Bridging the Gap: Effective Collaboration Between Circulation and Reference

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Bridging the Gap: Effective Collaboration Between Circulation and Reference

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Issues

• One big building, several service points
  • Hub (Information Commons) – basement
  • AV Desk – basement
  • Circulation – 1st floor
  • Reference Desk – 2nd floor
  • Periodicals Desk – 2nd Floor
The Urge to Merge

- Advantages
  - More economical use of staff
  - Less confusion for patrons

- Disadvantages
  - Too many services at one desk
  - Difficulty of training staff on widely different tasks
  - Space problems
What We’re Doing

- Space and storage
- Lost and missing items
- Integrated chat service
- Implementation of LibAnswers system
- Joint meetings between the two departments
- Fourth Fridays
Lost in Space!

- Space and Storage Committee
  - Facilitate and coordinate library space & storage issues
  - Advise Libraries about retrieval and delivery of stored mat’ls
  - Communicate and provide info concerning space & storage

- Lost and missing items
  - Define the current problems in the catalog
  - Recommendations for clearing the backlog
  - Recommendations for addressing the ongoing problem
  - Develop procedures
On the Front Lines...

- Integrated chat service
- Implementation of LibAnswers system
Keeping in Touch

- Joint meetings between the two departments
- Fourth Fridays
What outcomes do we hope to see?

- More effective communication
- Increased camaraderie
- Working together to address public service issues
- Learning and/or tweaking skills through 4th Friday sessions
- And our #1 goal always—the ability to provide better service
Tying in to the Strategic Plan

VALUES

• **Collegiality**
  - We value cooperation and collaboration
  - We commit to creating an environment that encourages collegiality

• **Creativity**
  - We value innovative ideas and flexible solution

• **Service**
  - We commit to quality services that meet or exceed our users’ expectations
Strategic Plan…..

ATTENDING TO THE BASICS

- Provide access to materials and information
- Offer the highest quality to users

GOALS

Goal 3 Opportunities for Growth and Enhancement,

Objective 3.3.3 Continue reviewing, analyzing, and implementing improvements to library services, hours, and security to provide creative, flexible, and safe learning environments
Challenges

- TIME!
- Cross training—challenges of its own
- Maintaining engagement
Other Ideas/Possibilities

- **Basic cross-training of faculty/staff**
  - Greater appreciation/understanding of work done at both desks
  - Reduction of bouncing students from one desk to the other
  - Ability to generate new ideas regarding workflow and policies from those being cross-trained

- **Improve student assistant training in both groups**
  - Standardize knowledge base
  - Set common high-quality service standard
  - Build technical skills
  - Cross-train and share students when possible—this not only helps in times of budgetary restraints, it also gives GAs and other library science students a wider view of public service
  - Invite GAs and student supervisors to 4th Friday sessions
Other.....

- **Create Student Advisory Group**
  - Consist of volunteers from across campus
  - Meet a couple of times a semester for feedback and perhaps to try out new services

- **Your Ideas?**
Question for Discussion

- Does your library have a combined reference and circulation desk? What are some advantages and disadvantages?
A B and B Production

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