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Kerry Wu

Portland State University, wuq@pdx.edu

Heidi Senior

University of Portland

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Author Information Page

Kerry Wu
Business and Economics Librarian

wuq@pdx.edu

Portland State University
Library (LIBW)
PO Box 751
Portland, OR 97207

503-725-4124

*Heidi Senior

Reference/Instruction Librarian

senior@up.edu

Clark Library
University of Portland
5000 N. Willamette Blvd.
Portland, OR 97203

503-943-8037

Business Librarians and New Academic Program Review

Kerry Wu

Portland State University

Heidi Senior

University of Portland

Abstract

The article aims to examine the role business librarians play in the new academic program proposal process on university and college campuses. Results of a nationwide online survey showed that current practices in this critical area varied. While over 60% of the respondents thought that librarians should play a part in the proposal process, over 65% of them indicated that they were never involved. Amongst those that participated, the levels and outcomes also differed greatly. The authors held in-depth interviews with survey participants reporting higher-than-average involvement to find out about their strategies for success.

Keywords: new program review, librarian-faculty relationship, collaboration, new program proposals, business librarians, academic libraries

Business Librarians & New Academic Program Review

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, business is the most popular major for postsecondary students in the United States (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013). The Association to Advance Collegiate School of Business (AACSB), a global accreditation body of business schools, reported a growing membership from 1096 in 2009 to 1343 in 2013 (2013b) . As the number of business schools and programs increases, the competition for enrollment has intensified. To attract prospective students, universities and colleges are “under increasing pressure to... offer niche-oriented, multidisciplinary programs” that promise “the best future employment prospects” (Chan, 2004). A 2013 AACSB membership survey showed that the percentages of schools offering specialized Master’s degrees had increased in over half of the surveyed fields/disciplines. Compared to the year of 2007-2008, the year of 2012-2013 witnessed marked gains in areas such as entrepreneurship (from 4.9% to 7%), international business (from 11.3% to 15.9%), and supply chain management (from 5.2% to 10.9%) (2013b).

Business is not the only discipline that fuels the increase in new programs. The national trend is reflected at the institutions with which the authors are affiliated. During the period between fiscal years 2009 and 2013, faculty at the Portland State University (PSU) submitted 31 new program proposals (from all disciplines including business), 19 of which were for new graduate programs and 12 for undergraduate (“Portland State University Curriculum Tracking System”). During those years at the University of Portland, faculty presented nine new program proposals, five for graduate programs and four for undergraduate. The authors have reviewed proposals in advertising, supply chain management, social innovation, real estate development,

nonprofit management, finance, healthcare management, and entrepreneurship. At the authors' institutions, subject librarian statements are required for new course proposals (PSU) and program proposals (UP) before they can be approved by campus curriculum committees.

Theoretically, the process is straightforward and reasonable, giving librarians the opportunity to offer their input before new programs are instituted. In reality, however, librarian participation is often a mere formality and an afterthought. Most of the time, teaching faculty wait until the whole proposal is already crafted to contact the library. The implied expectation is for the librarian to provide an affirmative statement that "library resources are adequate." Sometimes librarians are caught in an awkward position when the expected statement is not true. If they are frank about the need for additional resources (and hence financial support for those resources), they risk damaging the liaison relationship because the proposal could be delayed, even though an affirmative statement is usually not a requirement for final approval.

The existing literature related to this topic falls into two categories: theoretical musings and case studies that focus on specific procedures and techniques. No comprehensive study has been done to examine the general trend and current practices of academic libraries in the new program approval process.

Literature Review

The library literature contains many discussions of librarian participation (or the lack thereof) in different stages of the curriculum development process. The degree of involvement varies greatly from institution to institution. Almost thirty years ago, a survey of heads of collection development at 104 Association of Research Libraries institutions revealed that "few libraries are involved to any significant degree in curriculum planning" and that "selectors... are

rarely consulted automatically when curriculum changes are proposed” (Pasterczyk, 1986, p. 11). Almost two decades later, it was still “unclear how many [libraries] have established or documented processes specifically related to discipline or degree-specific collection assessment” (Sinha and Tucker 2005, 364). Even for those who were involved, the process could become highly political and “take on the character of a mere charade,” as departments were so eager to get the new program approved that they would state “that the library is sufficient when it may not be... [because] nobody wants the library to be the element that does not get them a new program” (Gregory, 1990, pp. 132-134).

Librarians benefit from involvement in the new program review process. Involvement sets “the stage for constructive exchange and collaboration between faculty and librarians” (Austenfeld, 2009, p. 215). In addition to enhancing the current collection or building a new one in a timely and thoughtful fashion in response to the change, involvement provides librarians a valuable opportunity to remind faculty and campus administrators of the cost of running a library, to integrate information literacy components in courses, and to have a dialog about scholarly communication issues such as institutional repository and open access (Bobal, Mellinger, & Avery, 2008). A “meaningful role in the academic program review process” can also help the library align the collection better with “the university’s strategic aims and overall institutional development” (Schwartz, 2007, p. 239).

Most librarians who are involved in curriculum development do so through representation on the campus curriculum committee, although not all library representatives have voting rights. Many campuses require the proposal to include a collection assessment report of some sort; the report analyzes the strengths and weaknesses of the current collection and evaluates the impact of the new program on library budget and services (Sinha & Tucker, 2005).

Several factors may have an impact on the level of library participation in the new program review process. The author of the 1986 study found no significant correlation between faculty status and the degree of librarian involvement in curriculum changes. However, she emphasized that informal communication cultivated through personal contacts with teaching faculty and department personnel is essential and sometimes more effective in helping librarians stay informed (Pasterczyk).

To enhance the role they play in curriculum development, librarians have employed a wide range of strategies, most of which focus on involving and building relationships with the teaching faculty. An Australian library used a team approach where academic staff and librarians met regularly to establish a collection development policy for the new subject area; the team identified important parameters, built rapport between the teaching department and the library, and could subsequently handle other collection management issues such as weeding (Linklater, 1988). To anticipate curricular change in African American Studies and build a comprehensive and balanced collection, a summer study group consisting of a librarian and scholars from diverse disciplines at Dickinson College compiled annotated bibliographies of core sources pertaining to Black history and culture (McKinzie, 1994).

One thing that particularly vexes librarians about the new program approval process is that teaching faculty often disregard the fact that additional library funding is needed to support new programs, or they assume that a new program will replace an old one when this is often not the case (Bobal et al., 2008). When additional funding is not available, or when funding is discontinued after an initial period, librarians have to resort to canceling subscriptions and relying on document delivery (Lanier & Carpenter, 1994). The tension between the addition of new programs and the lack of funding creates a “zero-sum game” where increase in support for a

new program will decrease support for other areas (Chu, 1995, p. 143). Sometimes money becomes available without library input; librarians then have to assess the collection, spend the money, and deal with the prospect of losing the money after the initial years (Marlor & Johnson-Corcoran, 2004).

Past research also reveals a certain degree of anxiety and frustration about the librarian-faculty relationship. Ideally, librarians “should be regarded as equals or partners in the overall educational process” (Pasterczyk, 1986, p. 12). In reality that does not often occur. In one study faculty and librarians were described as elements in a “loosely coupled system” where faculty regarded collaboration in collection development as mostly procedural while librarians wanted more collaboration on the content (Chu, 1995, p. 143).

Purpose of the Study

This article reports the results from a nation-wide online survey conducted in 2012 and follow-up phone interviews in 2015 with a select number of survey participants. The survey and interviews shed some light on how business librarians handle new program proposals, challenges they face, and their coping strategies. To get a more focused view and remove potential disciplinary differences, we limited participants to academic business librarians, namely, people who work as liaisons to departments or schools in business and related disciplines. However, based on what we learned in the literature, the insights and strategies we gleaned from the study will benefit subject librarians in other disciplines.

For the survey, ten questions covered a range of subjects related to librarian interaction with proposals of new academic programs: the extent of their involvement and of their collaboration with other librarians; the subject content and academic level of recent new

programs at their institutions; the presence of evaluation guidelines at their library; and several questions related to funding. Two questions asked for the librarian's opinion of and their estimation of faculty attitudes toward the importance of librarian involvement in the proposal evaluation process.

For the interviews, the authors asked a series of questions (see Appendix B) such as education background, detailed job responsibilities, working relationships with the business faculty, major challenges they have encountered, and tips and strategies for other business librarians. As the survey already painted a broad picture of the proposal process, we wanted to learn from participants who had been successful in the process on their respective campus.

Methodology

Data Collection

The authors developed a 17-question survey using Qualtrics in May 2012 (see Appendix A). In addition to the questions listed above, four demographic questions asked about the librarian's institution, the nature of their position, their length of service, and their educational background. Most questions offered a text field where respondents could leave comments, and a final open-ended question asked for additional input.

The authors tested the survey with non-business-librarian colleagues in June 2012. The survey was then revised and questions added without subsequent re-testing. Institutional Review Board approval was obtained in August 2012 based on the revised survey. The survey was advertised on BUSLIB-L and BRASS-L mailing lists and open to respondents from September 10 to October 31, 2012. Respondents received a \$5 Starbucks gift card for their participation.

Of 139 submitted surveys, 75 were complete and eligible for further analysis. More than 80 percent of the respondents (85.3%; 64) worked at universities; 7 (9.3%) worked at 4-year

colleges; and 3 (4.0%) worked at community colleges. Both new and experienced librarians were represented in survey results, with slightly less than half having fewer than 10 years' experience and slightly more than half having more than 10 years. Nearly all respondents possessed a Master's degree in library and information science (97.3%; 73). Approximately one-third had a Bachelor's, Master's, or PhD in a business field (34.6%; 26).

Asked to provide information about their specific position, most respondents selected options containing the title "business librarian." Seven (9%) said they were embedded in the business school, 12 (16%) worked in a branch business library, 36 (48%) worked as a business librarian in a main library. One-third said they were reference/instruction librarians with multiple areas including business. Twelve respondents selected "other" from the list of options; those respondents reported having more than one title, or more than one subject responsibility.

Answers for each question might not add to 75 but population percentages are calculated based on 75 respondents to avoid misrepresenting the data.

To select participants for the in-depth interviews, the authors first generated a list of survey subjects that indicated that they were interested in a follow-up interview. As it had been over two years since the survey, the authors emailed them to confirm that they were still in the same position at the same institution, and that they were still interested. Out of the 27 people that confirmed both, the authors selected nine based on their answers to specific questions in the survey. As the goal of the interview was to learn from business librarians who had been successful in the process, the final nine all indicated higher-than-average involvement.

Data Analysis

In addition to the original study variables, the Portland State University Survey Research Lab created two new variables to group respondents for further analysis: one to distinguish

respondents who participate in the curriculum development process from those who do not, and one to divide respondents by presence or lack of business educational background.

Quantitative data reflects numeric analysis of individual survey responses and comparisons of individual responses grouped by the new variables. Open-ended comment boxes followed many questions and provide the qualitative data analyzed here.

The authors transcribed the recordings by hand, identified common themes, and selected representative quotes.

Survey Findings

Librarians are unlikely to be involved in the early stage of the program development process. Just over 65% (65.3%; 49 out of 72) of respondents said they were “never” involved in creating proposals. However, they were “sometimes” consulted when the proposal is ready for curriculum committee approval. Sixty percent of respondents (45 out of 72) were involved at least “sometimes” in evaluating proposals, an increase from the 44% reported in 1986 (Pasterczyk).

Although 13.3% of respondents said they were required to collaborate with the collection development librarian or bibliographer when drafting a proposal evaluation, almost half of them stated they were not required to do so (46.7%). However, many librarians indicated that they would voluntarily consult other subject librarians if the new program was interdisciplinary, and work with their collection development librarian and staff in analyzing the current collection.

Respondents recalled the proposals they had received in the past five years and selected from a list of common subjects of business school programs. They were then asked to provide additional subjects of proposals they had received. A second section asked for the level (doctoral, master’s, undergraduate, etc.) of the received proposals. Ranked according to the number of

selections, the most common subjects for new proposals were entrepreneurship (21); management (20); marketing (11); accounting (11); logistics/supply chain management (11); and finance (5). The most common additional subjects provided by respondents were economics (5); information systems / information technology (4); international business (3); and human resources (3).

Nearly 60 percent (58.7%) of respondents stated that their libraries didn't have official procedures and guidelines for evaluating new program proposals. The result is hardly surprising, as past research also indicated a lack of clear guidelines on a majority of campuses (Sinha & Tucker, 2005).

A new program may involve a need for additional funds. More than one-third of respondents never asked for funding, and very few, 12%, always asked for funding. Text comments for this question showed that new programs didn't necessarily require new resources; that someone other than the respondent might ask for funding; and that sometimes they recommended new resources for informational purposes without requesting funding.

Generally, library support is not the deciding factor in a program proposal's success or failure. Over 60% of respondents said that proposals would not be denied if librarians indicate insufficient support. "Support" was defined broadly with examples being resources, interlibrary loan, staff, etc. The following comments are representative of their experiences:

"This has not happened in my tenure."

"Will be denied only if lacking a key database."

"It might occasionally affect the outcome but not completely deny it."

When the library lacks support for a program, librarians still think that students can complete assignments to some extent. Two-thirds of respondents said that students were

sometimes able to do their work despite a lack of sufficient library resources. Comments showed various strategies librarians have employed to cope with the challenge:

“We work with students & faculty to modify their research request, into something that is DOABLE, and still within the realm of their course.”

“It varies, it depends on what topic or subject the student chooses to research, sometimes we have the info sometimes we don’t.”

This “making-do” or “satisficing” occurs as often within the realm of acquisition. Seventy percent of respondents attempted to cover the subject area using funds allocated within the existing budget. One commenter described the approach as “doing acrobatics to make it work” but admitted that they were “running out of flexibility to rearrange resources to support new programs.” Less frequently (28%), librarians turned to the department, but they might find that the department’s mission conflicted with the library’s. One commenter stated “The departments I work with have been willing to support resources that support faculty research, but I’m not so sure how this would go with student research resources.”

A majority of respondents (60%, 45) strongly agreed that a subject librarian should be involved in all proposals at both undergraduate and graduate levels. Fewer librarians agreed with statements about involvement at the graduate level only (30.7%), or only in new subject areas (26.7%). When asked how their classroom faculty would react to the same statements about librarian involvement, respondents were divided, but most often said their faculty were either neutral on the subject, or would disagree that librarians need to be involved in this process. Results showed that respondents felt their faculty either didn’t want librarians to be involved, or that they didn’t care.

Subsequent analysis examined the possible influence of a librarian's subject background on their opinion of the program development process. Would librarians with a business education align more closely with their profession or with their faculty? A new variable based on educational background divided respondents by presence or absence of business education. The authors performed a chi-square test of independence to examine the relation between subject background and opinion. The relation between these variables was significant, $\chi^2(4, N = 69) = 8.631, p < .05$. Librarians with a business education background appeared to be more likely to believe that it is not necessary for a librarian to be involved in the development of new degree programs.

Implications of the Study

Several themes emerged from the survey. Librarian participation in the program development process seems to have increased. Resource funding continues to be an issue. More than half of respondents' institutions do not have standard procedures or guidelines for new program evaluation. While librarians feel strongly that they should be involved in the proposal process, they are unsure that the teaching faculty would share their opinion. Librarians continue to "make do" when they have to support new programs within an existing budget.

Interview Findings: The Proposal Approval Process

The survey, despite a relatively modest sample size, reveals the diverse ways business librarians deal with new program proposals, as well as their attitudes towards this challenging process. However, many questions remain. Even though people who took the survey were obviously self-selected, we found that very few were highly integrated in the process (i.e., participating from the beginning). For the few respondents that are involved more than others, what are their secrets? Is it simply a difference in campus culture? Or are there more personal

factors in play, such as education background or professional experience? Is there a positive correlation between the liaison librarian's level of engagement with the school and the level of his or her involvement in the new program review process? To find the answers to these questions, we proceeded to conduct in-depth interviews with nine survey participants that indicated higher than average involvement in their survey answers.

The nine interviewees came from both public and private universities in different parts of the country. The new program approval process is equally diverse across these institutions. Some participants are required to comment on both program and course proposals, while others only respond to program proposals. While proposals usually originate from a department or a faculty member and move up the chain, the administrative bodies involved differ greatly. While most institutions have some sort of curriculum committee, the approval process is lengthier and more complex on some campuses than others. The specificity of the proposals also varies. For example, on one campus, the proposal includes extensive details such as course syllabi, assignments, and bibliographies. At another university, however, the department only starts working on the details (instructors, syllabi, etc.) of the curriculum after the new program is approved.

Five out of the nine campuses require librarian response, in the form of a simple signature, a paragraph that is inserted in the proposal itself, or a formal letter that the library director has adapted from a subject librarian's more comprehensive memo. Some institutions may have a "library line" in the proposal, but the library is not actually consulted in practice. Furthermore, a formal mechanism to include the library doesn't necessarily lead to meaningful involvement. For example, one participant stated that her colleagues sometimes feel "anything from the library is considered pro forma and never really taken seriously." Another participant was discouraged by her supervisor from mentioning money at all in the library response even

though there is a genuine need, for fear of a possible confrontation with the faculty proposing the new program.

Even on campuses where librarians are genuinely respected, the consultation can happen too late in the process. For example, instead of being invited to participate at the very beginning when a proposal is being formed, the subject librarian is expected to “react” to an already fully formed proposal, and sometimes at short notice. Despite the fact that some feel faculty don’t exactly welcome librarian’s plea for support, or that often the pleas don’t get any results, interviewees expressed no qualms about bringing up the need for additional resources if necessary, even just to document their input. As one participant stated, “always ask for it, even just to get it in writing that they said no.”

When talking to the faculty about the new program proposal, six out of the nine interviewees indicated that, if relevant, they would mention the increased demand for both materials (e.g., books, database and journals) and services (e.g., instruction and reference).

Interview Findings

Factors that don’t correlate strongly with participation

To our surprise, some of the factors that we initially hypothesized that might make a difference actually didn’t have a strong positive correlation with the level of participation. These factors include: institution type, instruction load, business education background, faculty status of librarians, socialization with the business faculty outside of work, having an office or holding office hours in the business school building, and proximity of the library to the business school.

Hailing from both public and private institutions, the nine participants acted mainly as business subject librarians, although some had additional responsibilities and liaison areas. All of them provided reference and instruction for the business faculty and students. Instruction load

seemed to depend more on individual department faculty and their receptiveness; when the faculty leave or retire, activities may decline. Therefore, a heavy instruction load doesn't necessarily lead to high involvement in new program development. A business degree, especially a second graduate degree in an area related to business, was considered by the participants as beneficial, but not essential in the program proposal process. We also did not see any connection between high participation in program review and external prestige, such as the faculty status of a librarian or having voting rights on department matters. While it is helpful to make an effort to be closer to the department, such as developing personal friendships with faculty outside of work, having an office in the business building, or holding office hours in the business building, this effort is not the defining factor for increasing the likelihood of involvement.

Factors that do have a positive impact

Industry experience and strong working relationships are the two factors that we found to have a strong positive impact on effective librarian participation in the new program process.

Librarians with a certain amount of industry experience have a distinct advantage when it comes to being recognized as an equal by the business faculty. Several participants in our interview pointed out that their department faculty greatly respected the librarian's past experience as researcher or consultant in the corporate world, so much that they proactively solicited their instruction service, such as suggesting a required research course taught by the librarian or giving a generous amount of class time for library instruction.

A strong working relationship with the department faculty is also a predictor for effective librarian participation in the new program review process. Activities to develop such a relationship could include serving on campus committees with department faculty, collaborating on faculty research projects, and collaborating on course development such as helping to create

course bibliographies. One participant pointed out bluntly, “Faculty don’t see us as educators.” Another echoed the sentiment: “Faculty don’t realize how much librarians know about teaching or that we are faculty.” We believe these activities are especially effective because they take librarians out of the stereotypical “service” role, showcasing their capacity to be intellectual equals and domain experts.

Major barriers & challenges

Librarians want to be fully involved in the new program review process, instead of reacting to a mostly formed proposal under a tight deadline and with the implied expectation to just rubber stamp it (if their approval is required). Yet, few of the participant librarians managed to reach that level of collaboration with the business faculty. We hypothesized four factors that might prevent this level of collaboration: 1) Institutional culture; 2) Faculty perception of librarians' lack of subject expertise; 3) Geographic separation; and 4) time management. The interviews revealed these major categories of challenges:

Administrative or political.

- A flat and decreasing budget that is not in sync with campus program growth and inflation. “It’s just that habitual experience of ‘yeah you can say we need something”, said one candidate, “you can make a good case for it, but there is no money for it, there is no money for it.”
- “Reaction Mode”: not enough time to do research for evaluation or not knowing soon enough what’s coming. One participant pointed out, “the most challenging thing is that I would frequently like to be able to have a conversation with the faculty member who developed the program rather than just use the paperwork that's in front of me, and getting a hold of the faculty member is a challenge.”

- Campus culture in which library response has not been mandatory or meaningful, or where faculty are ambivalent about the library's involvement because they value academic autonomy especially in course development.
- Sometimes library administrators do not endorse asking for money due to fear of confrontation with department faculty, even though both the survey and interview results showed that most of the time a lack of library resources has no negative impact on the proposal approval.
- If campus administrators (e.g., the Provost) do not have a close working relationship with the library director, the whole library as an organization can be regarded as less important by academic departments.
- Internal library politics: sometimes the communication channel is not clear if there is not an official procedure.

Department faculty's lack of understanding of the library's role in student learning.

- Faculty do not understand the workload issue, that adding a new program not only demands more from the library collection, but also services such as librarian time, interlibrary loan, etc.
- Faculty's presumption that all libraries are created equal, especially if they come from a top-tier research institution to a less funded one. It may not occur to them to check with librarians.

Librarians' communication and marketing strategy (or the lack of).

- Librarians are not assertive enough about the timing of proposals and the need for adequate time to provide a meaningful response.

- Librarians are not assertive enough to position themselves as assets to the process, rather than additional financial burdens.
- Getting hold of key faculty to have a conversation. One participant, when asked about his biggest challenge, said frankly, “Getting them [the faculty] to return your emails.”

Strategies to improve librarian participation

“Relationship” is the major theme that emerged from the interviews. Library participation is not guaranteed or necessarily meaningful even on campuses that require library response. What really matters is the working relationship the subject librarian has with the department. Some of our most successful participants, those that managed to get involved from the very beginning when faculty start having conversations about a new proposal, worked for institutions with no mandatory library response requirement.

How does one go about building an effective relationship with the department? Our interview participants suggested the following:

Reaching out to key people, reframing the library budget request, and starting early.

For example, one interviewee worked on a campus where the university librarian was not Dean and therefore not part of the budget process. To overcome this barrier, he had an open conversation with the Dean of the business school. Instead of asking for money “for the library”, creating a false zero-sum game where the proposed money was perceived as gain for the library but loss for the business school, he reframed the request to convince the business school Dean that this request was just “[placing] that amount of money in the University Library budget to serve [the business school].” He helped the Dean to understand that the Library and the business school were on the same side working towards the same goal of “providing quality education for

students, and that this is not an ‘either/or’.” The Dean then conveyed the message to campus administrators to lobby for that money. The librarian had been very successful because of this reframing, and also because in practice he partnered very closely with the business Dean in “funding faculty research and resources in support of both research and teaching.” In addition to the Dean, one can also reach out to other key people such as the curriculum committee chair, the department chair, or discipline leaders. One participant suggested identifying faculty members that are “really attuned to the research side ... to strengthen our case.” In addition, it would be ideal to have a library representative on the campus curriculum committee if proposals need to go through that. Having a structure where the library response is mandatory does not guarantee meaningful participation, but at least it becomes part of the checklist. It is then the librarian’s responsibility to make the process meaningful.

Timing is crucial. When asked about strategies, one participant shared, “I do a lot better if I’m working directly with the faculty member on the support they need for their courses and programs rather than going through the level of administration... in cases where that later stage we’ve given them a figure it’s never resulted in any money.” Even if one works on a campus where there is a procedure that requires library signoff, it’s never too early to start the conversation. In short, be proactive, instead of reactive.

Cultivating supporters.

The importance of “champions” in the department cannot be underestimated. One astute participant pointed out that it is crucial to get the faculty “to realize that we can help the students and could be an asset to them. We have to prove ourselves” even if they initially may not think they need librarians. Once a librarian has a few champions, she continued, “Small successes lead to better reputation because faculty talk to each other.”

One needs to think carefully about the level of involvement one wants and is capable of doing. Curricular issues are a “deeper programmatic thing”, one participant pointed out, and it’s better to under promise and over deliver than the other way around.

One participant considered talking to librarians at peer institutions to be very helpful in gathering the needed resource information for evaluation.

Integrating oneself into the academic fabric of the department.

While it’s not necessary for librarians to attend all social functions of the department, “building informal contacts on a regular basis” helps to make the librarian stay on the faculty’s radar. Librarians can consider activities such as attending student or faculty presentations, judging student competitions, or speaking at student clubs. Another piece of advice is to get on the general faculty mailing list and attend faculty meetings where curriculum revisions are discussed, and to get in on the conversation. “Increasing awareness of what we are already doing”, one participant advised. “Get to know new faculty by looking up their information online,” another suggested. These efforts help elevate the librarian’s status from a mere “outside service provider” to “active member of the business school.” When one is integrated into the department, not by title, but by perception, it is easier to have tough conversations with the faculty.

“Insert yourself wherever possible,” one participant advised, “I was pretty good in terms of pushing the envelope... I always try and make the library sticky.” He was willing to negotiate and the following summed up his philosophy:

But often it is very definitely you cannot wait for them to come to you, you have to go to them and be willing to be "insertive" and make some suggestions going, "You know, I think the library can help you or we could help you with this, let's talk about it so that

we can make your lives a little bit easier and more productive, or a better experience for the students," ... It's not a passive, and I think that the personality type that goes into librarianship they don't like cold calls. I don't like cold calls, but sometimes that's exactly what you need to do, even if it's just to go in and say, "tell me what you do, what's your research." They all want to talk about their research, and you don't have to go, "Well we can't help you or we can help you," but you can go "Thank you, that really helps a lot," and then you see if there are opportunities to have the library contribute.

Other communication and marketing advice for business librarians

Multiple participants emphasized on the importance of communication. One participant said simply, “communicate, communicate, communicate. Just like any relationship.”

Instead of playing the default role of another hoop to jump through in the proposal process, librarians should change the narrative and brand themselves as partners. For example, one participant made sure that his library was regarded as “a funding opportunity”, because they “will partner with the college to joint-fund the addition of databases or datasets.” When having budget conversations with the department, he diplomatically phrased it “in such a way so that you’re supportive but you do put them on notice that there are implications on staffing and there are implications on budget, and that they do have a role in communicating this to the correct people, that additional funding may very well be needed in the future.”

Below is a list of suggestions by participants for librarians to better communicate with department faculty:

- Adapt to the local campus and department personality style

- Give out two business cards to the faculty (one for office and one for home as many work from home).
- Have a slide in the building lobby monitor about you or the library.
- Put the core library guide on the business school website so they don't have to look for it on the library website.
- Have a conversation with your supervisor or library director about liaison role and responsibilities. Use the 2014 book "Assessing liaison librarians" to guide the discussion. (Mack & White).
- Look up faculty office hours and call to contact faculty when they are on campus.
- Participate in new faculty orientation. Get to a list of new hires of the year and make an appointment to see them, spend 20 minutes to show them the library homepage and what we can do for faculty such as instruction, research support, etc.
- Communicate, communicate often, and build relationships not only with faculty but also with administrators (e.g., Associate Dean) at your college, because the administrators have the decision making power.

For new or shy librarians, we found advice from one of the participants especially salient:

"I actually developed a list of faculty members' names and set myself a goal of making sure I introduced myself to 75% of them. I would go over there and wander the halls and knock on doors and introduce myself. I felt really shy at first, but they were so welcoming that it got easier, and that made a huge difference, just walking the hallway and introducing yourself and having some conversations with faculty members."

“Don't be shy. As soon as you are at a school, try to find ways to meet faculty. Knocking on offices, having conversations, going to social events... I spoke at one of their all-faculty meetings and gave them a talk on "these are things that you can use me for," and I think that was very helpful in the relationship, because they told me later that they didn't understand that they could call on a librarian for all these things. Send emails but try to be judicious with them, batch things so you don't send too many emails, try to be brief because especially for the business school faculty time is money, so I find that I'm very conscious about taking up their time, so I hold those emails down so they're short and have headings so they can scan them. I do a newsletter a couple of times a year for them but it's one sheet with headings. At the meeting I hand it out so if one of the speakers is boring they'll scan the newsletter. It gets read that way.”

Discussion

Our main finding from the survey, that there is a lack of librarian involvement in new program development in higher education, is well supported by results from the 2013 Ithaca S+R Library Survey. Fewer than 40% of the library directors in this study agreed with the statement “Librarians at my institution are integrated into institution-wide processes of curriculum planning.” (Schonfeld & Long, 2013, p. 37)

The level of librarian participation in the new program proposal process can be a reflection of teaching faculty's perception of the campus library. Teaching faculty may have the “innocent assumption... that the institution's library is capable of supporting almost anything they want to add” and funds are expected to be “found in the current budget without any adjustments made for the purpose of implementing the new program.” (Gregory, 1990, p. 131). While this assumption conveys a positive impression, it is far from reality and actually has a

negative impact on the library. Librarians are expected to do more with less, which is unsustainable, as stagnant budgets cannot keep pace with inflation.

Another factor is the inherent imbalanced relationship between librarians and teaching faculty, in that despite their best intention to work together, they are not really “equals” in the context of campus power structure. Faculty status of librarians makes little difference (Pasterczyk, 1986) and “attaining academic status does not automatically deliver collegial credibility and respect” (Dorskatsch, 2003, p. 15); our interviews seem to confirm this. The library has always been regarded as a support unit, while librarians are often viewed as just people that provide services to support the academic departments. In the *2013 AACSB Business Accreditation Standards*, the word “library” is used only once in the context of “resources available to the school”, in the same category as “finances”, “facilities”, and “information technology infrastructure” (AACSB, 2013a). As one of our interview participants said, “[AACSB is] not concerned with a lot of the specific of what students learn, and they're definitely not concerned with anything we say information literacy is.”

Although Christiansen, Stompler, and Thaxton (2004) found that there is “an asymmetrical disconnection” between faculty and librarians for several reasons, one of which is that faculty don't see librarians as having expertise in the faculty's field of study, our interview results show that faculty are aware of librarian expertise, especially if that expertise was gained in a corporate environment.

While it seems rather daunting to have full and meaningful participation in the new program review process, there are success stories. Our interviews with higher performers in this area show that it can be done, if the subject librarian builds a solid, high-level, and effective

relationship with the department and its faculty. It takes time, ingenuity, sustained effort, assertiveness, and diplomacy.

Further Research

We hypothesized but did not ask about the availability of alternate resources as a factor in faculty perception of the library. In the area of business, despite the lack of sufficient library resources, students in new programs can still obtain information through alternative channels. For example, department-level subscription to a database usually costs less than a library-wide subscription, and some vendors will even provide free access to commercial resources as a way to court future paying customers. Instructors often have deep connections with practitioners in the business community and can design assignments to involve more field work than secondary research. Since campus administration may define program success by enrollment numbers and student feedback, the fact that students can get work done with minimum interaction with the library could further erode the library's role as a central provider of information resources.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Qualtrics Survey Questions

1. As a subject librarian, what role do you play in the development of new academic programs on your campus?

| | | | |
|---|--------|-----------|-------|
| I am involved in creating the proposal. | Always | Sometimes | Never |
| I am involved in evaluating the proposal. | Always | Sometimes | Never |

2. Do you collaborate with other librarians during this process?

I am required to collaborate with the collection development librarian or bibliographer.

I am not required to collaborate with other librarians but sometimes I choose to do so.

I don't work with other librarians on proposals in my subject area.

Other / Comment:

3. Thinking of the proposals you've received in the past five years, please check all that apply:

| Subject | Doctoral | Master's | Undergraduate, Major | Undergraduate, Minor | Certificate |
|------------------------|----------|----------|----------------------|----------------------|-------------|
| Accounting | | | | | |
| Entrepreneurship | | | | | |
| Finance | | | | | |
| Logistics/Supply Chain | | | | | |
| Management | | | | | |
| Marketing/Advertising | | | | | |
| Other, please specify | | | | | |

4. Does your library have formalized procedures or guidelines for evaluating new academic program proposals?

We have official procedures and guidelines that every librarian follows.

We have general procedures and guidelines but librarians have some freedom in creating their own criteria.

We don't have any procedures or guidelines on this.

Other / Comment:

5. What's your involvement at different stages of the proposal process?

| | | | |
|--|--------|-----------|-------|
| I am notified of new program proposals and am expected to make a statement on the library's capacity to support them, only if they are at the graduate level | Always | Sometimes | Never |
| I am notified of new program proposals and am expected to make a statement on the library's capacity to support them, regardless of level | Always | Sometimes | Never |
| I am notified of new program proposals but am not expected to respond | Always | Sometimes | Never |
| I am informed of the proposal outcome (approved or denied) | Always | Sometimes | Never |

6. In your statement, how often have you asked for additional funding for the library to support new programs?

Always

Sometimes

Never

Other / Comment:

7. If you asked for additional funding, what was the usual outcome?

| | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------|
| Received full amount | Ongoing funding | One-time funding | No funding |
| Received partial amount | Ongoing funding | One-time funding | No funding |

8. Will the proposal be denied if you indicate insufficient library support (resources, interlibrary loan, staff, etc.)?

Yes, it will be denied if there is insufficient library support.

No, it won't be denied because of insufficient library support.

Other / Comment:

9. In your experience, how often are students in an approved program able to do their work despite insufficient library support?

Always

Sometimes

Never

Other / Comment:

10. If library resources are insufficient for a new academic program but the proposal is approved, how do you deal with teaching/research needs that cannot be met?

Ask the school/department for money.

Attempt to cover this subject area using funds allocated within the existing budget.

Cut current subscriptions to free up money for resources in the new area.

Other / Comment:

11. In your opinion, how important is a subject librarian's involvement in the development of new academic programs?

| | | | | | |
|---|----------------|----------------|---------|-------------------|-------------------|
| A subject librarian should be involved in all proposals (both undergraduate and graduate levels) | Strongly Agree | Somewhat Agree | Neutral | Somewhat Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
| A subject librarian should be involved in all proposals (both undergraduate and graduate levels) | Strongly Agree | Somewhat Agree | Neutral | Somewhat Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
| A subject librarian should be involved in only graduate-level program proposals. | Strongly Agree | Somewhat Agree | Neutral | Somewhat Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
| A subject librarian should be involved in proposals in subject areas not previously part of the curriculum. | Strongly Agree | Somewhat Agree | Neutral | Somewhat Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
| It's not necessary for subject librarians to be involved in this process. | Strongly Agree | Somewhat Agree | Neutral | Somewhat Disagree | Strongly Disagree |

12. In your experience, what do you think of your teaching faculty's attitudes towards a subject librarian's involvement in the process?

| | | | | | |
|---|----------------|----------------|---------|-------------------|-------------------|
| A subject librarian should be involved in all proposals (both undergraduate and graduate levels) | Strongly Agree | Somewhat Agree | Neutral | Somewhat Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
| A subject librarian should be involved in all proposals (both undergraduate and graduate levels) | Strongly Agree | Somewhat Agree | Neutral | Somewhat Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
| A subject librarian should be involved in only graduate-level program proposals. | Strongly Agree | Somewhat Agree | Neutral | Somewhat Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
| A subject librarian should be involved in proposals in subject areas not previously part of the curriculum. | Strongly Agree | Somewhat Agree | Neutral | Somewhat Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
| It's not necessary for subject librarians to be involved in this process. | Strongly Agree | Somewhat Agree | Neutral | Somewhat Disagree | Strongly Disagree |

13. Any additional comments or suggestions?

14. What type of academic institution do you work at?

Community college

4-year college

University

Other (please specify):

15. Please tell us about your position ("business librarian" refers to having the word "business" or equivalent in your job title)

A business librarian embedded in the business school

A business librarian working in a branch business library

A business librarian working in the main library

A reference/instruction librarian with multiple subject areas that include business

Other (please specify):

16. How long have you been a librarian?

Less than 1 year

1-5 years

6-10 years

11-20 years

21 years or more

17. Please indicate which, if any, of the following degrees you have obtained. Please check all that apply:

Bachelor's in business

Master's degree in Library and Information Science (or equivalent)

MBA or Master's degree in various business disciplines (e.g., Finance, International Management, etc.)

PhD in business

Master's degree in other areas, please specify:

PhD in other areas, please specify:

18. Thank you for your time! To receive your \$5 Starbucks virtual gift card, please provide your email address below. Your contact information will be kept separate from your survey answers.

Email

19. We'd like to continue this conversation (over the phone or Skype) with you to learn more about this process on your campus, as well as your personal perceptions and strategies. If you are interested in talking with us, please leave your contact information below. All results (survey and interview transcripts) are anonymous.

Name

Email

Phone number

Appendix B: Interview Script and Questions

Those in brackets [] are notes for interviewers.

Ask for verbal consent (informed consent has been emailed prior to the interview).

Ask interviewee if they have any questions before we start.

Proceed with questions:

1. In our survey you replied that you were [choose from the list below based on their previous answer in survey]; are you currently holding the same position?
 - a. A business librarian embedded in the business school (*“business librarian” refers to having the word “business”/equivalent in the job title*)
 - b. A business librarian working in a branch business library
 - c. A business librarian working in the main library
 - d. A reference/instruction librarian with multiple subject areas that include business
2. In what ways do you interact with the business school/department at your institution? For example, do you do the following?
 - a. Do you teach classes?
 - b. Do business faculty refer students to you?
 - c. Do business faculty come to you for assistance with their research?
 - d. Do you regularly attend department meetings?
 - e. Do you have voting rights on department decisions?
 - f. Do you have an office in the business school building?
 - g. Do you attend department social functions (e.g., holiday parties)?
 - h. Do you socialize with some faculty members outside of work?
3. Please describe the proposal process for new academic programs on your campus.
[Clarify what “process” means, i.e., initiation/creation, evaluation, and implementation]
4. [FOLLOW-UP] What is your level of involvement at each stage? [Prompts: do you participate in the creation or just notified, if notified how much in advance; what are you expected to do in evaluation; are you notified of the result]
5. [FOLLOW-UP] Why do you believe you [are or are not] (fully) involved in the curriculum development process? [If interviewee is stumped why they are not involved, we can provide possible reasons below:
 - a. Institutional culture (has never been done before)?
 - b. Faculty’s perception of librarian’s lack of subject expertise (expert in library stuff, but not in that particular subject matter, say, supply chain management)?
 - c. Geographic separation (we are usually not in the same building)?
 - d. Timing (they have to put something together through a series of meetings and think librarians are too busy to participate)?]

6. When reviewing a new program proposal, if you identify a need for additional funding, how often do you point that out?

7. [FOLLOW-UP] What kind of responses do you get from the department faculty when you point out there is a need for additional funding? [If interviewee asks for clarification, give the following examples]:
 - i. They say the program/classes don't need additional resources
 - ii. They say the program/classes don't need to involve library research at all
 - iii. They agree to include the funding request in the proposal budget

8. Our survey result shows that librarians who have a business degree, compared to those with other backgrounds, are less likely to agree that librarians should be involved in new program development. What do you think of that finding?

9. What are the most common challenges you've encountered in the program proposal process [i.e., initiation, evaluation, implementation]? [Ask for examples]

10. [FOLLOW-UP] How do you deal with these challenges?

| Challenges | Strategies |
|------------|------------|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

11. How do you define success in working with faculty in curriculum development? [If no examples offered] What have been your biggest successes in working with faculty in curriculum development?

12. [FOLLOW-UP] What advice or best practices would you like to share with fellow business librarians?