty.

Services for Faculty

At Temple Libraries we want to maximize faculty awareness of the services we offer. Too often we encounter faculty colleagues who miss the opportunity to take advantage of library service owing to lack of communication. To improve on this we now offer a Library Services for Faculty brochure. Faculty services usually support either research or learning:

Research:

- Research in support of scholarship – librarian subject specialists assist faculty with research by providing consultations or conducting literature searches
- Assist faculty to identify appropriate research databases for research from among the over 600 offered, including new options such as Kanopy for streaming video, the online Encyclopedia of Social Work or American Song, a database of music from America's past.
- Help to speedily acquire books, articles and media not in our collection through loan or purchase.
- Fast delivery of material held by Temple Libraries so that faculty can save time by eliminating a trip to the library.

- Identifying and helping with tools to assess the impact of faculty publication in the disciplines.
- Collaboration on data management research plans and the curation of research data.

Learning

- Collaborate with a librarian to design assignments for improved student research and academic success.
- Arrange for a classroom instruction session to help students better their research skills.
- Ask a librarian to create a research guide customized for your class, and then integrate the guide into your Blackboard course.
- Integrate library E-Reserves into your Blackboard course so students can access learning content directly through Blackboard.
- Embed a librarian subject specialist into your course to provide students with rapid access to research support.
- Arrange for students to visit Special Collections Research Center to discover primary research materials.
- Review our "Ten Ways to Improve Student Research" with your librarian subject specialist to leverage Project Information Literacy findings to improve learning.

Additional Services for Faculty

- Identify Open Educational Resources for your course to replace costly traditional textbooks with alternate learning materials.
- Support for questions about copyright, author rights and other scholarly communication issues.
- Expert advice for starting an open access journal or seeking options for publishing in open access publications.
- Connect with the Temple University Press.
- Learn how to sponsor a student for the Library Prize for Undergraduate Research.
- Find additional services on our Faculty Services webpage.

Start With Your Specialist

   With so much to know about the Temple Libraries and all the associated services offered it's understandable that it may be overwhelming to keep track of all the options. Just keep in mind the most important starting point – your librarian subject specialist. If you have yet to meet with your specialist to learn more about all the services we offer, please consider connecting. If you have a question and are not sure where to start, Temple Libraries makes it easy to ask a question with options for contacting us by phone, e-mail, text, live chat and video chat. Let's keep in mind David Watt's aspirations for both faculty and librarians – that we can work collaboratively to achieve our shared goals for student academic success. Temple University librarians are well equipped to work with faculty to achieve that goal, and to assist faculty to in their research endeavors.