

Research, Scholarship, and Interdisciplinarity

Moderated by Neil Rambo and Steve Hiller

Participants in this session “brainstormed” new services and resources targeted at the research, interdisciplinary, and scholarly needs of graduate students. The following is a summary of the ideas generated by session participants.

New roles for library staff

1. Commit one or more library staff to responsibility for graduate student instruction and communication.
2. Consider hiring CLIR fellows in our institutions (as is the case at University of Minnesota) or other experts to help us better understand the graduate student population.
3. Bring in staff with domain knowledge.
4. Provide library staff during hours that coincide with graduate student needs.
5. Librarian in the lobby—or librarian offices in graduate academic departments (on their turf).

Sensitivity to graduate students’ points of view

6. Listen systematically to grad students.
7. Be more proactive by going out to grad students. Make them a special focus of our attention.
8. Create and sustain contact with grad student organizations.
9. Create and sustain contacts with grad schools.
10. Probe in order to discover what graduate students need (Example: IR)
11. Go to the departments, rather than expecting them to come to you.
12. Have to be in the flow, get into users’ point of view.
13. Conduct focus groups of graduate students to better understand the opportunities to provide valued services / resources.
14. Convene library summits to plan and organize for graduate student services.

Spaces for graduate students

15. Establish contact on “neutral ground” with graduate students (on their turf, or non-threatening turf).
16. Create a commons area to cater to grad students.
17. Make maximum use of existing library space (graduate students require their own environment)—perhaps unlock unused rooms for their exclusive use.
18. Create secure, collaborative spaces for grad students.

Skills support

19. Provide sessions for graduate students in finding and using e-journals & e-resources.
20. Work on the challenge of getting graduate students into the library; consider various critical skills instructions for grad students.
21. Create a section of the library's Institutional Repository for graduate students (to showcase their work / theses / etc.); give the training, and encourage them to set it up as their virtual community.
22. Provide copyright instruction.
23. Showcase EAD.

Faculty collaborations provide inroads

24. Partner with academic units in order to better serve graduate students.
25. Showcase innovative faculty & graduate projects in our libraries.
26. Promote partnerships between subject liaisons & faculty to make inroads into graduate populations.
27. Expand book delivery programs to include grad students.

Interdisciplinary "hooks"

28. Provide help to interdisciplinary majors with language and jargon across disciplines (communication issue).
29. Provide more outreach to interdisciplinary centers (where an increasing percentage of graduate students can be found).
30. Break down interdisciplinary boundaries (Example: promote use of institutional repositories).
31. Provide more library funding to support interdisciplinary work within the library (our models of funding need to be more flexible to successfully manage the shift to interdisciplinary research).

Reducing resistance

32. Work around organizational structures and standard resistance by "tricking" faculty & grad students into learning. ("guerilla librarianship")
33. Break through the librarian stereotypes—promote and demonstrate that librarians do more than buy books.
34. Communicate with grad students directly, rather than indirectly through faculty.