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Against Wind and Tide: Alternative Case Studies Reflecting on Subject and Functional Librarians in a Hybrid Reality

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Introduction to Liaison Models Panel

• Academic Library focus – all from large research institutions
• Supporting STM disciplines
• Case study approach – Subject, Functional, Hybrid & permutations of each
• Considerations for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
• Challenges posed by pandemic – maintaining remote staffing options
• Perceived difficulties in hiring for new positions, replacements – concerns about retention
• General observations shared by panel
Subject Model

• Organizational Structure – 2 Divisions:
  • Public Services – with 4 major home departments: Reference, Education/Outreach, IT, Design Services
  • Research Resources (Technical Services) – with 4 departments: Collection Strategies, Special Collections/Archives, Acquisitions/Cataloging, Digital Services

• All Subject librarians:
  • have general titles – Research Librarian for Applied Sciences, Physical Sciences, Humanities, Performance Arts, etc
  • Deliver all/same services to their liaison units:
    • Reference, Consultations, Collections, Scholarly Communication, Instruction from undergraduate to Post-Docs, Systematic Reviews, other related services
    • Make referrals to Functional Librarian Colleagues for data management, digital scholarship services, computational & quantitative analysis, etc

• Perform as a Generalist when working outside of Liaison assignments
• Portfolio is deeper & sometimes feels equally wide
Functional Model

Manage Individual Budgets

Liaison to VIVA

Vendor Relations

Head (Manage Overall Budget)

Negotiations

Approval Plans

Firm Orders

Journals

Electronic Resources

Individual Selector

Individual Selector

Individual Selector

Recommend & Team Ratifies

CM Team

Physical Inventory

Weeding

Manage Stacks & Storage

Binding & Repairs

Labelling

Collections Health

Preservation
Hybrid Model

- Hybrid allows subject librarians to build relationships and develop deep expertise in their specialties.
- Referrals are made to functional librarians for their expertise, such as evidence synthesis, citation management, data management, etc.
- Build on people’s strengths
- Cost/labor savings
  - Staff attrition may lead to some selection consolidation.
  - Negotiations team handles large purchases
  - Combine unrestricted funds
  - Streamline some book requests centrally
Hybrid Model

Collections Decision

- Budget
- Access Model
- Format
- Reuse Rights
- Accessibility
- Privacy
- Space Constraints
- Perpetual Access
- Labor to License

- Research Needs
- Curriculum Alignment
- Potential Users
- Content

- Potential
- Users
- Labor to
- License

- Perpetual
- Access
- Space
- Constraints

- Privacy
- Accessibility
- Reuse Rights
- Format
- Access Model
- Budget

- Research Needs
- Curriculum Alignment
- Potential Users
- Content
What do collections responsibilities look like in your model?
What are the strengths of your model?
What are the weaknesses of your model?
What can library leadership and management do to improve your model?
Conclusions & Audience Questions

• How is your library responding to changing staffing needs?
• What models are early career librarians most prepared for & likely to succeed in?
• Is there a best solution?
Further reading


