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Reports from the Field: Librarians in the College of Engineering

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Transcript:
Hello, my name is Jamie Niehof, engineering librarian. I liaise to five departments;
Engineering Education, Climate + Space Sciences, Computer Science, Nuclear
Engineering, and Robotics. In September 2020 I began teaching a credit course for
LS&A called ALA 105: Digital Research. Today I'll be talking about both ALA 105 and
Engineering.

A quick snapshot of the College of Engineering. We're up on North Campus & have our
own carillon tower, pictured here from The Before Times. There are 17 departments and
more than ten thousand students and almost one thousand faculty & researchers.

We began keeping comprehensive statistics last year and from July through last month
we've had 319 reference interactions. Although it's technically anecdotal, all 4 of
us engineering librarians feel like this number is higher than usual.

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So, what have we learned over the past year from our students in engineering? One of
the issues I often encounter in classrooms is getting students to interact. Usually
they just stare at me blankly. In Zoom chat though I'm getting <u>asked</u> more questions
from students during my teaching. They also <u>answer</u> more questions <u>from me</u> using the
chat feature. I have students get used to this at the beginning of a session by
telling me if they've ever had library instruction before, and in what class. Then I
have the chat window open while I'm teaching and I'm constantly asking them
questions, like if they've heard of Google Scholar before, what citation styles
they've cited in, etc. Responses flow right in over chat in a way that far exceeds
interactions in person.

I think this is due to 3 reasons:
1 - they're used to texting and chatting, so this isn't a big ask
2 - they are essentially anonymous
3 - they don't feel like they're interrupting

I have yet to figure out how to translate this to in-person instruction.

Next, students are more likely to attend librarian consults over Zoom. We often meet
with student groups of 5-6 students, but only 2-3 show up in person because of
logistics. During the pandemic the entire group is showing up, which of course is
ideal for both of us. Because of this, several engineering librarians will be keeping
Zoom options open for group consults going forward.

I've already talked about our increase in reference interactions. And finally, we've
seen a broad adoption of Canvas library modules. We began promoting modules to
engineering faculty in Jan 2019 and saw a few classes use them, maybe 3-4. Over the

course of the pandemic we've seen the modules be requested in at least 15 classes. This reinforces relationships with our liaison departments, with individual faculty, and with students. Feedback from both faculty and students has been fantastic.

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A few visual examples of changes we've made during the last year. Fellow engineering librarian Joanna Thielen was asked to do one shot instruction for two capstone classes, mechanical engineering 450 and biomedical engineering 450. Instead of holding multiple zoom sessions, Joanna made a series of five videos, each video discusses how and why the students might want to use a particular information type, like patents, or book chapters, and includes a demo of how to find that item. Joanna used her own LibGuide as a backbone for these videos. They were then assigned to students by professors as required viewing. The benefit of this is Joanna only teaches the content once, and the student gets the content at point-of-need,right before they actually use it, instead of weeks before. Another benefit of this approach is professors can track how many students have watched the videos and assign participation points. You can see the analytics on the top of this slide.

Next, I taught ALA 105 in the Fall and Winter, and both times students needed guidance in finding synonyms for their research topic. I created a short screencast demonstrating how I find synonyms, branded it for my class, and put it on YouTube. Shortly afterwards fellow engineering librarian Paul GroHUSKY had a Technical Communication in Industrial Engineering class that
needed help in developing keywords. I just removed my ALA 105 branding and we had something to offer the faculty member only 15 minutes later.

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Lastly, I team teach Engineering Across Cultures with Gabriel Duque. We began using Google Slides during the pandemic as well as our usual class-specific LiBGuide, so we've started embedding the slide deck right on the LiBGuide. Just a small thing that we'll likely continue after things go back to normal.

Thanks for listening.

I am now going to pass it off to Caitlin...