Environmental Scan of Off-Site Reference in Academic Libraries

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### An Environmental Scan of Off-Site Reference in Academic Libraries • Elizabeth Stephan & Penny Scott

#### Future of Service

**Relationship Building (Top 4 answers)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60.6%: Increased collegiality</td>
<td>60%: Librarian-student relationships</td>
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<tr>
<td>53.3%: More familiar w/information needs for classes</td>
<td>60%: Increased student awareness of the library</td>
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<tr>
<td>40%: Increased collaboration on assignments/instruction</td>
<td>56.7%: More aware of information needs</td>
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<tr>
<td>36.7%: More familiar w/research needs</td>
<td>50%: More familiar w/assignments</td>
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</tbody>
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**Comments**
- Want to expand
- Dorm hours not useful, but want to try elsewhere
- Dept I serve not on campus, so hours are important
- Want to discontinue, but faculty love it
- Discontinued, but restarted because it increased visibility

#### Planning Process

**How long have you been planning?**

- 71.9%: 6 months or less
- 12.5%: 6 months-1 year
- 5.4%: 2+ years
- 6.3%: 1-2 years

**Why do you want to offer service?**

- 28.1%: Increase visibility
- 25%: Become more involved
- 12.5%: Provide better service
- 21.9%: Other (renovations, job change, all of the above)
- 3.1%: Align w/library outreach/marketing plan

**Where will you be located?**

- 40.6%: Don’t know
- 25%: Office in academic subject dept.
- 12.5%: Coffee shop/dining area
- 6.3%: Student union
- 3.1%: Study area not in library

**Are others offering service?**

- 37.5%: Yes
- 12.5%: Now
- 50%: Don’t know

**Will you reduce hrs at ref desk?**

- 18.8%: Yes
- 75%: No
- 3.1%: Librarians not at ref desk
- 2.7%: Librarians not at ref desk

#### Time Frame and Location

**Hours**

- 40%: 2-4 hrs/week
- 33.3%: 1-2 hrs/week
- 26.7%: 5+ hrs/week

**Reasons for Stopping**

- 52.6%: Office in academic dept
- 15.8%: Coffee shop/dining area
- 10.5%: Computer lab
- 10.5%: Study area outside library
- 10.5%: Student Union
- 21.9%: Other
- 10.5%: Student housing

**Reasons (Summary)**

- Others have tried w/little success
- Takes time away from other tasks
- Small campus, don’t see a need
- Too many constituents to serve to do this
- Mostly do virtual reference
- Combination of everything: Lack of time, budget constraints, lack of space

**Will you continue?**

- 80%: Yes
- 10%: No
- 10%: Don’t know

**If yes, are others interested?**

- 34.5%: Yes
- 17.2%: No
- 48.3%: Don’t know

**Why have you never held off-site hours?**

- 18.8%: Lack of faculty/dept interest
- 15.6%: Lack of time
- 6.3%: Budget
- 6.3%: Think they’re useful
- 3.1%: Lack of space
- 50%: Other

For more information and background on our survey and our own experiences with off-site reference, see our website: [http://bit.ly/off_site](http://bit.ly/off_site)