Educational Session

Personal Librarians: The Not-So-Secret Agent of Transfer Student Success  
Transition Programs and Services, Partnerships and Collaboration

Academic libraries recognize the unique challenges of transfer students and have been working to find ways to support them for decades. Supporting transfer student success and reducing transfer shock has long been a latent goal of the University of Wyoming. This session describes the UW Libraries Personal Librarian Program for Transfer Students, which seeks to reduce the stress and shock of transferring from a small college to a large university.

Kristina Clement, Student Success Librarian

University of Wyoming
Personal Librarians
The Not-So-Secret Agents of Transfer Student Success
Hello!

KRISTINA CLEMENT
Student Success Librarian
University of Wyoming
kclemens8@uwyo.edu
kclemens3@gmail.com
@kc_librarian1
WHAT WE WILL COVER TODAY

A brief overview of Personal Librarian Programs
The Personal Librarian Program at the University of Wyoming
Program Logistics and Assessment
Toolkit for easy implementation

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Personal Librarian Programs

WHAT THEY ARE AND WHY THEY MATTER

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Personal Librarian Programs are one of the many ways that libraries engage specific demographics of students and have been in existence for decades.

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COMMON DEMOGRAPHICS

- First-Year Students / Freshmen
- Graduate Students
- College-Specific (i.e. College of Engineering)
- School-Specific (i.e. School of Medicine)
Personal Librarian Programs are not a new concept in the field of Librarianship...
...but, very few Personal Librarian Programs are designed for Transfer Students

PERSONAL CONNECTIONS CAN REDUCE TRANSFER SHOCK

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UNC- Chapel Hill

LARGE PROGRAM, LARGE UNIVERSITY
40 PARTICIPATING LIBRARIANS
800 STUDENTS

Santa Clara University

SMALL PROGRAM, SMALL UNIVERSITY
TWO PARTICIPATING LIBRARIANS
LESS THAN 20 STUDENTS

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“With seven community colleges across the state feeding into the University of Wyoming, the only 4-year, public university in the state, the University of Wyoming has a large transfer student population (nearly 45% of enrolled students).”


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The Personal Librarian Program at the University of Wyoming

**PARTNERSHIP**
Collaboration with the Transfer Relations Office in Admissions, Information Technology, the Registrar, the UW Libraries.

**LOGISTICS**
Had to think through several things before pitching the program, including the number of students, voluntary participation of librarians, communication schedule, etc.

**BUY-IN**
Presented first to the UW Libraries Research and Instruction Department and the UW Libraries' Associate Dean.
PROGRAM OBJECTIVE
To provide personalized library services and the first point of contact for transfer students, a group of students who often miss out on traditional library instruction.

SPECIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS
The program contributes specifically to:
- Social engagement between librarians & students.
- Ease transfer shock to a larger institution's library.
- Student engagement leads to academic success.

STRATEGIC PLANNING
The program directly connects to the UW Libraries' strategic plan, and, in turn, the University's strategic plan.
1,400 STUDENTS, 17 LIBRARIANS
Librarians decided how many students they wanted. Totals ranged from 10 students to 300+ students.

SIX EMAILS, ONE ACADEMIC YEAR
Librarians sent three personalized emails per semester to each of their students, totaling six communications for the academic year.

INTERNAL REFERRAL NETWORK
Librarians were encouraged to share knowledge and refer their students to the correct person or department as necessary.
In all, the Personal Librarian Program helps reduce transfer shock, especially for students from rural populations.
Program Assessment

RESPONSE RATE
The first year of the program yielded approximately a 5% response rate from students, which was on-par with expectations. Many students replied to thank their librarian for being their personal librarian.

LIBRARIAN SURVEY
Librarians were surveyed about their experiences participating in the program. All indicated a positive experience with the program, though those with small student lists wished more students had replied to them.

ADJUSTMENTS AND ADDITIONS
Adjustments included more detailed technical training for mail merge email customization and integration of spring transfers. Two off-shoot programs also started for distance students and first-year students.
Personal Librarian Programs Build Strong Relationships

Relationships are built between the library, student success units, students, and within our own organization.

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PROVEN USEFUL

Personal Librarian Programs have long been proven useful and are worthwhile efforts. Ours has proven especially useful to our transfer students from rural populations.

THOUGHTFUL CONSIDERATIONS

Keeping in mind the demographics of our transfer students and careful, flexible planning led to the success of this program.
Implementation Toolkit

EMAIL TEMPLATES
Sample emails to send in the fall and the spring semesters. Librarians are welcome to customize certain content as they see fit.

S.W.O.T. ANALYSIS
One of the most useful tools to get buy-in across the board. Allow stakeholders to do a S.W.O.T. analysis with you.

USER MANUAL
A user manual is a valuable resource, especially if additional programs are created. It also includes a tech guide for mail merge.

LOGISTICS LIST
A detailed list of all the logistics that we considered in developing our program and the solutions we found.

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Student Success Librarian
University of Wyoming

EMAIL
kclemens8@uwyo.edu
kclemens3@gmail.com

TWITTER
@kc_librarian1