

## ULS Liaison Librarian Position Description Framework

*Academic libraries must now reexamine their staffing strategy and organizational structure in light of the rising pressures, disruptive competitors, and new demands that have emerged over the last decade. The most promising roles for library staff are bound together by a commitment to moving beyond traditional library spaces and thematic boundaries and into more active support of the academic mission.*

“Redefining the Academic Library: Managing the Migration to Digital Information Services” Washington, DC: Education Advisory Board, 2011.

<http://www.educationadvisoryboard.com/pdf/23634-EAB-Redefining-the-Academic-Library.pdf>

### **Introduction**

This position framework outlines a new structure for outreach that will change the focus of the work done by the ULS faculty librarians away from one that is collection-centered towards one where their knowledge, skills, and abilities are more closely aligned with both the vision articulated in the Long Range Plan of the ULS (noted in italics below) and the teaching and research mission of the university. While all of the activities listed below will not be reflected in every new Liaison Librarian position to be written, this list does reflect appropriate responsibilities from which the selection will be made. Moving forward, it is important to think about position descriptions as living documents that will be updated as needed so that we continue to be aligned with the needs of our community.

This change will not happen overnight; the transition from the existing structure into job descriptions with new responsibilities will take time to fully implement. However, once completed this change will allow librarians to more actively participate in the overarching focus of the ULS which is to *re-envision library services to better support teaching and learning and enhance user satisfaction*, a goal that is repeated throughout this document as one that can be achieved through outreach to faculty, students, and staff under the broad heading of campus engagement. Campus engagement can be loosely defined as any professional work in which the librarian seeks opportunities to better serve the needs of the user. This purposeful kind of outreach can be beneficial to both the department/school and the ULS: the liaison librarian can integrate knowledge of resources and services by working closely with the user, and through these interactions we can learn more about how the collections and services of the library can better meet the needs of the faculty, students, and staff.

Cultivating relationships through campus engagement will also *increase external communications and raise awareness* by utilizing the liaison librarians as a primary communications channel in order to highlight the library’s collections and services, including special and digital collections. Reaching out to user communities through both the physical and virtual environments will provide liaison librarians an opportunity to speak knowledgeably about issues such as scholarly communication, digital collections, and information literacy.

Duties within this framework include traditional tasks such as collection development but elaborate on other activities that encompass changes consistent with a user-centered service environment. Listed below are the types of activities liaison librarians may be incorporating into their daily tasks.

### **Campus Engagement**

- Cultivate partnerships, and actively work towards establishing productive relationships with departmental faculty, staff, adjuncts and visiting professors, and students in order to integrate the library's resources in curricula and research projects.
- Promote library services and collections through a variety of channels, including social media to connect with undergraduates, graduates, faculty, and researchers.
- Speak knowledgeably about relevant issues such as scholarly communication, open access, institutional repositories, digital collections, and information literacy.
- Seek opportunities to collaborate and establish partnerships with faculty members and departments.
- Analyze trends in departmental teaching and research programs.
- Stay abreast of scholarship in disciplines themselves to respond to departmental needs.

### **Leadership and teamwork**

- Embrace an environment of continual professional development, improvement and learning; thus remaining current in the field and supporting others in doing so as well.
- Maintain understanding of ULS priorities, goals, and programs.
- Contribute to the goals and strategic initiatives of the University Library System through active participation in ULS collaboratives.
- Share expertise with colleagues and administrators to further University Library System goals.
- Be able to refer users to appropriate specialized services elsewhere
- Seek opportunities to address local, regional, and national organizations such as ACRL and ALA, to foster better communication and understanding of each other's programs and services.
- Pursue partnerships with other on-campus organizations (e.g., CIDDE, the Writing Center)
- Identify areas where new online learning and digital tools can place the library into the flow of teaching, learning, and research.
- Advance academic unit, library, and university goals.

### **Teaching/Learning**

- Engage faculty and other teaching staff to integrate information literacy concepts and skills into the curriculum.
- Deliver effective instructional sessions; and/or provide learning opportunities such as LibGuides, train-the-trainer sessions, or research consultations.
- Engage in reflective teaching through use of instructional improvement tools such as peer evaluation or teaching portfolios.
- Deliver information literacy instruction in accordance with ACRL standards in the classroom, the online environment and through faculty partnerships.
- Maintain up-to-date knowledge of relevant curriculum initiatives within the University of Pittsburgh.

- Develop and maintain an awareness of the information needs and information-seeking habits of college students.
- Conduct needs assessment as appropriate and selectively measure instructional outcomes in order to ensure effectiveness of instructional initiatives.

### **Research Services**

- Provide high quality reference and research support on demand by appointment, email, chat, or other venue.
- Collaborate on the development of a dynamic online service environment to engage users with library collections and services.
- Extend services through office hours, embedded librarianship, and support of undergraduate honors researchers.
- Participate in the promotion of library services and materials.

### **Scholarly Communication**

- Educate and inform faculty, staff, and students about scholarly communication issues. Examples include helping faculty and graduate students understand their rights as authors.
- Explain the ULS's Open Access policies and promote use of D-Scholarship, the university's institutional repository.
- Demonstrate competency on broad issues of copyright and how to responsibly use resources in an academic setting.

### **Content and collections**

- Ensure curriculum-aligned collection management.
- Manage collection funds efficiently, effectively and in a timely fashion.
- Strategically assess and make decisions regarding the acquisition, retention, and preservation of collections.
- Collaborate in the design, implementation, and maintenance of relevant online tools and services to better meet the needs of library patrons.
- Discover and recruit institutional scholarly output, research data, and other content for inclusion in ULS digital initiatives.