



Collaborating for Individual and Institutional Success: Libraries as Strategic Campus Partners

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Jennifer Duncan, Kacy Lundstrom, & Becky Thoms

Librarians often struggle to successfully communicate their valuable contributions to teaching and learning to the larger university community. When we saw the call for proposals for the Association of American Colleges & Universities 2017 Annual Meeting, we recognized an opportunity to promote Utah State University (USU) Libraries' work to align itself with our university goals and initiatives so that colleagues at other institutions might identify collaborative opportunities with their own libraries. USU is a mid-size land-grant institution with a full-time undergraduate enrollment of approximately 25,000 and about 3,200 graduates. Its mission centers around the core themes of learning, discovery, and engagement, and we in the Libraries are involved in many successful collaborations across campus to advance specific objectives derived from these themes. These partnerships arise from the Library's role in supporting research across its lifecycle in innovative ways that directly align with the initiatives and needs of the larger campus.

Libraries are proven to be adaptable and capable of providing solutions, creatively supporting curriculum, and responding to diverse institutional needs. However, knowing what these needs are and how to articulate what libraries offer is difficult, especially if librarians are not embedded within communication and governance structures where high-level conversations about the university curriculum regularly occur. In order to contribute and respond to initiatives at USU, librarians serve on various university committees, including Faculty Senate, the General Education Committee, the Education Policy Committee, the Research and Graduate Councils, and the Common Literature Committee, among many others. Through our affiliations with these groups, librarians contribute to conversations about general education, digital literacy, active learning, and accessibility to information resources. USU librarians are leading the way on our campus through:

Course integrated information literacy

USU does not currently provide for-credit information literacy courses, nor is there an institutional learning outcome for information literacy. Rather, we integrate with courses that emphasize research skills, and librarians support research assignments in both general education and program level courses using a combination of face-to-face interactions and online learning materials. We collaborate particularly closely with our second-year writing composition classes, English 2010. Subject librarians for each major are proactive in mapping how and where students receive research opportunities, so that we can be sure we are targeting courses in strategic ways.

Librarian-led collaborative assignment design faculty workshops

In addition to collaborating with faculty to provide library instruction sessions, the library facilitates interdisciplinary faculty workshops that provide an opportunity for faculty from the library and academic disciplines to improve the

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learning opportunities provided to students in their research assignments. These small-group workshops place librarians at the assignment design table and position the library as a forum for faculty collaboration and a partner in teaching excellence.

In-depth integration of unique materials into courses

Our unique collections provide opportunities for research using primary source materials. Special Collections hosts semester long courses in which students work with librarians and teaching faculty to curate **gallery exhibitions** related to a variety of topics. Curation comprises research, interpretation, graphic design, and promotion and results in a significant capstone event for students involved in this work. These collaborative physical exhibits broaden the perspectives of creators and audience by expanding the traditional definitions of research products.

Library support for digital pedagogy

Experiences with collaborative physical exhibits inspired an effort to reach out to faculty with another active learning opportunity—**student-created digital exhibits** using the open source Omeka platform. The library already uses Omeka to create exhibits highlighting portions of digital collections, but we recognize this tool has great potential for students to develop digital literacy skills such as writing for the web, creating metadata, and producing content for a global audience. Faculty from a wide range of disciplines, including History, Art, and Engineering, partner with us on these efforts, creating unique and meaningful research experiences for students.

Partnerships to promote student research

The USU Libraries have a close relationship with the Research & Graduate Studies Office that includes co-hosting the annual Research Week on campus. During Research Week, undergraduate and graduate students participate in **Student Research Symposium** poster and panel sessions in the library atrium and conference rooms. Librarians participate in the assessment of student work as well as promoting our institutional repository as a long-term home for the digital iteration of their output. This collaboration helps students begin to develop their own **digital presence**.

Partnerships to promote online learning

Like many institutions, USU offers diverse delivery methods for course content. Librarians work to ensure students receive equal access to research assistance and resources regardless of their location. Working with the Center for Innovative Design and Instruction, we design and deliver a range of **digital learning objects** that teach information literacy concepts and skills.

Assessment

We have conducted multiple and varied assessments of how these efforts contribute to student learning and success (Holliday et al., 2014; Lundstrom et al., 2015; Lundstrom, Martin, & Cochran, 2014). The library instruction program is currently conducting a follow-up assessment study which looks at how the changes we made after our previous large-scale rubric study have had an impact in our second-year writing composition courses. This smaller scale assessment will provide information as to whether or not these changed practices are increasing students' abilities to synthesize and use information effectively.

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The library is also assessing the impact of the assignment design workshops by collecting feedback via an online survey at the end of each workshop, by interviewing participants on their experience in implementing their redesigned assignments, and by assessing student work produced as a result of these assignments.

The assessment of the student exhibit experiences, both physical and digital, is an on-going process. Within the context of particular courses, we survey students both throughout the course of the semester and at the conclusion. The mid-semester report allows us to gauge where students might be struggling, giving us an opportunity to make adjustments that could improve the outcomes of the course and the students' experience. We also conduct debriefing sessions with faculty at the end of the semester to get feedback about the process and discuss the relationship between the exhibit projects and meeting the course goals and objectives. All of this data helps us evaluate our efforts in terms of effectiveness for both students and faculty as well as contributing to continual library discussions about our role in student learning and engagement in a timely manner.

Librarianship is a changing field and we urge you to look at the innovative work members of our profession are undertaking to make significant contributions on our campuses to improve teaching and learning across all disciplines. Increasingly, librarians are developing programs and offering services that speak directly to assignment design, curriculum scaffolding, undergraduate research opportunities, and authentic assessment. Offer your campus librarians a seat at the table, and you will find new and valuable partners in your efforts to improve outcomes and experiences for students and faculty.

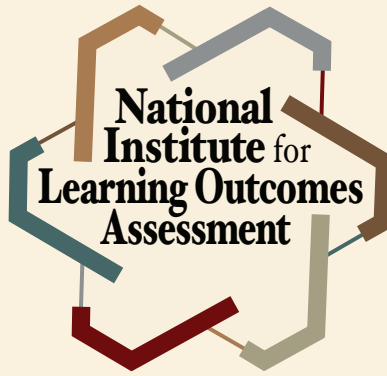
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