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Librarian Outreach: Better Research for Better Careers

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Librarian Outreach: Better Research for Better Careers.

Preparing University Students for Success in the Health Sciences.

Todd Prusin, M.S.L.S. Health Sciences Liaison Librarian,
Georgia State University Library
Southern Chapter Annual Meeting, Medical Library Association,
Charleston, South Carolina

Health Sciences Librarian conducting office hours with 'librarian' sign.

BACKGROUND

Georgia State University has liaison librarians, a group of subject specialists assigned to work with Georgia State's academic departments to support research and teaching. The health sciences liaison librarian, a former hospital librarian, works with the Byrdine F. Lewis School of Nursing and the Institute of Public Health.

At Georgia State University, any formal student interaction as known as a 'consultation.' Prior to the introduction of office hours, students contacted a librarian - office visits, email or telephone - with general consultations. Questions related to basic library information; items location, how to search online databases as well as GIL, our online catalog. Students were often using wrong databases and weak search terms. Also, professors and other faculty rarely contacted librarian. The Liaison & Outreach Services department at Georgia State University created a program where the liaison librarian would schedule visits to his/her departments in an effort to better serve the community. For the health sciences librarian, these visits, known as 'office hours,' allow the librarian to provide a stronger foundation for research and information literacy to health science students. The goal was to prepare health sciences students to use hospital and medical libraries more effectively.

IMPLEMENTATION

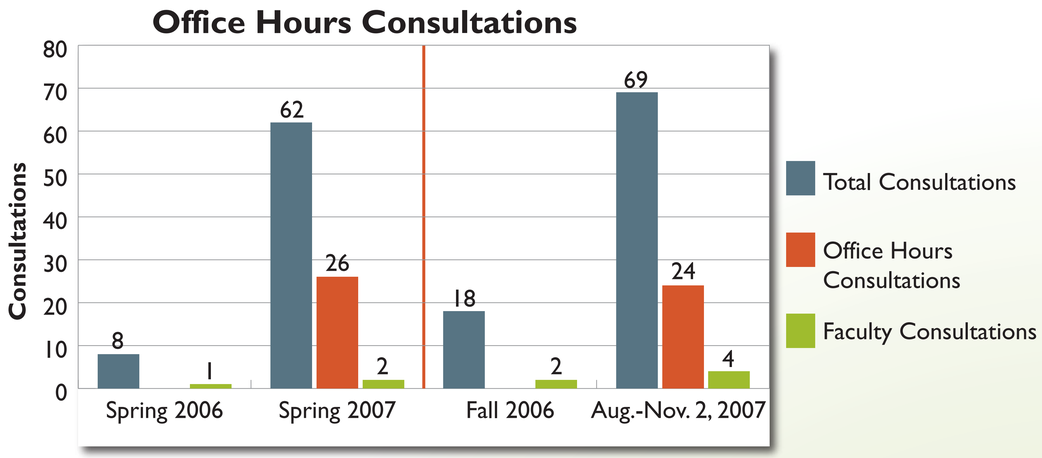
Beginning with spring semester 2007, librarian spent 4 "office hours" a week in nursing/public health departments to increase accessibility to faculty and students. Librarian announced office hours to students at new student orientation at the beginning of each semester, department heads advertised via email and signs were posted in the computer labs with office hours times. Librarian had a desk sign for his space to also draw attention.

MAIN RESULTS

Office hours have given the librarian better contact with faculty, greater understanding of assignments and curriculum and better access to students to provide real time assistance with research projects. Students are more information literate via the proximity and access to their librarian and faculty

CONCLUSION

Office Hours outreach provides health sciences students with more opportunities to consult with their librarian. Because of the limitations of a student's schedule and their reluctance to seek librarian assistance, office hours allow students to more easily consult with the librarian and acquire the tools necessary for successful library usage. With the implementation of office hours the amount of student and faculty consultations increased. As health professionals, patrons will use hospital/medical libraries with greater success.



Nursing Librarian
HERE
Fridays 11am-1pm
On the 8th floor, in Public Health
Wednesday 1-3pm

Public Health Librarian
HERE
Wednesdays 1-3pm
On the 9th floor, in Nursing
computer room Fridays 11am-1pm

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Librarian Outreach