Academic Librarianship Reflection: Promoting Library Services

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Academic librarians taking active roles in outreach initiatives ensure the viability of their college libraries. Library instruction facilitates student success, therefore outreach to faculty for promoting student interactions with librarians is vital. In my experience, face-to-face interactions with faculty yield the best success with achieving these types of collaborative efforts. Arranging for face-to-face contact can be as simple as stopping by faculty offices to introduce yourself. Be prepared to highlight your willingness to share your expertise assisting their students with analyzing sources, selecting a topic, determining search strategies, etc. Also, ask them what their students are struggling with in their research and be prepared to listen to their response. You may be asked immediately to schedule a visit to their classroom, or it may happen down the road, but the seed that you are ready to help has been planted. They may even share their newfound awareness of your availability with colleagues, and you are on your way to cultivating enhanced relevance and connectivity within your institution. Periodic visits to faculty offices bear continued fruitful exchanges, can spark brainstorming, and initiate further collaborations.

Other methods for achieving face-to-face interactions include participation in workshops, learning communities, and seminars that faculty will also attend. Many of these types of activities now happen online, which should not be a deterrent. Make sure that you contribute meaningful exchanges that communicate your points of view as a librarian or representative of the library. In my experience participating in these types of activities, I almost always can promote library services or resources that fit perfectly with the topic being discussed. Here is one example. During online exchanges when a book or paper is mentioned, quickly searching the library catalog to share in the chat box a link to show that our library owns the item always receives positive feedback.

Librarians proactively promoting library resources and services make a difference. While flyers, posters, and digital promotions can be effective marketing tools, pursuing face-to-face interactions with faculty contributes to the continued strength and vitality of the library within academic institutions.