Assessing liaison librarians’ skill sets to build strong partnerships and ensure better outreach in a quickly changing research and learning environment

Denise Hersey, Yale University
Francine DeFranco, University of Connecticut
Two Heads (or three or four) are Better than One
Yale –UConn Liaison Workshop

- Attended by 60 staff representing broad academic areas
- Included welcome comments from both Library Directors
- Included group discussion describing liaison activities
- Included small group discussions about outreach activities
- Included Skype presentation by Karen Williams
- Included discussion of Needs Assessment results
- Included discussion of skills sets needed for current job descriptions
- Included outline of personal action plan for liaison activities
Workshop for Liaisons and Subject Specialist Librarians
Sponsored by Yale University and the University of Connecticut

9:00 - 9:15  Coffee
9:15 - 9:20  Welcome and Overview, Denise Hersey, Yale University and Francine DeFranco, University of Connecticut Libraries
9:20 - 9:40  Introductory Remarks, Susan Gibbons, University Librarian, Yale University
9:40 - 10:00 Opening Comments, Brinley Franklin, Vice Provost, University of Connecticut Libraries
10:00 - 10:15 Open Discussion: What activities define liaison work today?
10:15 - 10:45 Table Discussion: What outreach activities are you engaged in with faculty?
10:45 - 11:30 Open Discussion: Share results from small group activity
11:30 - Noon Skype with Karen Williams, Associate Dean, University of Minnesota Libraries and co-editor of *The Expert Library*
Noon - 12:30  Lunch
12:30 - 1:00 Group Discussion: What are the knowledge, skills and abilities needed for the new liaison librarian? (chapter 5 “Expert Library”)
1:00 - 2:00  Table Discussion: Duke Report and future job descriptions
2:00 - 2:15  Needs assessment (review results)
2:15 - 2:45  Create action plans; meet peer-partners
2:34 – 3:00 Wrap up and evaluation
What Skills are Important? Needs Assessment Results

**Skills we have: Advanced Skill Level**

- Work effectively with users to teach them information seeking skills (50%)
- Understand reference tools that support academic departments (52.8%)
- Work well with diverse users who possess varying skill levels (52.8%)
- Conducting an effective reference interview (55.6%)
- Communicating effectively in face-to-face and telephone reference (65.7%)
- Communicating effectively in asynchronous online reference situations (i.e. email) (69.4%)

**Skills we need: Basic or Intermediate Levels**

- Basic understanding of copyright law (61.1%)
- Understand and employ effective marketing techniques (61.1%)
- Advise scholars on managing data (63.9%)
- Ability to perform a user needs assessment (65.7%)
- In response to user needs, develop new tools based on results (69.4%)
- Analyze data from user needs assessment (72.3%)
The Husky Approach (UConn)

Liaison Workshop follow up:

Improving skill sets
• Established a “Learning Together” series
• Invited outside speakers for Copyright and Mendeley
• Invited University speakers to address new initiatives
• Identified library experts for training/professional development

Meet with Deans/Department Heads
• Comparative review Deans/Department meeting information
• Review and rewrite job descriptions
• Review and revise Library Liaison Program description
The Bull Dog approach
(Yale)

- Improving skill sets
  - Citation management systems
  - Learning how to teach
  - Copyright
  - Data Management
- Defining expectations and best practices
- Partnering with centers and groups
To Infinity, and Beyond…

- Workshop evaluation suggestions
- Bring in reps to train librarians at both institutions
- Organize a teaching workshop
- Create shared Mendeley account
- Develop joint workshop for Spring 2013