GUIDELINES FOR SUBJECT LIBRARIAN LIAISONS
December 10, 2008

The Library Liaison Program at the University of Maryland exists to establish ongoing relationships between the Library and the University’s academic departments. At its core, the Library Liaison Program is composed of subject librarians and departmental faculty working together to enhance communication and improve library resources and services.

SUBJECT LIBRARIAN LIAISONS

Developing relationships between the University Libraries and academic departments at the University of Maryland is a core responsibility for all subject librarian liaisons. It is expected that subject librarian liaisons will be proactive in all areas, achieve some level of mastery of their subject areas and communicate regularly with their departments.

Librarians can use a variety of approaches to build rapport with their academic departments. Liaison activities are an essential part of the ongoing mission of the University Libraries for supporting teaching and research across the curriculum.

An effective liaison will take advantage of opportunities to learn about and contribute to his or her subject specialization(s) through collection development, instruction, and in-depth consultation activities.

Individual liaisons should encourage viable relationships between the University Libraries and their respective academic departments or recognized special interest groups. In liaison relationships, the Libraries strive to educate the academic departments on library issues as well as promote transparency grounded in mutual respect. Subject librarian and departmental liaisons share an understanding and awareness of the challenges and opportunities inherent in serving specialized areas of academic creativity while supporting the teaching and research needs of the University.

Examples of liaison activities appropriate for subject librarian liaisons are limited only by the imagination of the liaisons working together with academic departments to forge mutually beneficial alliances.

Effective alliances of this kind are based on shared understanding and commitment to service throughout the university. Individual liaisons are encouraged to combine various activities, as appropriate and useful, in achieving the desired ends stated above.

Listed below are goals and best practices for all subject librarian liaisons:
COMMUNICATION

Maintain an ongoing dialog with departments and individual faculty.

- Meet with those having special roles in the departments, e.g. department chairs, directors of undergraduate studies, directors of graduate studies, and teaching assistants.

- Meet with the departmental liaisons on a regular basis.

- Share, explain and promote new developments in the Libraries, such as budgetary issues and changes in services and procedures, in a timely manner.

- Inform faculty, students, and staff of new resources and offer instruction or facilitate use when needed.

- Attend department/college/school functions, lectures, events, colloquia, conferences, performances, convocations, etc., in order to increase awareness and understanding of teaching and research interests.

- Monitor changes in curriculum related to both traditional and interdisciplinary initiatives.

- Attend meetings of academic departments when possible to report on library matters.

- Be aware of research and teaching interests of faculty and graduate students.

- Attend the campus New Faculty Orientation in August and departmental orientations for new faculty and students when appropriate.

- Provide orientations and introductions for new faculty to inform them of the library’s resources and services and learn about their interests.

- Encourage the departmental liaison(s) to attend the annual State of the Libraries Address, liaison convocations, and special meetings.

- Attend subject-specific annual conventions, association conferences, meetings, etc., when appropriate.

- Respond to departmental, faculty and student requests in a timely manner.
COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

Work closely with assigned department to develop an understanding of the ongoing needs for library resources and collections and collaborate with faculty to build collections that meet their research and teaching needs.

- Inform faculty of changes in the Libraries’ collection development policies and procedures.
- Consult with faculty about departmental requests for new or updated acquisitions.
- Inform faculty of new trends in publishing, copyright and scholarly communications.
- Attempt to acquire materials authored by faculty members for the library collections.
- Provide support for program and accreditation review processes, new academic program establishment, and grant proposal preparation.

SUBJECT LIBRARY INSTRUCTION

Promote and encourage the integration of library instruction and information literacy into the department’s courses and curriculum.

- Develop complementary materials to support course instruction, such as web pages and tutorials.
- Collaborate with faculty to design effective library assignments.
- Encourage faculty to link general library web guides as well as course-related web pages to their course management systems and/or syllabi.

REFERENCE / CONSULTATION

Provide specialized subject assistance to meet information and research needs of faculty and students.

- Understand faculty and students’ expectations and perceptions of library resources and services.
- Develop and maintain subject-specific library resource guides.
- Market research assistance to faculty and students of the departments served.
• Respond to departmental, faculty and student requests in a timely manner.

MASTERY OF THE SUBJECT

Develop an understanding of the subject areas of assigned departments in order to best serve their needs.

• Attend professional conferences, including those sponsored by library associations, publishing groups, or academic societies related to subject specialization(s), and those sponsored by subject-specific professional organizations and societies.

• Join library, academic, or professional associations related to collection management issues or subject specialization(s).

• Monitor new developments in the field by joining appropriate list-servs and reading professional literature, especially the major review journals.