

Identifying Novel Library Liaison Roles in Academic Health and Life Sciences

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Objective:

To identify services offered by library liaisons serving academic health and life science schools and programs. Establishing an understanding of available services can inform the development of current and emerging liaison roles.

Methods:

Nine health sciences librarians and three life sciences librarians individually created lists of services which they currently provide in their liaison work, and those they would provide given additional resources and/or demonstrated constituent interest. The resulting lists were collected and service activities were grouped into conceptual clusters such as reference, outreach, and teaching activities. The responses were then analyzed for overlap among current and potential services.

Results:

An impressive quantity and variety of services were provided by liaisons, spanning more than 75 services in 18 categories. In addition, liaisons suggested the adoption of a large quantity and variety of potential services. Many of the services listed go beyond the librarian as simply a service provider, instead casting the liaison in the role of research or teaching partner and faculty peer.

Implications:

These results support the reimagining of the librarian's role in academic health and life sciences environments. The next step will be to identify new roles of highest potential use to constituents in the health and life sciences. This process has already begun and data collection is ongoing.

Current Services

- Reference
 - Quick questions, email/chat, literature searches
- Teaching
 - Search process, EBM, citation management
- Consults
 - Searching, citation management
 - Systematic reviews
- Collection Development
- Scholarly Communication
 - Copyright, open access policies
 - Publication review
 - Recommend journals for publication
- Tech Support
 - Online classroom tools, tool identification
- Library planning and development
 - Committees, meetings
- Committees within liaison department

Current and Potential Services

- Teaching
 - Special topics: ethics, social media, informatics
 - Preceptor training
- Office Hours
- Library orientations for new students and faculty
- Outreach
 - To students, faculty, outside groups, donors
 - Global Health projects
- Professional Development
 - Attending conferences/webinars
 - Publishing and presenting research
- Scholarly Communication
 - Poster review
- Tech Support
 - Mobile technologies
- Research Support
 - Grant help
 - Data management plan assistance
 - Guidance on data repository options
 - Guidance on best practices for data
- Strategic planning within liaison department
- Project management and development with faculty

Potential Services

- Outreach
 - To clinical departments/units
- Social media and blogging
- Institutional repository projects
- Digitization projects
- E-portfolios
- Usability studies
- Data Management
 - Guidance on describing data (metadata)

Please use the Post-it Notes to add any additional potential services you do not see listed