The Library and Student Affairs:
Partnerships to Achieve Student Success

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Abstract

This paper discusses the development, implementation, value, and future of the Library Partnerships to Achieve Student Success (PASS) Program at California State University Channel Islands (CI). This program is focused on breaking down the barriers and forming partnerships with Student Affairs colleagues at CI in order to better serve students from historically underserved populations. Over the course of one academic year, the authors established partnerships with five student support programs within Student Affairs that serve various populations of students including Hispanic students, veterans, and students with disabilities. The program has been successful in increasing the Library's presence within these programs and has been the catalyst for other new outreach efforts.

Introduction

The John Spoor Broome Library is a small university library serving the approximately 6,000 students at California State University, Channel Islands. Although the library offers services and resources to all students with the goal of improving information literacy and supporting academic success, there is an awareness that the library's critical services and resources may not be reaching students from historically underserved populations. To remedy this, the authors looked beyond the walls of the library to find new ways to reach these students.

Generally, academic libraries and student affairs have similar goals: to give students the skills, knowledge, and access to resources that will help them achieve academic success. Additionally, professionals in both areas have valuable expertise and resources, that when shared, would greatly benefit students. Establishing partnerships between the two ensures that historically underserved students are receiving holistic support for their academic endeavors.

Broome Library previously did not have a librarian designated to develop new outreach initiatives; consequently, any initiatives that were developed were often "one off" events that had difficulties moving forward due to a lack of student buy-in. Without a point-person for outreach,

there was also uncertainty from Student Affairs staff about whom to contact in the library to initiate collaborations. From these observations came the development of the Library PASS Program. The goals of the program are to create points of contact in Broome Library for those in Student Affairs and initiate meaningful collaborations between the library and student affairs that have a positive impact on student learning and success.

Literature Review

Student affairs literature emphasizes the integral role of the student affairs professional in student success as well as the capacity to serve as a valuable collaborator on campus. The National Association of Student Personnel Administration (NASPA) and The American College Personnel Association's (ACPA) 2015 *Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Educators* outlines ten professional competencies expected of student affairs professionals that are intended to inform best practices. Most of the competencies have a collaborative component, leveraging how a variety of partnerships improve the ability of an institution to serve the whole student. Collaboration with faculty is specifically identified as a way to, "co-create seamless learning experiences for students," (p. 10).

Learning Reconsidered: A Campus-Wide Focus on the Student Experience issued by NASPA and ACPA in 2004 argues for integrated resources in higher education and that through the blending of learning and development institutions can create experiences that go beyond traditional classroom learning. Approaching the campus as learning community leverages student experiences to deepen and create more meaningful learning, "...no single arena of experience is solely responsible for producing these college outcomes. All areas of college engagement provide opportunities for student learning and development," (NASPA & ACPA, pg 23). In looking towards the future of student affairs the report highlights many issues, trends, and concerns that might create opportunity for this proposed model of intertwined learning and development.   For example, new organizational structures which stray from traditional dichotomies, will allow for more flexibility and increased collaboration. The continued theme throughout the report is that campus-wide learning is essential and that student affairs and faculty collaboration outside of the classroom will support the fusion of learning and development of the whole student, creating a transformative educational experiences for all students.

This idea of collaboration between student affairs professionals and faculty is not new to the student affairs profession. Robert Brown's *Student Development in Tomorrow's Higher Education: A Return to the Academy* published by the American College Personnel Association in 1972 asserted that college personnel workers are viewed as those that support student development, but that this development cannot be cultivated without integration of academic components of the student experience. This work serves as a call to action for student affairs professionals to become academicians, which would allow them to gain necessary knowledge to

perform their work in meaningful ways and participate alongside faculty in fostering an interrelationship between learning and student development.

Similarly, within library literature, there is an increasing call for librarians to continue to push outside of the classroom to support students. The evolution of the internet, technology, and mobile devices has created ease of access to information resulting in the need for librarians to continue to seek innovative ways to reach students and reinforce information literacy.

In her article *Library Liaison with Non-Academic Units: A New Application for a Traditional Model,* Candice Dahl asserts that the liaison model is not being leveraged for its greatest application and should be expanded beyond academic programs in a systematic way. She suggests that expanding the traditional model will allow libraries more opportunities to meet a diverse range of user needs. Scales, Matthews, and Johnson (2005) also recognize that the expansion addressed the increasing need for promotion of basic information literacy skills across campuses. There has been a shift over time from informal arrangements for library instruction to broader information literacy goals across an institution with a variety of stakeholders. As a result, "these underlying changes to society's view of the role of information literacy result in the need for librarians to rethink and extend their collaborative skills beyond those they have used in traditional interactions with teaching faculty." (p. 229)

Examining the role of and strategies for collaboration between library and student affairs, Swartz, Carlisle, and Uyeki (2007) provide practical approaches for successful cross-campus collaboration. Although barriers will be present, finding common goals and purpose will help create common ground to move collaboration forward. Their ultimate findings after initiating, nurturing, and maintaining collaborations with students affairs is that a positive approach and open attitude are just as significant to the success of a collaborative relationship as best practices for collaboration.

Although the literature on academic affairs/student affairs collaborations is quite sporadic, recent years have shown an increase in the literature regarding specific cross-campus collaborations. For example, *Environments for Student Growth and Development: Libraries and Student Affairs in Collaboration* (Hinchliffe & Wong, 2012) is an entire book dedicated to specific collaborations bridging the gap between these two campus entities. This work leverages the importance of outside-of-class learning, provides a history and context for student affairs aimed at librarians, and provides examples of successful collaborative relationships.

Methods and Results

In 2014, the authors created the Partnerships to Achieve Student Success (PASS) Program. In order to serve historically underserved students, the authors reached out to several student support programs within Student Affairs and invited their lead staff member to meet,

learn about the PASS Program, and brainstorm ways the library could best serve their specific student population. Initial partners included the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP), Student Support Services (SSS), both of which serve first-generation, low-income students, Promoting Achievement Through Hope (PATH), which serves students who were in the foster system, adopted, or experienced homelessness, Project ACCESO, a grant funded program that supports STEM students, the Veterans Center, and Disability Resource Programs (DRP). The authors learned from the support staff within each of these areas about their student population, trends they saw, and their students' needs. Although the authors' initial vision was to conduct library instruction tailored to each support programs' needs, they found through these meetings that students required an even more basic introduction to the library before this could happen.

After meeting with support staff, the authors provided a variety of materials and services based on the unique needs identified for each student group.   For example, Project ACCESO requested a bookmark with library information and a list of STEM-focused databases. They also have a peer mentor and tutoring program and requested that the authors provide library training for their student mentors and tutors as a way to increase awareness of library service and referrals. In contrast, staff from DRP felt their students would be reluctant to seek assistance through a general phone or email contact and would benefit from a specific library contact whom they know could be trusted to assist them. DRP also had an intake process in which students complete an orientation to become familiar with campus services, in which they had not previously included library information. Through new information gained, the authors were able to provide DRP with more usable library outreach materials for their students. A bookmark that included specific point of contact and their office email and phone numbers, a digital advertisement for the library with the authors' pictures and contact information, and information on the library to be included in their intake orientation, have all been incorporated into the outreach materials provided to DRP registered students.

EOP, SSS, and the Veterans Center are located in high-traffic areas of campus and offer computers, free printing, and areas for socializing for their students. Staff in these programs believed their students would be interested in reference hours at their center and library tips to be included in their monthly newsletter. The Veterans Center also requested an in-person workshop since their center had presentation capabilities and a consistent student presence. PATH is a relatively new program on campus with a small, but growing student base. Their support staff had plans to hold a series of workshops, of which PATH students were required to attend at least two. The authors were able to be integrated into this workshop series by giving a brief library introduction during the Study Skills workshop.

In addition to the services offered, while at each center for reference hours or workshops, the authors took the opportunity to talk directly to students about the library and what could be done to better meet their needs. These informal conversations yielded valuable information. Students at each program wanted to learn more about the library and were interested in attending

library workshops; however, many had barriers to doing so. Students indicated that they had work, family, and other academic obligations that made attending an in-person workshop a challenge. Students also provided great ideas on how they can interact with the library asynchronously including through video tutorials or mobile library orientations.

In the spirit of valuing feedback from students and taking to heart their suggestions, the library has begun to implement some of the ideas gathered through the PASS Program. The Library Minute Video Series, developed after multiple suggestions from students, has so far yielded two videos on the basics of using the library. There are plans to expand this series with a virtual library tour and other videos instructing students on library services such as course reserves and interlibrary loan. The videos can currently be viewed on YouTube; however, a more accessible web presence for the series is being developed for the library's website. Additionally, the authors continue to explore other student populations that might benefit from additional library support and the best ways to engage these groups, such as working with student clubs formed to support specific student populations. Although there have been successes and steps forward, there were also efforts that did not fare as well as expected.

While Student Affairs staff were open to hosting librarian reference hours in their respective centers, the authors found that students rarely initiated conversations during in-center reference hours. That is not to say that students were unreceptive. Students, particularly those in the Veterans Center, were excited to attend a library workshop in their center, and the authors had great dialogues with those students. Additionally, when the authors approached students in each center to introduce themselves, students were receptive and open to giving suggestions on how the library could better serve their needs.

The authors determined that while they can gain the trust of and establish relationships with Student Affairs staff members, it is more difficult to do so with students. Although the authors held 6-10 reference hours in each center each semester, it was still not enough time to develop relationships with students within those centers. As a result, the authors are in the process of developing a student ambassador program, in which a student from the student support program would act as a library liaison. This student would be trained by the authors to provide library support to their peers and also be tasked with holding workshops and social events within the library. Utilizing peers as ambassadors allows the library to utilize the existing relationships between students to build towards addressing information literacy.   A student ambassador program will also allow the library more authentic feedback from students, who are likely to be more forthcoming with their peers.

At the end of each semester the authors and support program staff met to evaluate the efforts and adjust as needed.   These allow both entities the opportunity to share feedback, foster their relationship, and maintain momentum in building the program to ensure that it meets student needs.

Conclusion

Overall, the authors have seen positive results from the PASS Program, with an increase in referrals to the library received from these areas as well as increased initiative in incorporating the library in their student success planning. For example, the library has been invited to participate in EOP's Summer Bridge, a high contact weeklong experience for all incoming EOP students. The Library PASS Program is just the first step to institutionalizing collaboration between Broome Library and Student Affairs. The first year of efforts resulted in establishing partnerships and gaining valuable information from students. By continuing to refine their efforts and exploring new avenues of support, the authors believe the Library PASS Program will grow to provide even better, more valuable targeted services to the students.

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