Faculty Services Roundtable

2015 AALL Annual Meeting, Philadelphia – Sunday, July 19, 2015, 11:45 a.m.

Contents

Marketing & Outreach Services

Moderator – Cassie Rae DuBay

Question 1: How can librarians be more proactive in promoting library services or initiating contact?

- "Coffee dates"
  - Librarians meet with new faculty to introduce themselves; bring the collection development librarian to gauge research interests and understand which subject areas to collect in.
  - Have a coffee date annually with all faculty
  - Try sending emails targeted to specific faculty groups about relevant databases or services, i.e. all faculty in the tax group—they are more likely to respond because their colleagues know they received the email.
- Library orientation—for new faculty, be sure the library is a part of the welcome orientation.

Question 2: Tips for building stronger relationships with faculty and addressing the hurdles particular to library liaisons.

- Follow their twitter accounts
  - Simply following them lets them lets them know you are keeping current with their research or interests.
  - Retweet them to help promote their profile.
- Go beyond a research lecture and be an embedded librarian in writing courses/ seminars. For example, the librarian can provide a research lecture, but the professor could also require that each student meet with the librarian at least once in the semester or by a certain date.
- For libraries using the liaison model for faculty research: the head of reference can request a weekly report from each liaison and then may suggest additional outreach with the faculty or tips to improve current outreach methods with faculty.

Question 3: How do you seek input or suggestions from faculty about current services or desired future services? How does your library communicate major news or library updates?

- Library-hosted lunches as part of the faculty's regular faculty forum series.
- Explore unused real estate to convey information (i.e. think of ways to communicate beyond email); for example:
  - At one school, the faculty enjoy coffee and bagels every Wednesday morning in the faculty reading room. Put a poster or infographic here for the faculty to look at while they prepare their breakfast.
  - Use bathroom stalls or counters to hang a monthly newsletter.
- Keep good statistics. Having a wealth of data makes it easier to:
  - Create fun infographics;
  - Share quick facts in conversation or in bulletins
  - One suggested platform: Compendium Knowledge Tracker

Question 5: How do you get faculty inside the library? Does this even matter or just that they utilize library services?

- Host a "new book" or recent scholarship event in the library. Examples include a "Spring Celebration of Books" event to showcase faculty work.
- Many folks said that getting faculty into the library simply isn't a priority; as long as they are using the library services or know how to reach out to the library when they do need assistance, etc., then the library is succeeding in faculty services.

Empirical Legal Research—completing empirical research when you don't have an empiricist on staff

Moderator – Pamela Brannon

Question 1: Empirical research/ project—what is it, where is the line?

- Some libraries assist with coding data, others do not. One library was presented with a project to retrieve writs of errors and cert petitions for a specific time period. The library staff retrieved the petitions/writs and coded the data.
- Sense that we can find the data, find the resources, but may be uncomfortable going beyond that, as we lack training.
- Some library schools require empirical methods classes, others don't.
- Empirical projects include both creating/manipulating data sets and conducting/collecting surveys.

Question 2: Locating potential assistance with empirical research

- Talk to main campus librarians – they may be able to help you find/manipulate data, and they may be able to help you find graduate students in other disciplines who would be able to work as research assistants.
- Talk to the graduate office at your school – again, they may be able to identify potential research assistants.
- Think not only about statistics graduate students, but also students in education, social sciences, other disciplines that use empirical methods.
- At standalone schools, you can reach out to a local university.

Question 3: Resources for empirical research data/training

- Empirical Legal Studies blog – http://www.elsblog.org. Posts on methodology, also links to data sets.
- Conference on Empirical Legal Studies – http://law.wustl.edu/CERL/celspapercall.html.
- Inter-university Consortium on Political and Social Research – http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/landing.jsp. Central repository for raw data sets.
- Federal government data, such as the National Center for Education Statistics (http://nces.ed.gov) and Data.gov (http://data.gov).
- Institutional repositories – some institutions post the data from empirical projects undertaken by faculty in their repositories.

- Faculty web sites – some faculty post their data on personal web pages.
- TRACFed – http://tracfed.syr.edu. Data on the operation of the federal government and criminal/civil litigation.

Working with Students

Moderator – Morgan Stoddard

The discussion at this table focused primarily on two topics: (1) models for working with student research assistants in the library and (2) training for faculty research assistants.

Question 1: Models for working with student research assistants in the library

- Many, but not all participants, had a pool of research assistants who worked in the library and provided research assistance to faculty
- The number of research assistants in the library pool ranged from one or two to ten
- The research assistants were generally supervised by a librarian; however, at one library, the students' were supervised and their work was reviewed by the faculty member with whom they were working on a project
- The research assistants were generally current law students or recent graduates; however, one law school also hires incoming 1Ls during the summer before their first year and some have hired other graduate students
- Some libraries had limitations on who they could hire (e.g., work study or current law students only)
- Participants used a number of approaches to advertise positions and identify research assistants
    - A few used the law school's Simplicity site
    - Some identified students who did particularly well in legal research classes
    - Some identified students in the school's library science program who had a JD

Question 2: Training for faculty research assistants

- Participants provide a variety of training opportunities for faculty research assistants
- Many libraries provide a general training once a semester or in the summer
- At least one library scheduled one-on-one trainings with all new research assistants so they could provide information specific to the research assistants' assignments
- Participants discussed the pros/cons of general trainings versus one-on-one training
- In terms of topics discussed at the training, one library had a two to three hour session at the beginning of summer in which research assistants learned how to navigate resources at the library, advanced Westlaw/Lexis search features, and major sources other than Westlaw/Lexis
- One library contacted faculty prior to the training so that it could be tailored to the specific topics faculty were researching that term
- Training was not required at any of the participants' schools
- Participants discussed ways in which they marketed training to faculty or research assistants and encouraged students to attend

    - Many participants used multiple types of advertising (e.g., newsletters, posters, blogs, et cetera)
    - One participant received a list of all new research assistants each semester and emailed them individually
    - One library increased attendance at trainings by getting the law school to agree to pay students for the time they attended the training
    - Participants discussed the importance of getting faculty to encourage their research assistants to attend training and utilize the library
- One library had a "faculty RA liaison" program, in which research assistants were given an individual librarian they could contact for assistance

When to Say No & How to Say it Well

Moderator – I-Wei Wang

Question 1: Boundaries—what are they, how do we establish them?

- Sometimes not well defined –is there any "universally" applicable absolute boundary?
    - Work outside of regular hours (weekends, snow days)?
        - Even this is not universal
        - Late evening or weekend work should mean "compensatory" time taken when things aren't as busy
        - Never "advertise" this – e.g., compose emails over the weekend but send first thing on Monday morning; don't give out non-work phone number
    - Are librarians to be expected to check emails, or work from home (in absence of explicit telecommuting agreement, w/o institutional support of a home office/infrastructure)
        - We're professionals (dedicated, engaged with our work) - But we're not law firm associates (we're not paid like law firm lawyers or librarians)
        - "We are administrative – you don't expect HR to be available 24-7"
    - Example of a well-defined boundary: one institution gives a guideline that "If it's a project that will take more than 20 hours, that's probably more appropriate to an RA"
- Good sense of boundaries protects librarians–
    - Frustration/boredom - "bad" assignments, the project everyone dreads
    - Failing to maintain boundaries communicates the wrong thing about who we are as professionals – "Some of them treat us like we're their servants"
    - Underutilization of our real skills & value
    - Often the crossing of boundaries (or edging past the point where the librarian is really comfortable) is a matter of us being "too good at what we do"
    - How this is communicated is critical
- Having formal (and/or written) policies?
    - Clearer for librarians and faculty
    - Easier to diplomatically say "no"
    - BUT – nice to have greater flexibility
- Support from Director/institution
    - As a matter of diplomacy and maintaining personal relationship to faculty/liaison, appropriate to have the Director be the one who says no

    - Absolutely critical to have clear, good & consistent support and “sense of boundaries” understood with Director
- Sometimes it just comes down to staffing
    - Someone is not here right now to do that –
        - “Your failure to plan ahead doesn’t equate to my making this my priority” (there are always just a few chronically unprepared “cranks” who don’t get this)
        - How/if to say no in this situation – being the hero vs. being the martyr
        - Setting bad precedent (rewarding bad behavior)
    - Happy to train your RAs
    - We don’t have someone who does this (e.g. data manipulation or other specialized field) –
        - We can help you find an RA (e.g. undergrad) or other specialist who can do this
    - Need for transparency/communication of staffing limitations
- Interdisciplinary research, data-heavy support
    - Challenges –
        - Can be difficult at standalone law library (lack of subscription resources, expertise/familiarity, potential for collaborations)
        - Faculty may be treading into areas unfamiliar to them – poorly formed questions, wrong expectations about availability of information, no research leads to start from
        - May have to “refer away” (to specialist/expert at “Main” library etc.), or may have to (or get to?) mediate the interaction with outside experts
        - Referral to “Main” library specialists: may have different level of service/liaison relationship for Law faculty
    - Fun! -
        - Ability to show off foundational, core research skills and strategies
        - Participating in “leading edge” research
        - Opportunity to collaborate outside law school/law library
        - This is where they need us the most! (Least expertise with content, resources, strategies)

Question 2: Communication and collaboration

- Setting expectations, communicating and creating transparency about boundaries
    - Beneficial to establish this from the outset – introductory orientation/intake interview with new faculty
    - Written policy/guidelines/service description
    - A positive way to communicate boundaries is to provide examples of good-fit projects – let faculty infer the boundaries based on examples (we’re all legally trained, inferring the rule from example is what we do!)
    - But it’s often also important (within limits) to emphasize openness to all kinds of requests
    - Saying “yes” 99[.99999]% of the time makes the time you say “no” more significant
    - Examples –
        - ILL request over the holidays – Real message: “There is a human being who has to do this.” Positive spin: “we’ll submit this after the holiday – you’ll have the book for the full loan period”

- Ability to connect faculty or their RAs to other resources
    - Faculty/librarian specialists outside the Law School/Law Library
        - Not an option at standalone law schools
    - Partnering with or training RAs –
        - Training faculty's RAs
        - collaborating with faculty RAs
        - coordinating faculty's RAs with library or other RAs
        - Risk (benefits?) of becoming project manager for RA crew
    - Communicating the value of the library or library RAs
        - Are library RAs marketed as temps (fill in if you don't have RAs or they aren't available), or as an A-Team (specially trained, supervised, coordinated, to do the work your RA isn't able to)
- Making the best of a bad situation
    - Opportunity to educate faculty – "look what we're able to do"
        - Impact on reality and perception as professionals?
    - Turning the "dreaded" project into an opportunity to communicate the value of the Law Library (helpful at budget time to demonstrate the level of service provided)

Question 3: "Cultural" differences between faculty and librarians

- Faculty/tenure status
- Helpful to communicate about your own research interests, teaching activities
- Ultimately, we **are** different
    - Hard for faculty to see your research interests at same level
    - So often we only have time for our support role, not for independent research/publication
    - They face (or self-perceive) more stringent and urgent pressures to publish
- Timing issues – summers, sabbaticals, while "visiting" at another institution
    - Faculty may lack RA support in these times
    - Maybe remote – you are the lifeline at a heavy research time for them
    - While a visitor elsewhere –
        - you are the familiar resource
        - services at the institution they are visiting may be less robust for visitors
        - other inst. may be courting them – are you in a "librarian vs. librarian death match"?
- Understanding, transparency and communication about similarities and differences in our roles and the pressures we face as librarians versus as faculty is critical.