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Helping Struggling Students Develop Skills for Academic Success: An Academic Library and Student Services Collaboration

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Developing Skills for Academic Success:
A Health Sciences Library & Student Services Collaboration

TOURO UNIVERSITY
C A L I F O R N I A

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Background

Starting in Fall 2018, two health sciences librarians at Touro University California began a collaboration with the university's Academic Support department to teach a library session in Academic Support's 1-unit "Pathways to Success" elective course. The course is designed to help students develop skills for academic success, including time and stress management, mindfulness, and study strategies. All students and programs are welcome to enroll, but many students in the course are identified by their program as needing additional support and referred to Pathways. Based on this, Academic Support determined a library session would help students improve their study and research skills and invited the librarians to be a part of the course.

Description

The Library session is a 2-hour long interactive class focused on library resources determined to be useful to the particular group of students in each session. The specific resources, tools, search examples, and other content covered in the sessions depend on the academic programs represented and the specific needs for that group of students. As most students need to improve their academic performance, areas typically covered are as follows:

- Library Website Orientation
- Study Tool resources for exams and self-assessment
- Database searching (PubMed and/or ProQuest)
- Boolean logic and filters for advanced searching
- How to read a research paper

Time for activities involving study tools and literature searching and Q&A are prioritized. An evaluation form is distributed at the end of class seeking feedback on the usefulness of the Library session and the most/least helpful topics covered.
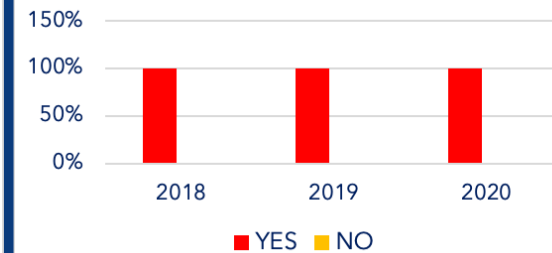
Program Objectives

- Increase student awareness of librarians, Library services, and resources.
- Create a partnership with academic support to help students improve study habits by using study/self-assessment tools in the Library's subscribed databases.
- Build student confidence engaging with Library resources and reduce Library anxiety.
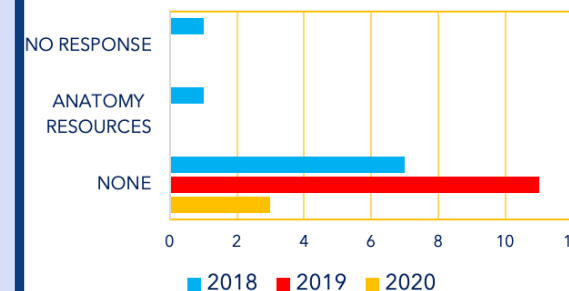
Program Outcomes

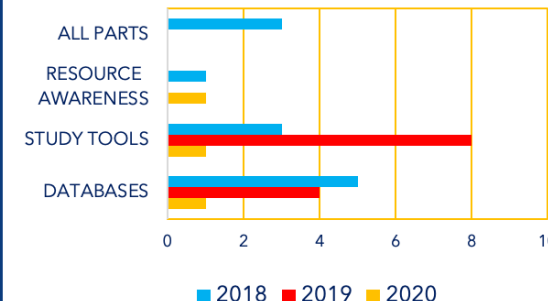**Do you feel you learned new things about the Library?**
(Bar chart, 2018–2020, values at ~100%; legend: YES, NO)
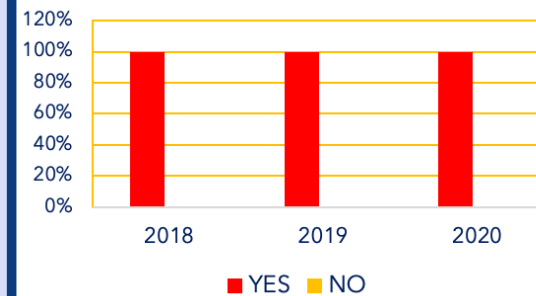
After the session, do you feel more comfortable using the Library's resources?
(Bar chart, 2018–2020, values at ~100%; legend: YES, NO)

Which parts do you think could be eliminated?
(Horizontal bar chart; categories: NO RESPONSE, ANATOMY RESOURCES, NONE; legend: 2018, 2019, 2020)

Which parts of the session do you feel were most useful?
(Horizontal bar chart; categories: ALL PARTS, RESOURCE AWARENESS, STUDY TOOLS, DATABASES; legend: 2018, 2019, 2020)

Conclusion

For the past three years, the two librarians have taught a Library session in "Pathways" that has focused on how library resources and services support the academic success of students. This unique opportunity has helped the librarians identify the specific needs of struggling students and how the Library can support them. This is significant since there is no official library orientation for most students, leaving many unaware of how the library can serve them in their academic, and eventually professional, careers. The librarians have also received feedback that Academic Support now recommends Library resources to students' outside the Pathways course. Finally, this collaboration allows the librarians to demonstrate the value of the library and its resources—including the librarians.