"Getting in on the Conversation: Implementing and Leveraging Embedded Librarianship"
Webinar, August 29, 2017

Panelists:
- **Jean Song**
- **Nadine Anderson**
- **Joel Scheuher**

Moderator: David Shumaker

The following are responses to questions that weren't answered during the webinar.

Questions for all of the webinar panelists

Q: How many librarians do each of your libraries have?

Jean: The Taubman Health Sciences Library has 17 full-time librarians (including our director, deputy director, and 2 assistant directors), 2 part-time librarians, and 2 full-time staff

Joel: Kresge Library Services has 6 full-time reference librarians. The Director and 3 other librarians (who work with web and tech services) assist during peak times.

Nadine: The Mardigian Library Research Center has seven full-time librarians; 6 of us are subject librarians who are embedded to varying degrees. There are also other librarians and staff working in Systems and Technical Services.

Q: Are any of you embedded in the LMS for the classes? How do you manage the time/workload for that?

Jean: We work in team based groups (eg. Public Health core team, Medical Education core team, Nursing core team...) so typically the entire group of individuals is added to the LMS depending on the project being supported (course or other instructional activity). The integration with the LMS is tied into the work of the integrated partnership for the course so we don't count the time as "separate" and the integration can come in different forms - contributing resources to the site, having contact information, embedding videos/quizzes. As the manager for the Academic and Clinical Engagement unit, I require everyone who works for me to

submit a monthly report with their best estimate of percent time allocated into different areas: Instruction (consultations), Projects (advanced searching, publications, collections), Committee, Professional development. Marisa, also uses this form for her group, and we discuss how resource allocation is going and where we may need to make adjustments for our areas.

Joel: Yes, we are embedded in our LMS for some classes, but in most cases as a resource that students can access. For those classes, there really isn't much pull from the students. Recently, we are involved with one of our classes that all Sophomores take. Two of my colleagues are actually teaching 2 sections of the class. There are 35 sections of the class and a librarian is embedded in each section. We visit each section twice. This is definitely a workload challenge, especially as we sometimes run short of librarians. We are leveraging some students to help from the Library school here who have been very helpful in assisting. Frankly, I think this is a good problem to have.

Nadine: Yes, I am embedded in the LMS for some courses, in different forms: integrating assignments, LibGuides, as a resource for students to contact. It can be a lot of work, so I have had to start strategically allocating my time towards courses in which I can have the most impact to prevent burnout.

Q: Many thanks, some useful ideas to follow up on. Any advice for struggling solo practitioner?

Joel: I'm not sure to answer this except that it's important to get out of your workspace and "bump" into potential customers where they congregate. Also, I attend as many meetings as I can where I feel that I can interact with customers. I invite myself with the caveat that there might be something I can do to assist. Sometimes, it takes a champion to help get you into these conversations/meetings.

Nadine: My sympathies, I was a solo librarian myself and I know how difficult it can be. I concur with Joel that's important to get out of your workspace and mix with your user community more. I personally liked walkabouts when I was a solo librarian; I timed them for when I knew stakeholders were having their coffee breaks so I could meet with people in a more informal way and find out what's going on, any meetings I should perhaps try to get an invite to. I also agree with Joel that you should try to get yourself invited to relevant meetings. Could the person whom you report to help you identify relevant meetings and get an invitation for you to those meetings?

Dave: First, know that a lot of solo librarians have these questions: As a solo, am I

embedded? Should I be? Can I be? From conversations I've had, it seems like many solos are embedded, in having strong working relationships with key groups and individuals in their organization. If you're not already embedded, think about where you could add the most value, who in your organization needs you the most and what more you could be doing for them. Also about what you are doing that doesn't really add a lot of value and could be stopped or done a different way. Go over your thoughts with your boss (by definition a non-librarian) and once you have buy-in, go for it!

Q: Has the demand for an embedded librarian exceeded the available supply? How has it been handled?

Jean: So, in my eyes, demand always exceeds supply. Our organization has lost a great number of librarian positions over the years. This is the reason why we aggressively seek external funding. We have had some success in turning part-time positions into full-time be demonstrating demand to the provost - this was true for a grant-funding informationist position. It was also true of my position as the Assistant Director for Research and Informatics. We started with part-time positions and then demonstrated our value by showing demand and how we allocated our resources, and then we made the budget ask to the Provost for more funding.

Joel: We seem to be reaching full capacity. Once again, I think this is a good problem to have. It's up to my director to manage the workload and lobby for another position and accompanying budget if it is deemed necessary. But for now, he is managing a lot of moving parts. Thankfully, my co-workers are flexible and willing to fill in gaps and we back each other up whenever there is a shortfall. All of us have been trained to work on many different tasks that allows us to step in when needed.

Nadine: Yes! I personally have had to be much more strategic and selective in the partnerships I agree to and the courses I agree to be involved in. I think it's important to emphasize that embedded librarians always need to be strategic about who we collaborate with and how we contribute our expertise to our user communities. We simply cannot partner with all of our users, on all of their research and instruction needs. That's why I feel identifying the particular needs and goals of your user community is so important, because it helps you identify the best places to embed your expertise. You can see this in the different ways in which Jean, Joel, and I are collaborating with and embedded in our user communities.

Q: Do any of you have specialized certificates, etc. (not just MLS/MLIS)?

Jean: So some individuals have different Master's degrees - our Bioinformationist has an additional MS in Biology, and two other individuals have their Master's in Public Health degrees. Three informationists including myself came from Biology backgrounds, but nothing more specialized than that.

Joel: I have a Bachelors degree in Accounting and an MBA. Most of my colleagues don't have business degrees, but many of my colleagues worked in industry for at least some part of their careers.

Nadine: We involve faculty in the hiring process of our subject librarians, and have found during the hiring process and once the subject librarians are hired that faculty are much more receptive to people with subject backgrounds in the discipline in which they'll be embedded. I personally have a second Master's degree in Educational Psychology and a Psychology/Sociology Major/Minor in undergrad. It certainly set me apart in the hiring process, and was a big reason why my user community initially accepted me and my expertise.

Questions for Jean

Q: For Jean - how have y'all been made aware of grants that were coming up that provided these opportunities?

Jean: We look for grant funding opportunities by using tools like COS Pivot and being on the newsletters of many organizations that put out RFPs - like government agencies, foundations, our own offices of research. We also email each other A LOT about funding opportunities that we are made aware of. But we actively seek them. I know it's another thing to add to your plate of work, but it can really pay off. We also make it a priority to go out to our researchers talks, seminars, presentation - then we ask questions, and then they often come to us and say "hey, we're going to put in a grant…" That's when we'll pipe in and say - "How about adding us a key personnel or providing funding for conference support, etc"

Q: Jean, in your proposals for embedded librarians to the depts; how did you demonstrate the value the informationists would bring to the organization? Specific examples would be helpful

Jean: It, of course, depended on the position. For example for the Bioinformationist some of the things highlighted were: 1) other peer institutions programs that have bioinformationist/bioinformaticist/bioinformatics support 2) time savings - conducting searches, awareness of other tools, methodologies, code 3) project contributions - creating documentation for tools that were developed (how to's,

FAQs), heuristic analyses of tools 4) grant compliance (depositing of publications, administrative grant support), research expertise (publications tracking)

For the MLibrary@NCRC, things we highlighted were 1) access to resources - databases, market research, availability of an informationist, the entire breadth of the University Library system including the Kresge Business Administration Library (people like Joel!), the Copyright Office, MPublishing 2) small footprint that was needed 3) being able to serve both academic and commercial groups - although with expectations heavily managed in this arena 4) our ability to network with other disciplines outside of the health sciences - key to translational research. If you need more specifics, please feel free to contact me.

Q: For Jean - how have you been made aware of grants that were coming up that provided these opportunities?

Jean: We use tools like COS Pivot to create alerts, but if you look at my response to Dianna, you'll also see some other things we do like - be on newsletters for specific targeted groups. We also work really hard to get around campus to listen to the talks given by the people we are partnering/supporting so that we can know what grants they are applying for/have received.

Q: For the bioinformationist role, did you first get specific certificates/ credentials before proposing the role?

Jean: I answered this question offline as the questioner contacted me right after the webinar, but the answer basically is - no. We developed skills and provided professional development after the roles were made official, but the individuals had knowledge in those areas (bioinformatics, data, global health) and were very passionate about the material so we knew that they would be successful.

Question for Nadine

Q: Nadine: What does your physical embedded space look like (an office, a help desk, a full library, etc)? And how do you keep connected with your library colleagues?

Nadine: My space is an office, among the other faculty offices on the Behavioral Sciences floor. I added a separate meeting area in my office with a table, three chairs, and a whiteboard to facilitate meeting with students and faculty. To keep connected with my library colleagues, I split my time between my office in the Behavioral Sciences and my office in the library - three days per week in the Behavioral Sciences and two days per week in the library. I also still serve on

committees in the library. Incidentally, I find that I meet with waaaaay more students and faculty in my Behavioral Sciences office than in the library.

Question for Joel

Q: How many business librarians support the business student groups?

Joel: Kresge Library Services has 6 full-time reference librarians. The Director and 3 other librarians (who work with web and tech services) assist during peak times. As a matter of fact, because of these projects, we have more librarians than most other academic business schools.