Maiden Voyage: A Library and Faculty Development Center Partnership to Promote Information Literacy

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Abstract

Incorporating information literacy skills and competencies into the curriculum requires collaborative partnerships between library faculty and the academic faculty with whom they work. At Northern Kentucky University's Steely Library, a non-tenure track faculty position was created to serve in a dual role as a member of the Information Literacy faculty in the library and a member of the faculty in the University's Professional and Organizational Development Center (POD). This dual role allows for the librarian to gain valuable insight to faculty needs while serving as a faculty member of the POD. Giving teaching faculty the opportunity to encounter the concept of information literacy in a variety of contexts allows them to become more interested and open to exploring how it can enhance their teaching and student learning. Areas in which the library can enhance faculty understanding and incorporation of the library's information literacy curriculum are more easily recognized with the librarian embedded into the POD. Targeted and specific information literacy tools such as tutorials, web pages, and blackboard courses are developed and promoted via the POD. The library's information literacy initiatives are marketed via the POD, therefore increasing the library presence among academic faculty. As a member of the library's Information Literacy and Instruction Team, the librarian is able to report findings from POD activities and use this information to increase the success of the library's information literacy and instruction programs. This presentation will outline the strategies of this collaborative partnership and describe how it has impacted the integration of information literacy skills into the curriculum.

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Charting Our Course
(History of the Position)

Today we will be taking you on a voyage where we will share information about a collaboration at Northern Kentucky University between our library and the Faculty Development Center. Last year, a unique librarian position was created whereby an Instructional Librarian was hired to divide her time between two distinct departments on our campus—Steely Library and the Professional & Organizational Development Center (POD). Stephanie Henderson is the first Instructional Librarian at our institution to hold this newly created position, and she began work in September of 2006. We chose the title *Maiden Voyage* for our LOEX presentation because this position is still in its infancy. This paper will discuss the evolution of the position and the direction that it has taken over the past six months. We'll also be offering more details about the unique role that Stephanie plays and how it promotes Information Literacy on our campus.

Northern Kentucky University is a public university located near a metropolitan area (about 15 minutes away from Cincinnati, Ohio). While we do have residence halls that house 1400, our enrollment is 14,638, so most of our students commute. NKU is the newest of Kentucky's eight state universities (founded in 1968). NKU has 8 Associate, 51 Baccalaureate, 9 Master, and 2 First Professional academic programs. There are 19 library faculty, 21 staff, 3 graduate assistants, and 52 student employees currently employed at the W. Frank Steely Library. We conduct about 230 library instruction sessions a year, and have 9 librarians who do library instruction. The W. Frank Steely Library Collections house nearly 250,000 titles. There are more than 500,000 federal government documents, and over 900,000 periodicals, serials, and microforms.

The Professional & Organizational Development Center (POD) is housed in Steely Library. While it does occupy space in the library, it is not a department within the library. The original title for this department, which opened in October of 2002, was Faculty Center for Teaching, Learning, and Technology. After some reorganization and the hiring of a new director (Assistant Provost for Professional Development), this area became known as the POD in March 2005. The POD has 2 administrators, 4 professional staff and 1 faculty member (Stephanie). The POD offers professional development workshops for faculty and staff covering a variety of topics such as curricular development, technology and pedagogical techniques. The POD also offers state of the art technology and working space to collaborate on projects within their area.

Why was it decided to create a librarian position that collaborated between two departments? The Associate Provost for Library Services determined that it would be beneficial for the library to have a presence in the POD and set the plan in motion, in conjunction with the Provost and the Assistant Provost for Professional Development. Justifying the creation of such a position was not difficult. The location within the library made it a natural fit. Additionally, having an in-house librarian dedicated to the POD offered the library another platform to reach faculty as well as the chance to be at the pulse of faculty trends and needs. Meetings were held between the Director of the Research and Instructional Services Division of the library and the two supervisors (Assistant Provost for Professional Development Programs and Coordinator of Information Literacy) to create a job description that met the needs of both areas. Interviews were conducted with both areas represented. One important skill that the committee sought in addition to library experience and knowledge of technology was flexibility since the very nature of the position required a person who could work successfully in two different work groups. There were eighty applicants that resulted in four interviews for this position. Stephanie Smith (now Henderson) was chosen as the top candidate and began employment on September 18, 2006.

This position is very unusual in the fact that this individual works as an integral part of two departments. Stephanie reports to Steely Library for 60% of her time, and the POD for the other 40%. Stephanie's entire salary is paid by the library because, despite her location, she is always serving as a librarian with a focus on information literacy. Stephanie's schedule for spring semester 2007 illustrates how she divided her time weekly.

- Monday: 1:30 - 4:00 POD
                4:00 - 9:00 Steely

- Tuesday: 9:00 - 12:30 Steely
                12:30 - 4:30 POD

- Wednesday: 8:30 - 12:30 Steely
                12:30 - 3:00 POD
                3:00 - 5:00 Steely

- Thursday: 9:00 - 1:00 POD
                1:30 - 5:00 Steely

- Friday: 8:30 – 10:00 Steely
                10:00 – 12:00 POD
                12:00 – 4:30 Steely

Stephanie's time in the library is divided between library instruction, on-call hours, consultations and working on projects. When she is in the library, she has the same responsibilities as the other library faculty in the Research and Instructional Services division. She attends division meetings, holds service hours and all other librarian responsibilities. Stephanie's POD time is dedicated to presenting POD workshops, consultations and working on projects. When she is in the POD, she operates as a part of their work group and attends their departmental meetings.

Many Ports of Call
(IL in a Variety of Contexts)

Embedding a librarian in the POD allows the faculty to encounter the concept of information literacy in a variety of contexts. While faculty can still learn about information literacy from traditional means such as library instruction, library web pages, the liaison program and consultations with librarians, the creation of this position allows for new methods of promoting information literacy concepts via the POD. A new series of information literacy workshops have been developed and are now a part of the recurring trainings offered in the POD. IL-specific web pages have been created and are on the POD site. Information on these pages includes IL definition and standards, Steely Library IL competencies, tips for creating library research assignments, copyright and plagiarism information, handouts and tutorials. Faculty can also email, IM or drop by the POD for one-on-one consultations with Stephanie. Information literacy publicity via the POD such as flyers and an open house have also allowed for faculty to increase their awareness of IL. The placement of a librarian in the POD has allowed the library to increase its presence during the POD's Summer Faculty Institute. During this two week period workshops are offered to faculty in the morning and afternoon. This year, six librarians will be presenting and co-teaching five information literacy workshops during the Summer Faculty Institute.

Oars, Lifeboats & Anchors
(IL Tools)

In addition to the increased IL publicity that this position offers, new information literacy tools for faculty have been developed. The nature of the split position allows extra time for special projects. As previously mentioned, IL-specific web pages for faculty have been created. Library information related to faculty has also been added to the POD website. A Blackboard course for all SPE 101 faculty is in the developmental stages. In this course, faculty will have links to tools for teaching all of the SPE 101 information literacy competencies from the Steely Library Sequential Curriculum. The tools will be offered in a variety of formats such as handouts, web pages, podcasts, and tutorials. Several tutorials have been developed in the POD to support the library's self-paced tutorial program, LEARN (Library Education and Resources for Northern). Five of these tutorials were created in direct response to a POD consultation Stephanie had with a faculty member in the department of Organizational Leadership, who needed library resources to support students in this online program. Flyers and handouts promoting information

literacy and the unique collaboration between two departments have been developed and sent out via the POD. The existing library liaison program has also been an excellent tool for promoting library events in the POD. Regular emails have been sent to the library liaisons requesting distribution of important information to their respective departments.

Smooth Sailing (Benefits)

Placing a librarian in the POD has been beneficial to both departments. The library faculty have benefited from the gateway to course faculty, as well as the increased presence on campus through presenting combined developmental opportunities. The POD programming and contacts made with teaching faculty have provided a boost to the library goals of teaching information literacy concepts that reach beyond bibliographic instruction. The placement of a librarian in the center who supports faculty professional development has also helped the library gain valuable insight to current and future faculty needs. Stephanie is also able to connect teaching faculty with the appropriate library faculty or department that meets their specific needs. For example, when a faculty member emails a copyright question to Stephanie, she is able to pass it to the copyright expert in the library. She has often referred questions regarding aspects of library programs that are coordinated by other librarians. The POD has benefited from the expertise of the library faculty, as they contribute to the center by broadening both the content and context of the programs presented. The POD has also benefited from the tools created for faculty and the increase in faculty awareness of the center's curricular development goals as a result of interactions with an in-house librarian.

Buried Treasure (Unexpected Benefits)

As with most endeavors, there have been some unexpected benefits from this partnership. Being a member of two working groups has allowed Stephanie to make significant connections with faculty and staff members across campus. Attending staff meeting for two departments has also allowed her to be better informed regarding faculty events on campus. What is significant to mention in a POD meeting might not be mentioned in a library meeting, but by being a member of both teams, she is able to see things from both sides. The technology that Stephanie has been introduced to in the POD has been the most exciting unexpected benefit. Working in the same department as the Blackboard Specialist on campus has allowed the library to have a stronger presence in Blackboard. Much of this is due to the close working space and collaboration Stephanie shares with the Blackboard Specialist. Working in an environment where she is surrounded by the latest technology everyday has allowed Stephanie to deepen her knowledge of podcasting, blogging, using the audience response system vPads, and the statistical software Google Analytics. Stephanie has taken full advantage of her POD colleagues' expertise and has implemented and encouraged the use of many of these technologies in the library.

Walk the Plank (Challenges)

As previously outlined, the benefits associated with this collaboration are numerous. Of course, even the best working situations encounter challenges as well as benefits. As with any new position, there are some things that cannot be anticipated until they happen, despite the best of intentions. One issue that was not anticipated was a shift in the POD from face to face visits to more of an online access of their services. In the early stages of creating the position, one of the projected perks of the position was the opportunity to hold impromptu library consultations for drop-in faculty and/or make referrals to other library colleagues. Since faculty have not visited the POD as frequently as anticipated, this aspect of the position has not come to fruition. Fortunately, Stephanie and the other librarians conducting workshops within the POD have been able to make some good connections with faculty during the sessions, so all is not lost.

Another aspect that was not considered fully was the "nomadic nature" of the position. Since Stephanie is traveling from one floor in the library to another and has two work areas, working on large projects or feeling settled in any one place is challenging. Adding to the difficulty is the fact that, in the POD, she does not have an office but rather works at a cubicle in an open area, which can be a less stable (and sometimes distracting) situation. When the position was being created, plans were made to order a laptop with a docking station so Stephanie could carry her computer from place to place. Of course, this highlights another challenging aspect of Stephanie's job—she can daily be seen toting her laptop and other projects she's working on from one office to another, which is certainly not the optimal situation. Plans are in place to order a wheeled cart, which should add solace to Stephanie's "daily commute" from floor to floor. During her first semester, Stephanie's POD hours were arranged around her service hours in the library. As a result, she was often moving between offices three to four times per day. This proved to be too demanding and prompted Stephanie to approach scheduling spring semester much differently. She now works for much bigger blocks of time (about ½ a day) in each area.

In addition to these few challenges that were not anticipated prior to the position, there is also the giant obstacle that was obvious from the beginning—having two supervisors, two working groups, two different philosophies and work cultures. Despite the fact that Stephanie has two supportive supervisors and collaborative colleagues in both areas, and the fact that she is amazingly flexible, it still results in a hectic work day. Since no department operates exactly the same and each has different policies and ways of communicating, it can be quite challenging to remember what set of rules is operating from one hour to the next. It also adds more hoops for Stephanie to jump through than her colleagues in the library, simply because of the nature of her position. She has to attend twice as many departmental meetings, two annual retreats, and more than the ordinary number of meetings with her supervisors weekly. Additionally, in the POD, the majority of Stephanie's colleagues are staff members while she is faculty, which adds another dynamic to the mix since

staff members sometimes have different rules and regulations on campus. Also, even the best of departments can become territorial at times, and Stephanie has had to deal with this in minimal ways from both sides of the fence. Fortunately, both departments have indicated the expectation that she alert them when things are not working, so they can be reassessed, because of the new and unique aspects of her position. As the position continues to evolve, there certainly will be more challenges that arise, but they will be addressed as collaboratively as possible. Luckily, the benefits far outweigh the challenges in this position. As with any new position, it is necessary to determine what works and what doesn't, and then act accordingly.

NAVIGATING THE HIGH SEAS
(STEPS YOU CAN TAKE AT YOUR UNIVERSITY)

While many libraries might not be able to secure funding for a part-time librarian in their faculty development center, there are several ways they can take advantage of this platform to promote information literacy efforts on their campus:

- Set up a meeting with the director or coordinator of the center to discuss your information literacy program, common goals, and what you can do to become involved
- Attend the workshops offered and make connections with the experts in technology and curriculum development
- Implement some of lessons learned from these sessions into your workflow or that of your department
- Discuss ways you can collaborate or co-teach a workshop
- Ask if you can add links to your information literacy program or library faculty web pages on their website
- Provide information literacy workshops in the faculty development center
- Consider adding their department to your list of liaison areas and designate one librarian to work with them on developing programming to support goals of both departments

FUTURE VOYAGES
(PROJECTED INITIATIVES/CONCLUSION)

While Stephanie "hit the ground running" and has accomplished a great deal in her first few months in the position, she does have a number of goals for the future. One is to create faculty focus groups to better assess their information literacy needs and obtain valuable feedback regarding program planning. She also plans to create an information literacy retreat for faculty where they can obtain professional development related to IL, and possibly receive stipends for attending. She also hopes to unveil a new podcast series for faculty and staff that will feature an interview series and basic tips and tricks regarding information literacy and Steely Library services. Additionally, she will continue to seek innovative ways to promote both her unique position and IL in general to the faculty and staff on NKU's campus. While this program is still in its infancy at Northern Kentucky University, we know that this maiden voyage has already become a successful journey and look forward to the new and exciting adventures that lie ahead as we collaborate to enhance and promote information literacy on our campus. We will continue to develop innovative methods for educating faculty about information literacy, utilizing both Steely Library and the Professional Development Center as our platform.