

Discovery and Access

Moderated by Karen Williams and Cecily Marcus

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

Special collections provide a rich locus for discovery—use graduate student assistants to organize collections and create portals for access (proximity to these collections provides uncommon opportunity for discovery, association of ideas, and increased familiarity with research processes).

When developing responses, remember that all graduate students are not the same. Our response may not be “one size fits all.”

The manner in which we practice academic librarianship has to shift in order to embrace needed change, new ideas, and emerging technology in new ways. (The notion that technology can be more than a tool, and integrated more creatively into our solutions for grads.)

We require new kinds of expertise in libraries, and for those needed positions we will give up others. Needed:

- Copyright manager
- “40” new position ideas (that is, there are many new kinds of positions we require)
- Unix specialists
- Digital librarians
- Moving staff positions from serials and cataloging into growing areas
- Building collections—> supporting users/building relationships

We recognize that we require:

- Changes in culture
- Opportunities for informal social engagements: cocktails, social hours, etc.
- Spaces for graduate students
- Moving librarians out of the library and connecting to students

What do grad students need and want? Don’t “reinvent the wheel” every time we consider services and resources for graduate students. We should use insight provided by research that others have done, and build on it:

- Create buy-in from faculty and deans for the new engagement and assistance we can provide. Determine ways to create partnerships with departments, deans, etc.
- Think about providing spaces for graduate students to meet their research and learning agendas
- Conduct pilots of novel concepts

- Integrate e-chat into course Web sites
- Provide needed tutorials and delivery
- Teach graduate students how to do research
- Determine how to share resources among libraries (in order to meet the demands of interdisciplinary and inter-institutional research)

Contact grad students early and often; use both formal and informal approaches

Create a forum for weekly grad student presentations of their research in the library; promote these engagements via word of mouth, and through the departments; portray as non-threatening sharing of ideas in library.

We must overcome the absence of a physical draw that would otherwise bring graduate students into the library. The question becomes "How to create personal relationships with graduate student clients?"

Develop capacity to share ideas, and know pertinent information resources in other institutions, as well as what's in your own institution

Get serious about the "communication" skill set the academic librarian requires. We must be able to "work the room" when we're among graduate students, turn up in departments for cold calls; develop social skills to facilitate contact and interaction.