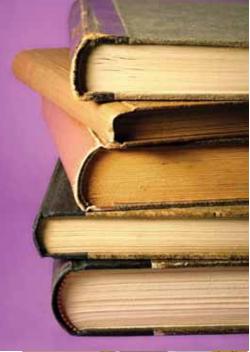# A Framework for the Engaged Librarian: Building on our Strengths

The role of subject librarians in academic libraries continues to evolve because of the changes occurring throughout higher education—changes marked by simultaneous hyperspecialization and interdisciplinarity, by the movement of learning experiences toward the online and the mobile, and by changes in user behaviors in library spaces, where traditional reference service is less needed in a time of ubiquitous access to information resources, but where greater explanation, context-setting, and interpretation is needed for many library users to make sense of their research projects within a rapidly changing environment, and where positioning subject librarian expertise within the workflows of users is crucial.

To respond to this environment, The Ohio State University Libraries have made "engagement" a priority for subject librarians, and Area Studies and Special Collections Librarians. The kind of deepened involvement with the academic community envisioned by "engagement" calls for a new Framework, which presents an organized approach to professional activity with "engagement" as the linchpin or guiding principle.

How the Framework will be Used

The Framework for the Engaged Librarian presented here draws on the best thinking of the Engaged Librarian Framework Group in the OSU Libraries, and on the documents on subject librarians and engaged librarianship developed first by the University of Minnesota Libraries (Librarian Position Description Framework); the University of Iowa Libraries (Iowa Framework for Liaisons/Subject Librarians) and Duke University Libraries (Engaging with Library Users: Sharpening Our Vision as Subject Librarians for the Duke University Libraries).

This Framework presents the main categories of engaged librarian responsibilities, and serves to create expectations for all subject librarians at OSUL (including Area Studies and Special Collections Librarians). The Framework will be used to set goals each year for all subject librarians. Each of the five sections in the Framework contains a list of competencies. All competencies should be considered "core" for all subject librarians, but will be considered developmental as the Engaged Librarian Model is implemented over time. In addition, each section has a list of "best practices" enumerating sample activities, projects, or behaviors that illustrate engagement . Subject librarians, in consultation with their division heads and supervisors, will develop their list of goals each year, using the competencies identified, and the best practices examples as a guide. Their goals will also be based on disciplinary distinctions and other aspects of their assignments.

Engagement

Engagement is a deepened level of sustained, high-quality, mutually beneficial interaction in the liaison role with academic programs.

Competencies:

• Communicating effectively with members of the assigned departments, individually or in groups, in both face-to-face and virtual venues

• Developing partnerships when appropriate between the library and the assigned area on collection building, teaching and learning issues, grants or research projects, or other areas of mutual interest

• Creating new programs and services (or improving existing programs and services) that respond to identified needs and priorities of students and faculty and to strategic directions of the Library

• Facilitating problem-solving for the assigned programs in relation to library services

• Championing the library as an intellectual meeting place for programming, conversation, and inquiry

Examples of best practices:

• Communicating often with faculty, students, academic staff, and administrators in assigned areas

• Participating in departmental meetings and other events such as colloquia, seminars or dissertation defenses

• Participating in discipline-specific organizations and associations

• Inviting faculty to share their scholarship through library-sponsored programs and events

Research Services

Provide expert research consultation to members of the university community through understanding user needs, extending specialized services to users appropriate for their discipline and points in their research workflow, and assessing the services offered in order to improve them.

Competencies:

• Analyzing and understanding users' research and information needs to develop, refine, assess, and sustain research and information services and programs in all formats

• Actively seeking opportunities to foster interdisciplinary collaborations in the provision of research and information services across the campus

• Providing research consultations that involve subject or other in-depth specialized areas of expertise

• Providing on-demand research and information support in multiple formats

• Continuously evaluating and assessing research and information-related services

Examples of best practices:

• Developing and conducting studies to assess users' research, information, and technology needs (using data from Ask Database, web logs, circulation statistics, ILL Statistics, interviewing key constituents)

• Sharing information with colleagues about disciplinary trends and OSUL/University activities

• Creating research portals, research wikis, research blogs, and other virtual tools and resources

• Offering regular virtual and in-person office hours in departments

• Creating and maintaining appropriate online research guides, tutorials, etc.

• Regularly surveying departmental web sites, listservs, press releases, OSUToday, onCampus and other appropriates sources to identify faculty research interests, announcements of new University initiatives and centers, etc.

• Contributing to Subject Teams and other groups in planning services for interdisciplinary projects and strategic priorities at the campus level

• Establishing research mentorships with students writing undergraduate theses

Scholarly Communication

Work with members of the university community to enhance their ability to share their research broadly and effectively by addressing a range of issues, including changes in publishing, funder requirements for sharing research, open access models for disseminating new knowledge, digital publishing, and exercising author rights to broaden sharing of research.

Competencies:

• Knowing how scholarly communication works (including understanding a variety of publishing models) in assigned disciplines

• Tracking emerging trends and models within disciplines and how these relate to trends in other disciplines

• Understanding and explaining the value and function of OSUL publishing partnership options as they develop

• Explaining the principles behind open access publishing and public access practices, knowing expectations of funders for sharing research results, and knowing available options for open access for scholars in their assigned departments

• Understanding and explaining the functions and policies of institutional repositories and disciplinary repositories generally and OSU-supported repositories specifically.

• Understanding the mechanics of authors' copyrights and advise faculty and students on strategies for effectively managing and exercising their rights in their works.

Examples of best practices:

• Helping faculty, graduate students, and academic staff to negotiate retaining their rights as authors to broaden access to their research.

• Advocating with authors and editors for advancing sustainable models of scholarly communication.

• Providing resources that increase faculty, graduate students, and academic staff awareness of alternative publication models in their discipline.

• Working with faculty to deposit their works in institutional or disciplinary repositories and publish in open access venues.

• Recruiting university-published content; identifying digital resources that require long-term preservation and merit sustained access.

• Referring faculty, students, and staff to the Head of the Copyright Resources Center, Preservation and Reformatting Officer, or the Scholarly Resources Integration Department when appropriate and partnering with them in projects that increase sharing of OSU research.
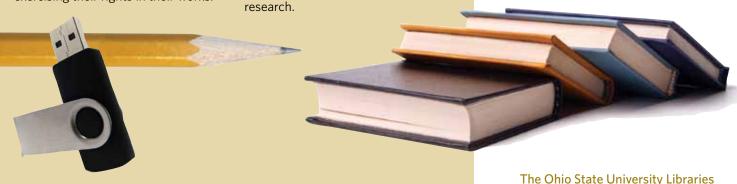
Collection Development

Develop and manage collections to actively support research and instruction in subject area(s) by contributing to the selection and management of content for the libraries collections in relevant formats and languages.

Competencies:

• Using collections as a basis for engagement to create dynamic services and innovative applications of collections to research questions or curricular goals

• Managing funds and other resources to support the acquisition of content that has the most value for OSU research, teaching, and learning.

• Working effectively with colleagues in the Libraries to enhance acquisition, access, discovery, and use of library collections.

• Integrating knowledge of scholarly communication patterns and trends in a discipline with local collection building and management activities.

• Developing cooperative statewide collection development relationships to enhance collaboration, access and the development of shared resources

• Developing and applying knowledge of local use of collections to effectively manage resources and increase the value of collections for users' research, teaching, and learning.

Continued

Examples of best practices:

• Applying knowledge of changing user needs and behaviors to review continuing commitments and approval plans regularly to ensure our collections reflect current research and scholarship on campus;

• Expending collection funds effectively and in a timely manner;

• Identifying new content (e.g. e-resources) that advances research or teaching at OSU and creatively seeking resources to acquire it.

• Participating actively in managing print retention and maintaining print collections within shelf capacity

• Analyzing usage data for electronic or print collections and revising purchase recommendations in response.

• Developing and maintaining relationships with donors (both in-kind and monetary) and dealers.

Engaged Librarian Framework Working Group

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Teaching and Learning

Collaborate with colleagues within and beyond the libraries on planning, delivering, improving, and assessing information literacy initiatives within the context of the larger curriculum of the university.

Competencies:

• Promoting understanding among faculty and other teaching staff about approaches to integrating information literacy concepts and skills into the curriculum

• Understanding basic principles of instructional and assignment design appropriate to information literacy instruction

• Using program assessment data to plan new areas of instructional initiative

• Developing effective instructional sessions and provide alternative learning opportunities (research consultations, Carmen Library Links, etc.)

• Engaging in reflective teaching through the use of instructional improvement tools that are available from UCAT (University Center for the Advancement of Teaching) and the Library's Teaching and Learning Office

• Understanding basic copyright principles and recognize basic areas of application (e.g. fair use scenarios and face-to-face teaching exceptions)

Examples of best practices:

• Analyzing curriculum within assigned subject areas and prepare curriculum maps or other curriculum plans for information literacy competencies

• Negotiating with teaching faculty on timing, purpose, and learning outcomes for information literacy instruction

• Writing learning outcomes for information literacy appropriate to their disciplines

• Using appropriate assessment techniques to gather and analyze information on student learning and information needs in preparing instruction

• Developing learning materials in a variety of formats for a variety of teaching situations (e.g., materials for faculty or GTAs to use for class sessions)

• Teaching classes effectively using a variety of pedagogies

• Creating learning environments using appropriate e-learning technologies or systems

• Working with staff in the Libraries' Teaching and Learning Office in improving instruction and to incorporate new technologies and effective e-learning strategies

• Performing regular teaching self-assessments