Outreach with a Personal Touch: Takeaways and Tips from a Personal Librarian Program

Amanda Evans, Kent State University
Joe C. Clark

Available at: https://works.bepress.com/amanda-evans/1/
Outreach with a Personal Touch: Takeaways and Tips from a Personal Librarian Program

Amanda L. Evans and Joe C. Clark
Performing Arts Library, Kent State University, Kent, Ohio

Abstract
Are you looking for a new way to reach out to students and draw them into your library? Why not consider implementing a Personal Librarian (PL) Program? In fall 2015 Kent State University Performing Arts Library started a PL Program to undergraduate and graduate level music, theatre, and dance majors. This poster provides tips, best practices and ideas to consider when planning a new outreach program both to students on campus and online. Marketing strategies, web presence, programming ideas, classroom visits, lessons learned, and the benefit of faculty buy-in will also be addressed.

Vision & Goals
- To build a personal connection with students and faculty.
- Rebrand existing services to appear more relevant and approachable to our audience and provide a new way to promote the Performing Arts Library and librarians.
- To support student success and improve retention.

Marketing & Programming
- Start with what can be developed in house.
- Letter size posters and handouts.
- Stickers with contact information for both Personal Librarians to give to students to affix to their class syllabus, planner, technology case, etc.
- Build a web presence that is engaging and inviting.
- Approachable, engaging photograph.
- Contains “interview” with Personal Librarians.
- Provides opportunity to electronically schedule an appointment.
- Build on existing personal connections with students and engendering word of mouth marketing.
- Build on existing programming to foster personal relationships with students and faculty.
- College of the Arts Sundaes on Friday Student Mixer.
- Performing Arts Library Welcome Week Series: Meet & Greets and Connect @ Kent.

Tips & Takeaways
- Engage faculty and library administration. 
- Promoted service as a rebranding of existing services, rather than starting a new service.
- Request to be added to the agenda at annual performing arts faculty retreats/meetings.
- Speak with faculty individually.
- Start small and build on successes.
  - Focused primarily on freshman in the Fall 2015 semester by collaborating with First Year Experience instructors to tailor a library introduction sessions.
  - In the Spring 2016 semester we expanded to include all undergraduate and graduate performing arts majors and minors.
- Promote the program through classroom instruction and pop-in visits.
  - Visit classes with performing arts majors each semester to stay on students’ radar.

Top References & Resources
- Personal Librarian & First Year Experience Library Conference - [http://library.case.edu/kel/services/personal librarian/conference](http://library.case.edu/kel/services/personal librarian/conference/) (presentations and posters archived electronically)