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Reimagining Library Liaisons: A Liaison Competencies Mashup

Karyn Hinkle
University of Kentucky, karyn.hinkle@uky.edu

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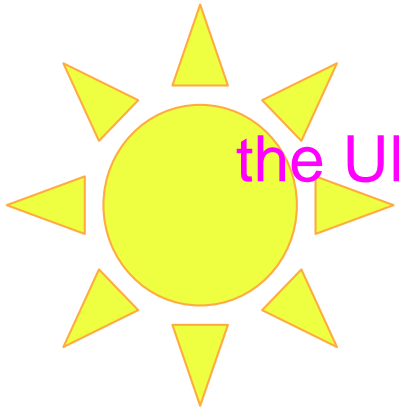
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the UK Libraries Information Literacy Committee's summer 2018 workshop

"Reimagining Library Liaisons: A Liaison Competencies Mashup"

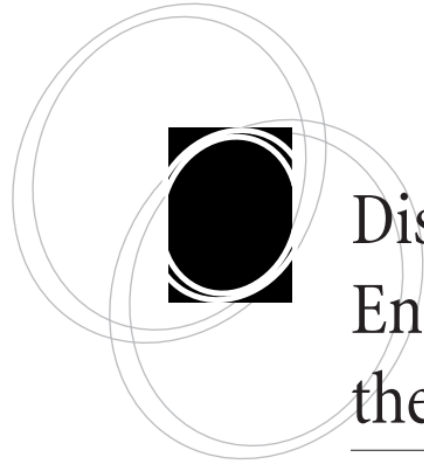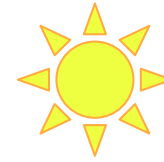Wednesday, June 20, 2018
1:00 - 3:30 p.m.

workshop
pre-reading

Distinctive Roles: Engagement, Innovation, and the Liaison Model

Jennifer Church-Duran

abstract: Bent on improving the teaching and learning experience, enhancing the productivity of researchers, and increasing the visibility of research outputs, libraries are redistributing staff, reallocating resources, and reorganizing internal structures, all to better partner campus-wide. Nowhere is the impact of this push for service innovation and user engagement greater than on the workload, direction, and even future of liaison librarian programs. This article provides brief historical context as it explores a cross section of libraries that recently redefined or restructured their liaison roles and begins a larger look at the corresponding impact of organizational climate and structure that may influence future success.

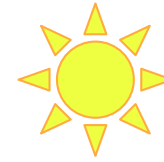# Distinctive Roles: Engagement, Innovation, and the Liaison Model

Jennifer Church-Duran

April 2017

The twenty-first century library is valued less for the content of its collections, and more for the scope and quality of the distinctive services in its portfolio.

Nowhere is the impact of the rise of service innovation and user engagement greater than on the purpose, workload, direction, and even future of liaison librarian programs.

The Evolution of Liaison Librarianship

Over the years, liaison librarians have gone by many names, including *subject specialist*, *subject librarian*, *academic liaison*, *subject liaison*, *liaison librarian*, and *subject bibliographer*. For the purposes of this article, the terms *liaison* or *liaison librarian* are used. But regardless of the moniker selected, there are shared, common characteristics. These are librarians assigned to a specific client base (a school, department, college, research center, or co-curricular unit) in a personalized, relationship-centered system of service delivery.

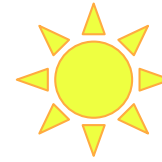# Distinctive Roles: Engagement, Innovation, and the Liaison Model

Jennifer Church-Duran

April 2017

One of the first, best-known, and most frequently cited of these ventures came from the University of Minnesota Libraries in Minneapolis-St. Paul and its Librarian Position Description Framework. Developed over several years and shared widely by Karen Williams in the 2009 ARL publication "A Framework for Articulating New Library Roles," the Minnesota approach sought to align trends in higher education and the overall mission of the university with the work of liaisons.[13]

Minnesota's project helped spur a national conversation, inspiring a host of other institutions to take a similar leap and draft versions of an engagement-centric framework for their own liaison programs.
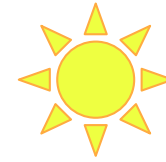
By the time ARL released the results of its third study on liaisons in 2015, *SPEC Kit 349*, dozens of academic libraries had pursued some variation of the framework concept or a similar method meant to provide clarity in liaison job expectations.

Distinctive Roles: Engagement, Innovation, and the Liaison Model

Jennifer Church-Duran

April 2017

Table 1.
Comparison of selected liaison framework models

University of Minnesota Libraries (2009)	Duke University Libraries (2011)	University of Washington Libraries	The Ohio State University Libraries (2011)
Campus engagement	Engagement	Outreach, marketing, and management management	Engagement
Content/collection development and management	Collection development	Collection development and management	Collection development
Reference/help services	Research services	Reference services	Research services
Teaching and learning	Teaching and learning	Teaching and learning	Teaching and learning
Scholarly communications	Scholarly communications	Scholarly communications	Scholarly communications
E-scholarship and digital tools	Digital tools	Communication with other subject librarians	
Outreach (to the local community)	Outreach beyond Duke*	Contribute to UW's commitment to serve the Community	
Leadership	Technical services*		
Exhibit and event planning	Exhibits*		
Fund-raising	Fund-raising/grants management*		

* Tasks depend on particular position.

Distinctive Roles: Engagement, Innovation, and the Liaison Model

Jennifer Church-Duran

April 2017
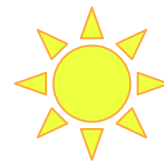
They expect librarians will work as liaison officers between the library and researchers in their domains, as knowledgeable consultants who understand the unique information cycles of faculty in their disciplines, as entrepreneurs able to identify opportunities and offer innovative solutions, and as trainers to improve users' skills and understanding.

To truly create agile systems for translating engagement into ideas and, in turn, transforming those ideas into scalable, sustainable, and replicable services, libraries must work to connect the ongoing emphasis on engaged librarianship with the need for supportive organizational strategy, structure, and culture.
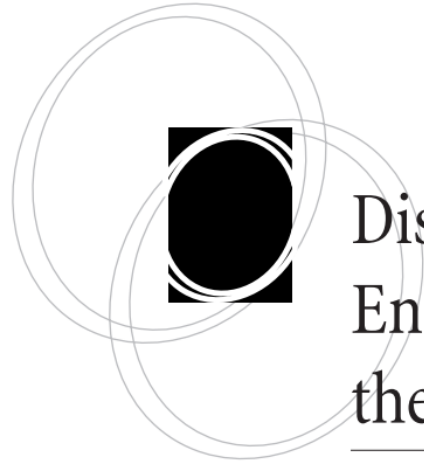
Distinctive Roles: Engagement, Innovation, and the Liaison Model

Jennifer Church-Duran
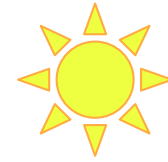
workshop pre-reading

abstract: Bent on improving the teaching and learning experience, enhancing the productivity of researchers, and increasing the visibility of research outputs, libraries are redistributing staff, reallocating resources, and reorganizing internal structures, all to better partner campus-wide. Nowhere is the impact of this push for service innovation and user engagement greater than on the workload, direction, and even future of liaison librarian programs. This article provides brief historical context as it explores a cross section of libraries that recently redefined or restructured their liaison roles and begins a larger look at the corresponding impact of organizational climate and structure that may influence future success.

689 Views

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Program

Bridging the Gap: Supporting Subject Liaisons to Become Ambassadors for Digital Scholarship in Academic Libraries

📅 Sunday, June 24   🕐 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM   📍 Location: Morial Convention Center, Rm 392

ALA Unit/Subunit: ACRL, ACRL_DSS
Meeting Type: Program
Cost: Included with full conference registration.
Open/Closed: Open

As more academic institutions expand their Digital Scholarship services, and as the broader research enterprise evolves, the role of the library liaison is changing to include new knowledge and technical skills. New areas might include digital humanities, data, data visualization, geospatial data, makerspaces, 3d modeling, basic electronics, and virtual reality. How can academic libraries continue providing legacy services while growing to meet these new scholarly and pedagogic demands, whether through new hiring paths, redefining liaisonship, or translating digital scholarship support to other areas of academic librarianship? Our invited panel will address how academic libraries may bridge the gap between support for legacy research skills and digital scholarship skills.

Conference Website

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conversation continues

ASSOCIATION OF RESEARCH LIBRARIES

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Home › Focus Areas › ARL Academy › Communities of Practice › Reimagining the Library Liaison

Reimagining the Library Liaison

The Association of Research Libraries (ARL) has been actively engaged in reimagining the role of the library liaison for a number of years through initiatives such as publishing SPEC Kits and reports on the topic; convening meetings for liaisons and their supervisors in conjunction with American Library Association meetings; and organizing a pilot Library Liaison Institute in partnership with Columbia University, Cornell University, and the University of Toronto in Summer 2015, the result of which is a report published by ARL in December 2015.

ARL program staff and the organizers of the Columbia/Cornell/Toronto institute continue to offer webinars, consultations, and facilitation to ARL member libraries who would like to replicate some or all of the institute, including an on-site workshop that can be customized to meet local needs. For an example of the latter, please see the website of the Prairie Liaison Institute 2017.

ARL Academy

> ARL Annual Leadership Symposium

> Communities of Practice

   > Accessibility

   > Assessment

   > Digital Scholarship

   > Reimagining the Library Liaison

> Leadership Development Programs

> Workforce Development

> Julia C. Blixrud Memorial Fund, Lecture & Scholarship
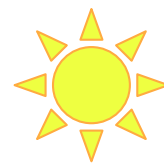
Community of Practice in ARL

ARL Liaison Institutes

Pilot Liaison Institute:	Columbia University, Cornell University, & University of Toronto	Summer 2015
Prairie Liaison Institute:	University of Illinois, University of Minnesota, & University of Wisconsin	Summer 2017
ASERL–ARL Library Liaison Institute:	Association of Southeastern Research Libraries (ASERL) members (biggest yet: 88 participants from 30 different libraries)	Spring 2018

ARL Liaison Institutes

Agenda
ASERL – ARL Library Liaison Institute
Friday, April 27 - Saturday, April 28, 2018
Klaus Advanced Computing Center, Georgia Tech
266 Ferst Drive, Atlanta GA

Friday, April 27, 2018

9:15 AM	**Breakfast / Coffee service**
10:00 AM	**Welcome / Introductions / Housekeeping** – John Burger, Association of Southeastern Research Libraries
10:15 AM	**Keynote: Liaison Futures** – Anne Kenney, University Librarian *Emerita*, Cornell University
10:45 AM	**Icebreaker Activity** – Rita Vine & Elizabeth Waraksa, Association of Research Libraries
11:00 AM	**Liaison Competencies Mash Up** – Rita Vine & Elizabeth Waraksa + small group discussions
12:30 PM	Lunch
1:30 PM	**ARL Scenarios vis-a-vis Competencies** – Rita Vine & Elizabeth Waraksa + small group discussions.
3:00 PM	Break / Networking
3:15 PM	**Round-robin "Birds of a Feather" Discussions.** Discuss each topic then move to another group.
4:30 PM	**Wrap-Up / Open Forum / Next steps / Topics for Next day**
Friday evening	Dinner groups

Saturday, April 28, 2018

8:30 AM	**Breakfast**
9:00 AM	**Unconference / Working groups / Report-Outs** – Rita Vine & Elizabeth Waraksa
10:30 AM	Coffee Break
11:00 AM	**Closing / Re-Connect with your teammates / Wrap-up. What are your desired next steps?** – Rita Vine & Elizabeth Waraksa
12:00 PM	**Adjourn**

ARL Liaison Institutes

ARL Liaison Institutes

ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEASTERN RESEARCH LIBRARIES

aserl

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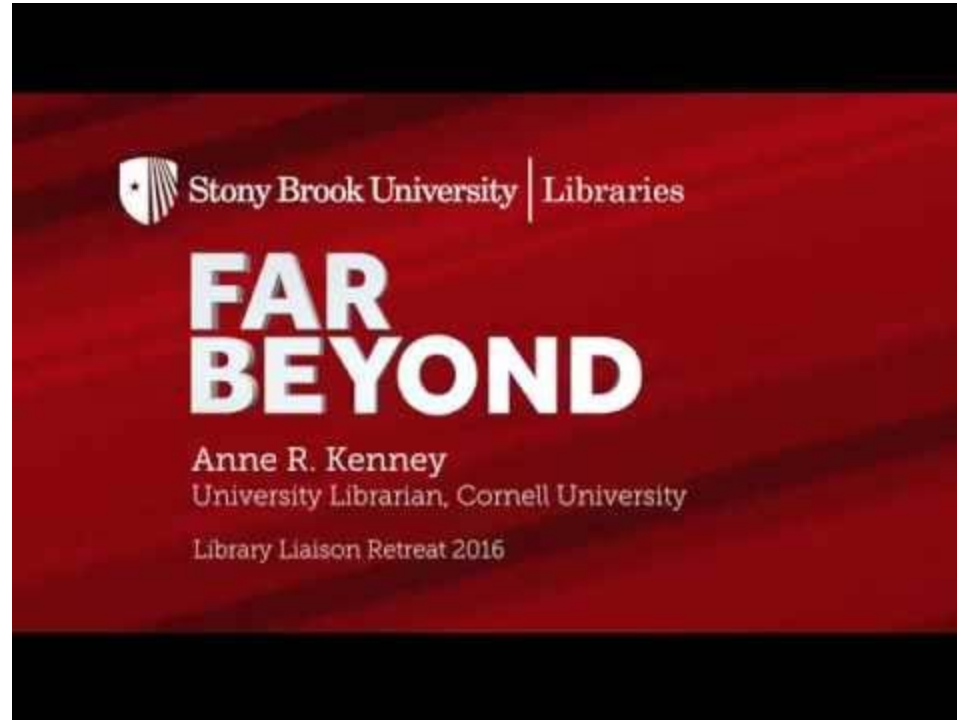|	
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"subject specialist"

examples:

- Music Librarian
- Chemistry Librarian
- Social Sciences Librarian

"functional specialist"

examples:

- Copyright Librarian
- Digital Humanities Librarian
- Scholarly Communications Librarian
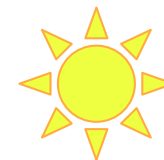
ARL Liaison Institutes terms

ARL Liaison Institutes

Rita Vine @ritavine · Apr 28
Try this at home (it worked well at the @ASERLJEB institute: review current job descriptions, competencies, for things that can be sunset, or things that need to be added to be a 21st century #arl_liaison

Liaison Competencies Mashup activity

Instructions

1. Take c. 10 minutes to familiarize yourself with the liaison job description your table has been provided.

2. As a group:
   a. Discuss skills/competencies mentioned in the job ad that could be reduced or phased out, and any others not mentioned that could be added. List these in two columns on your flip chart.
   b. Identify the most important/core competencies you believe a liaison in 2018 should have. List these on a separate page.
   c. Prepare one member to report out your group's findings for the larger room.
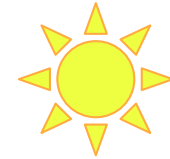
Table 4 job description

Asian and Middle Eastern Studies Librarian

The Asian and Middle Eastern Studies Librarian [AMES Librarian] is a year-round (12 month) tenure track library faculty position responsible for the overall development, management and coordination of the Libraries resources in all formats for these subject areas. The position supports the University's academic programs including the Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures (LLC), as well as interdisciplinary programs supported by the University's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, such as International Studies and the Center for Global Islamic Studies. The AMES Librarian also liaises with the Museum of Art in support of the Asian Collection.

Responsibilities include analyzing the University's programs in the LLC and International Studies, collaborating with librarians and academic faculty to establish collection profiles, selection guidelines, and preservation, location and cataloging priorities; and evaluating existing collection strengths and current collecting intensities. Collaborates with other subject librarians to provide support in religious studies and other interdisciplinary areas. This position manages specialized subject area reference services, library instruction, and online database services.

The library encourages staff participation in reaching management decisions and consequently the AMES Librarian will serve on various committees and teams. To support all students and faculty and foster excellence in a diverse and global society, the AMES Librarian will be expected to include individuals of diverse backgrounds, experiences, races, ethnicities, gender identities, sexual orientation, and perspectives in work activities. The AMES Librarian will pursue professional development opportunities, including research, publication, and professional service activities in order to meet library-wide criteria for tenure and promotion.
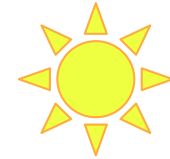
Table 3 job description

Librarian for Environmental Studies

Reporting to the Director of Research Support and Outreach Programs at the Center for Science and Social Science Information, this position facilitates access to the services and collections of a complex, multi-faceted research/academic library through direct contact with researchers and the development and promotion of services and collections. The Librarian for Environmental Studies is a member of the CSSSI team and participates in Library programs and committees.

The incumbent provides research support to graduate students and faculty in the School of Forestry & Environmental Studies and to undergraduate students in the Environmental Studies major through research consultations, course-integrated instruction, and other modes. As the subject specialist for environmental studies, the librarian provides research support and instruction to students and faculty across the campus and works closely with library colleagues to support interdisciplinary teaching, learning, and research related to environmental issues.

- Provides research consultations and instruction in the discovery, use, and management of text and data.
- Supports research and raises awareness of resources through outreach efforts such as department-based office hours, social media, and workshops.
- Creates and maintains research guides and other research support tools.
- Collaborates with librarians, archivists, GIS specialists, and Digital Scholarship specialists to support research and teaching.
- Provides consultation and instruction in the discovery, use, and management of locally created and externally available environmental data.
- Collaborates with librarians, GIS and Digital Scholarship specialists, and other campus partners to develop scalable, sustainable, and domain-appropriate data and GIS services in support of environmental research.
- Selects materials in all formats related to environmental studies, forestry, sustainability, and other topics relevant to teaching and research.
- Works closely with the CSSSI Director of Collection Management, Technical Services, and Access Services to review and acquire materials.
- Responsible for managing collections funds, evaluating approval plans, and maintaining collection development statements in assigned subject areas.
- Participates in outreach and research/instruction program planning and implementation for the CSSSI.
- Participates in Library planning, committees, and task forces, and engages in campus, regional, and national professional organizations and collaborative activities.
- Participates in professional activities outside of the Library and monitors developments and best practices elsewhere to help ensure the excellence of research support services and collections.
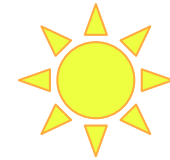
Table 2 job description

Instruction and Research Librarian

This year, the Libraries saw a large number of retirements. We are excited for the opportunity to recalibrate our organization and individual responsibilities to meet the intense demand for support for instruction, research, outreach, and digital scholarship across campus. We are seeking four Instruction and Research Librarians who can bring a positive, creative, playful approach to problem solving, serving as excellent colleagues and partners in relationship building.

Instruction and Research Librarian (four openings)

The Libraries is seeking a creative, collaborative, and enthusiastic Instruction and Research Librarian. Reporting to the Head of Research, the librarian will cultivate partnerships that help the libraries understand and respond to student and faculty informational needs.

A critical aspect of this position requires that the librarian be a strong presence in the campus community, building and maintaining close relationships with faculty and students in order to meet their teaching, learning, research, and publication needs. The Instruction and Research Librarian will engage students in the learning process by providing instruction sessions, workshops, and online guides and tutorials. They will provide individual research assistance, including consultations, and participate in collection development. They will serve as liaison to campus groups and academic disciplines, including those in the social sciences and humanities.

The successful candidate will have an opportunity to build expertise as part of the Libraries' effort to advance scholarly communication and data management services; therefore, the successful candidate should have an interest in the extensive scholarly communications landscape, including digital scholarship, open access platforms, open educational resources, open data, copyright, and related intellectual property issues.

The librarian will work in a team environment in the Libraries and must have willingness and interest in continual learning and development through work related experiences, training, and professional development. The responsibilities will evolve as the library environment changes.

Librarians play a key role in the educational mission of the university by establishing strong relationships with faculty and students, and connecting them to the services, content, and tools that meet their research, teaching, and learning needs. They participate in Library-wide committees and in professional activities outside the university, and monitor developments and best practices in academic librarianship.
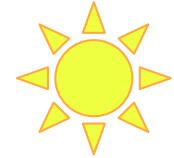
Liaison Competencies Mashup activity

Table 5 job description

Architecture & Design Librarian

The Libraries seek an enthusiastic, collaborative and future-minded professional to serve as the Architecture & Design Librarian. In support of evolving research, teaching and learning for one of the world's leading architecture programs, the A&D librarian will help define new paradigms in liaison librarianship, develop creative outreach practices, engage with new pedagogies, and support digital scholarship. This librarian will shape and deliver programs of outreach, instruction, and resource and content development in architecture and design, building technology, art and art history, and the intersection of culture, art, science and technology.

Leveraging knowledge of their constituents' goals and needs, and using systematic practices, the A&D Librarian gathers and analyzes information to serve strategic initiatives and develop innovative service design. The successful candidate will bring essential expertise, experience, and leadership skills for advancing the partnerships and collaborations needed in the Libraries' fulfillment of the Future of Libraries Task Force Report recommendations.

As a liaison, the A&D Librarian will:
- Offer expert research support throughout the research cycle, from finding and managing information to creating, disseminating and stewarding research products.
- Develop a program of outreach, drawing upon the full range of library services, to facilitate the success of varied research endeavors including local and global collaborations, interdisciplinary teams, industry or grand challenges competitions, online learning projects, and original undergraduate and graduate student research.
- Design and provide instruction on critical information skills, relevant tools and resources, and issues in the information ecosystem, such as Open Access, intellectual property, publishing and impact, and the growing body of literature on design as a tool for social change.
- Support the evolving strategic work and priorities in space and programming in the School for Architecture and Planning.
- Facilitate collaborative learning communities and foster scholarly communities of practice through outreach, service provision, design, technology, and exhibit programming.
- Partner with Collections Strategists and other staff to develop collections and content in relevant disciplines, and contribute to library collection strategies that expand access to research through Open Access and creative deployment of digital collections.
- Collaborate across departments to systematically enhance the Libraries' capacity to deliver visual and specialized collections and assess their impact on digital scholarship.

The A&D Librarian reports to a manager in the Department for Liaison, Instruction & Reference Services. They work collaboratively with colleagues to provide evolving services and to support interdisciplinary research. The A&D librarian supports the quality and impact of library services by leading or participating in department and system-wide initiatives, serving on teams and task forces, and/or through service coordination or functional expertise.
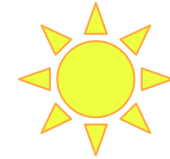
Liaison Competencies Mashup activity

Table 1 job descriptions

Librarian for Social Work & Psychology

The Libraries seeks a liaison librarian supporting the School of Social Work and the Departments of Psychology and Applied Psychology. The ideal candidate has an abiding dedication to developing services for the highly diverse user communities of these programs, which draw learners and researchers from across cultural and demographic spectra, who range in focus from applied to research-intensive work. Library liaisons at this library contribute to the educational mission by establishing strong relationships with faculty, graduate students, and undergraduates, and connecting them to the services, content, and tools that meet their research, teaching, and learning needs.

This position serves as the primary library liaison to the above areas with special emphasis on delivering a program of extensive and integrated instructional, consultation, and research support services; developing responsive and creative services for communities who are engaged in work within the university and the city as well as on the global stage; and building and curating collections in all formats. Candidates should exhibit a strong public service orientation, a high degree of facility with technologies and systems germane to the 21st-century library, and have experience helping students and faculty who are increasingly using quantitative and qualitative data, survey methodologies, evidence synthesis methods (e.g., systematic reviews), computing-intensive applications, and geospatial visualization in their work. Liaison librarians actively learn and apply new skills and knowledge in emerging areas of digital and data-intensive scholarship; research data management practices; and the evolution of systems of scholarly publishing and communications.
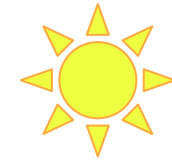
Social Sciences Data and Sociology Librarian

The Library seeks a highly collaborative, innovative and service-oriented professional to support the University increased focus on social sciences data research in the School of Public and International Affairs, and to provide in-depth quantitative reference and research services. This position is also the Library subject liaison to the Department of Sociology, supporting undergraduate course and independent work, the graduate student program, and faculty teaching and research. The Department incorporates both quantitative and qualitative approaches to social sciences; courses and research reflect social dimensions of economics, politics, history, psychology and demography. The successful candidate will oversee the Library collections in sociology, manage acquisitions funds in this area, and work closely with subject selectors in related areas on collection development and collaborative collection building.

The Social Sciences Data and Sociology Librarian actively participates in a dynamic team environment in the Library and with other social sciences librarians and data specialists to develop and efficiently implement instructional, outreach, research and reference services to University students and faculty. Creates research guides to promote access to subject-specific and data sources. Represents the university in relevant professional and scholarly organizations. This position is part of the Library Scholarly Collections and Research Services Department.

ARL Liaison Institutes

Rita Vine @ritavine · Apr 28
Try this at home (it worked well at the @ASERLJEB institute: review current job descriptions, competencies, for things that can be sunset, or things that need to be added to be a 21st century #arl_liaison

ARL Liaison Institutes
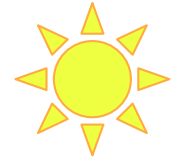
> **Rita Vine**
> @ritavine
>
> We've collected some personal #reflections from recent participants in #arl_liaison institutes in this thread. What excites liaisons about the future, and what concerns them?   1/
>
> 3:49 PM - 10 May 2018

- local context matters

- seeing outreach/ engagement/ impact in new ways

- questions about assessment

- disciplinary diversity

- rethinking position descriptions

- figuring out internal org issues, but not necessarily re-org

ARL Liaison Institutes

Rita Vine
@ritavine

Follow

We've collected some personal #reflections from recent participants in #arl_liaison institutes in this thread.
What excites liaisons about the future, and what concerns them?   1/

3:49 PM - 10 May 2018

Rita Vine @ritavine · May 10
Local context matters.

"These are complicated jobs within complicated institutions."
"Each library has its own needs when it comes to liaison."   2/

💬 1   ⟲   ♡   ✉

Rita Vine @ritavine · May 10
Seeing outreach, engagement and impact in new ways.

"I was inspired by all the creative ways that liaisons promote engagement..."
"Our liaison program needs to be more intentional."   3/

💬 1   ⟲   ♡   ✉

Rita Vine @ritavine · May 10
Figuring out internal org issues, but not necessarily re-org.

"Library teams"
"Partnerships between liaisons and functional librarians"   4/

💬 1   ⟲   ♡ 1   ✉

Rita Vine @ritavine · May 10
Disciplinary diversity.

"Liaisons can look very different in different disciplines... make sure we're understanding each other."
"the needs of humanities, sciences and health/med are very different."   5/

💬 1   ⟲   ♡ 2   ✉

Rita Vine @ritavine · May 10
Position descriptions, competencies.

"...grappling with how to assign liaison time"
"...liaison has expanded to include many different areas."
"There are so many moving parts of our jobs."
"Time to rethink our position descriptions....a good way to start some discussions"   6/

💬 1   ⟲ 1   ♡ 1   ✉

Rita Vine @ritavine · May 10
Assessment

"what will "new metrics" look like for a "high impact institution", a "high impact library" and a "high impact librarian"
"Many liaison programs are struggling with similar questions about assessment."
"...ways to evaluate and assess liaison work."

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What are your current thoughts about the most important/core duties of the library liaison job?

outreach, instruction, understanding how we can better meet faculty needs...

outreach, relationships, teaching, relevant collections

strategic and consistent communication, learning and supporting the teaching and research needs and interests of your departmental faculty, engaging with students in your department through instruction, reference, and consultation, and showing up for departmental functions and programs (i.e., being visible and taking interest in the department).

coordinating with faculty on materials needed for teaching and then developing appropriate & relevant instruction sessions.

information literacy, research support, collections

lack of time and overextended responsibilities

outreach, public services, collection development

providing the appropriate services and keeping the faculty updated on options

faculty and student outreach, info lit, research support

strong grasp of the faculty research areas, the department's content / learning outcomes goals/ curricula, accreditation needs, ongoing open communications with the academic department

interacting with and responding to the research needs of my clientele--the faculty and students in my subject areas. the most time-consuming parts of this are preparing for and delivering consults and information literacy sessions.

outreach, instruction, research consults, collections - also, liaisons should be the first point of contact for our faculty and students, but not necessarily the last

liaising with department and infolit instruction; dealing with the increasing large numbers of students in the program is making one-on-one consults impossible even though they are critical

work directly with my departments

collection development

UK Libraries liaisons: pre-survey word cloud by Antje

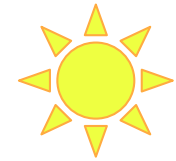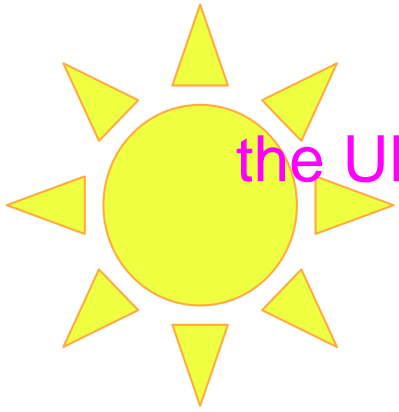UK Libraries liaisons: pre-survey word cloud by Antje

Imagine you would take these eliminated/added liaison competencies
back to your library administration.

- How would you share this?
- What do you think the replies would be?
- How would you respond to critiques?
  - Tie ideas to library and institutional strategies/strategic plans.
  - Think about solving problems one-by-one: breaking them down to individual issues and addressing those.

UK Libraries liaisons / "Liaison Competencies Mashup" activity recap

the UK Libraries Information Literacy Committee's summer 2018 workshop

"Reimagining Library Liaisons:
A Liaison Competencies Mashup"

Wednesday, June 20, 2018
1:00 - 3:30 p.m.