



LIBRARY LIAISON HANDBOOK

LINSCHIED LIBRARY

Library Liaison

A library liaison is a librarian who has been formally designated as the primary contact person between the Linscheid Library and assigned academic departments at East Central University. This person serves as a contact for assistance with, or information about, any library service or issue. In other words, the liaison fosters two-way communication between the library and the university. The liaison is expected to understand the information needs of his or her assignments as clearly as possible, and to represent those needs within the library. Conversely, the library liaison is expected to be well informed about library products and services and the technologies used to deliver them, and to represent and promote these effectively to his or her departments.

Assignments

By nature of their title and job duties, librarians have major assignments within the library, such as reference, periodicals, government documents, audiovisual, juvenile literature, and special collections. In addition, all librarians will have liaison assignments with the academic departments. These assignments will be based on each librarian's academic background as well as library needs. All assignments will be posted on the library's website, and will be reviewed every July. Duties in assigned areas may include the following:

- Communication and Outreach – keeping academic departments aware of new databases, services, and technologies; representing the library at campus sponsored activities, non-library departmental meetings, and/or campus committees;
- Collaboration – helping departments promote their resources; providing a venue for book signings or other marketing opportunities; providing collection reports for accreditation and assisting with site team visits;
- Collection development – selecting, evaluating, and weeding assigned collections;
- Bibliographic Instruction – teaching classes in library use, information literacy, and other special topics;
- Faculty Research – providing the tools needed for faculty to succeed in their academic endeavors.

Best Practices

Developing relationships between the library and academic departments is a core responsibility for library liaisons. The library administration recognizes that a variety of approaches promotes rapport and considers liaison activities an essential contribution to the ongoing mission of the library in supporting teaching and research across the curriculum. Establishing and maintaining regular communication with the university may include:

- Visiting with department chairs or liaisons to discuss future plans;
- Perusing departmental websites to gather new information;
- Attending departmental meetings;
- Serving on departmental committees when appropriate;

- Attending lectures, discussion groups, and special events sponsored by the department;
- Reading *The Journal* and other campus publications to keep abreast of faculty publications, awards, and other activities;
- Providing budget information and collection assessment reports;
- Soliciting or recommending orders for new materials;
- Keeping a departmental “wish list” of possible purchases;
- Asking for input in weeding collections;
- Requesting help in reviewing gift and other incoming materials;
- Relaying information about changes in the library;
- Welcoming new faculty and staff and providing orientation;
- Preparing accreditation reports;
- Making class visits;
- Working with departments to ensure information literacy is fully incorporated;
- Reviewing syllabi; and
- Reporting departmental information to library staff.

Library liaisons will adhere to practices stated in the ***Access to Materials, Audiovisual Services, Faculty Services, Library Instruction, and Outreach Standards and Best Practices***.

Communication and Outreach

Communication and outreach between library liaisons and faculty is critical to effective fund management and enrichment of the social, cultural, and intellectual atmosphere of the university. Effective communication builds a collection with a broader awareness of university needs, helps to maintain a quality collection, and provides opportunities to the ECU community that may not otherwise be available. Library liaisons are responsible for communication with their designated academic departments as well as with their colleagues.

Effective communicators:

- Collaborate with departments as appropriate;
- Collaborate with colleagues to meet cross-disciplinary needs; and
- Work with the Acquisitions, Government Documents, Periodicals and Reference Librarians to ensure ongoing purchase of needed materials and formats.

Effective outreach encompasses:

- Communication and collaboration with academic departments; and
- Working with the Outreach Librarian.

Collaboration

There are many opportunities to work with departments and their faculty, staff, and students. Liaison librarians should actively find ways to help departments promote their resources, such as, providing a venue for book signings and/or student research; displaying student portfolios or art work; asking departments for help in determining

database purchases; and providing collection reports for accreditation and assisting with site team visits. Periodically, academic programs are re-evaluated for accreditation. The library liaison would be responsible for collecting any needed data and submitting a report to the dean of the college or school. The following types of data are generally asked for, and liaisons will need to work with various librarians in collecting this information:

- Use and size of the collections, broken down (i.e., books, AV, periodicals, electronic);
- Instruction provided; and
- Budget information: allotment, breakdown of expenditures.

Effective collaborators:

- Collaborate with faculty on curriculum based selection decisions;
- Keep abreast of what's going on in their departments (Ada Evening News, The Journal, involvement in the department, dialoging with the secretary/dean/chair);
- Actively seeks opportunities to market ECU and its resources; and
- Remembers that departments are part of our team, and we are part of theirs.

Collection Development

The Library Director, Acquisitions Librarian, liaison librarians, and individual faculty share oversight of various collection development responsibilities. However, the library has the ultimate responsibility for building and maintaining the collection, including decisions about storage, preservation, and weeding; collection interpretation; collection evaluation; and budgetary management.

Library liaisons manage designated funds with subject responsibility for the selection of materials that provide direct support to the instructional and research programs of the university. They work with their designated academic departments to build and maintain a collection that balances the needs of students, staff, and faculty. They evaluate all selection requests for appropriateness to the collection and maintain awareness of new information resources available for purchase. They are responsible for spending their designated funds in a timely manner, in accordance with the collection development calendar

(<http://www.ecok.edu/library/information/acqdept/calendar.htm>) and departmental needs.

Library liaisons are responsible for the weeding of their designated areas. Weeding is an essential and continuing library practice. Liaisons should involve their faculty, whenever possible, in this process to ensure that publications of historical or research value are not discarded.

Effective collection developers:

- Utilize publisher catalogs, advertisements, and professional reviews to make selection decisions;
- Review gift materials for possible acquisition and make replacement purchase decisions for lost or long overdue materials;

- Address user needs for new journals and for online access to existing subscriptions;
- Assess statistics and make purchase recommendations regarding new databases and other electronic products; and
- Weed the collection systematically to ensure current and relevant content.

For further collection development information, consult the ***Collection Development Handbook***.

Bibliographic Instruction

Through collection development and communication, library liaisons should get a sense of the needs of their departments. Instruction is essential to the effective use of the library collections. See the ***Information Literacy Plan*** and the ***Instruction Assessment Plan*** for detailed information.

Effective instructors:

- Present instructional content in diverse ways;
- Design effective assessments of student learning;
- Solicit instruction opportunities;
- Report accurate statistics of instruction activities; and
- Work with the Instruction Librarian.

Faculty Research

Liaison librarians should always enhance faculty research by promoting available library services, such as:

- Free copying of materials that are not available electronically;
- Performing needed literature review searches; and
- Providing training of services and resources at the faculty's point of need.

Effective liaisons:

- Ask the faculty what their research needs are;
- Market available services and resources; and
- Work with the various library departments (circulation, periodicals, audiovisual) to fulfill the needs of the faculty.

Annual Reports

Annual reports are an important way to review what was accomplished for the year, report data and statistics, and inform the administration of what it is that you do. Be sure to include the above duties and activities in your annual report.

Examples of liaison activities are limited only by the imagination of those working together to forge mutually beneficial alliances. Effective alliances are based on shared understanding and commitment to service throughout the university. Library liaisons are encouraged to combine various activities, as appropriate and useful, in achieving the desired results previously stated above.