AC 2010-186: ACADEMIC LIBRARIANS' ROLES IN ATTRACTING & RECRUITING STUDENTS TO THEIR UNIVERSITY

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Academic Librarians' Roles in
Attracting & Recruiting Students to Their University

By Bob Kackley, Jim Miller, and Nevenka Zdravkovska

Abstract

This paper reviews the literature on academic libraries' active efforts to help their institutions recruit students. It concludes that very few libraries have focused on recruitment as such, but that more explicit attention needs to be paid to this function in order to keep the libraries' mission relevant to an increasingly competitive academic environment. The experience of University of Maryland librarians is described, and typical classes given from 2001-2009 for K-12 students are discussed. Out of 9224 total instruction sessions, 151 were for K-12 students. Thirty one of those were devoted strictly to Engineering and science; the others were general library orientations that often included some science and technology resources.

Introduction

What do the nicknames His Airness, Tinchie, Kitchen, Skeets, and Babsie all have in common? These five individuals were recruited by at least one of the twelve Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) schools. So what do libraries such as the University of Maryland Libraries have in common with recruitment efforts similar to these? Maybe more than those affiliated with the information services field realize (in the Conclusion the identities for those nicknames will be revealed).

In the summer of 2008, librarians Jim Miller, Bob Kackley, and Nevenka Zdravkovska of the Engineering & Physical Sciences Library (EPSL) at the University of Maryland gave two bibliographic instruction sessions to Summer Program students on campus. Students were from two local magnet schools, Oxon Hill High School and Charles H. Flowers High School for an Inventor's Camp for the program, Project Lead the Way. After talking to Alex Prasertchoung, the coordinator for the two classes, we realized that these ninth to twelfth grade students were being heavily recruited to attend the University of Maryland upon matriculation from their respective high schools.

Upon later reflection we realized how many opportunities the Maryland Libraries, including EPSL Librarians, have taken advantage of to enhance the University of Maryland in the eyes of newcomers. For example, every year on the last Saturday in April, Maryland Day occurs on campus with as many as 75,000 visitors, many below the age of 18. For several years for Maryland Day, the UM Libraries have sponsored a well-known children's TV celebrity, Bob the Vid Tech, from Maryland Public Television fame in a tent crammed full of youngsters. The other initiatives include "History Day", put on by the UM Libraries Archives as well as EPSL, and Michele Smith Performing Arts Center librarians assisting home-schooled students during daytime events. These are part of a long term general recruitment effort to pull in future Terps (nickname for the University of Maryland mascot, the Terrapins).

We evolved a keen sense of awareness of just how much the students in the Summer Program, Project Lead the Way (Inventor's Camp) were being not merely encouraged, but actively recruited to attend the University of Maryland upon high school graduation. This led us to investigate how many instances in the literature there were of academic libraries actually talking about their efforts to recruit upcoming students for their respective university or college. Sadly, there was only one 2007 article by Michele Behr (et al) found in the journal, College and Undergraduate Libraries that really hit the nail-on-the-head with this. In their literature search, she states that they were "…. unable to uncover any instances of a library playing any role in recruitment initiatives at another college or university".[1]

Now, there is a factor we need to consider at this point. Most likely every single institute of higher learning's library system is contributing to recruitment efforts, via instruction classes, workshops, etc., even if the full extent of these are not consciously identified and recognizable -- -- and the UM Libraries are no exception. For example, the very well-run UM Libraries User Education Department keeps a detailed log of every instruction class that has been taught from 2001-present, by mostly librarians, but also some other library staff (Table 1). It was surprising to go through the entire nine years of statistics to see the various classes, schools and groups listed. Granted, the University of Maryland is located in a large metropolitan area, Washington DC. More than thirty-five K-12 schools (high school, middle school and elementary) were listed, and 147 sessions were given to these students alone.

YEAR	UMD Libraries Total Sessions	Total Attendance	UMD Libraies K-12 Sessions	K-12 Session Attendance	EPSL K-12 Sessions	EPSL K-12 Session Attendance
2001	968	18,836	4	60	1	12
2002	1008	21,075	11	260	1	9
2003	1099	22,432	12	211	1	11
2004	999	20,579	20	392	4	87
2005	1027	23,409	20	500	0	0
2006	986	22,736	28	700	6	73
2007	1,042	22,439	23	520	4	64
2008	1,062	23,253	16	266	10	156
2009	1,033	21,512	17	371	4	51
ALL	9,224	196,271	151	3280	31	463

Table 1. K-12 (high school, middle school, and elementary) school seminars
Compiled From UM Libraries UES Teaching Statistics 2009[2].

In addition to Project Lead the Way and other K-12 sessions, there were follow-up classes for enrolled students (See Table 2). These included groups such as Academic Achievement (31 instruction sessions given to 534 undergraduates since 2001), Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation, Math Spiral, and Women in Engineering (WIE). Some of these programs, such as Academic Achievement, are composed of provisional students who are accepted to the University of Maryland only upon completion of the programs. Just as recruiting a prized athlete doesn't stop with the signing of the letter of intent --- neither does the work with these

provisionally accepted students. Later in this article we will illustrate the University's as well as the libraries' efforts to collaborate on recruitment. We will describe some of the Engineering & Physical Sciences Library (EPSL) initiatives. Not only do these recruitment efforts help the University out -- they help the libraries stay in business while keeping a higher profile on campus --- all very critical in today's economy.

Years	Group	No. of Sessions	Attendance
2002-2009	Academic Achievement Program (provisionally accepted students)	31	534
2004	Bethesda Chevy Chase International Baccalaureate	1	22
2007-2008	Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation	2	33
2004	Math SPIRAL (Summer Program In Research And Learning at the University of Maryland)	1	18
2004-2009	McNair Scholars (preparing underrepresented groups to pursue doctoral studies)	3	65
2007-2008	Women in Engineering	2	12

Table 2. Follow-Up Sessions for Current Students
Compiled From UM Libraries UES Teaching Statistics 2009[3]

Literature Review

As mentioned earlier, the amount of direct mention in the literature to universities and colleges is minimal at best. Behr states that while academic libraries are considered "...at the center of the educational enterprise, librarians often feel peripheral on campus".[4] Our new Dean of the University of Maryland Libraries, Patricia Steele, constantly stresses the word "dazzle" when it comes to how our library system should function within regard to the University of Maryland Libraries setting, and for good reason. Amiso M. George, in his 2000 *Journal of Nonprofit and Public Sector Marketing* article (still critically important 10 years later), talks about "New Public Relations" and how we must use marketing and public relation strategies for university recruitment.[5] University libraries would seem to be an integral part of this proactive activity, if in fact they are "at the center of the educational enterprise".

A 2006 issue of the *Journal of Academic Librarianship (JAL)* presents two strong viewpoints involving reaching out and recruiting. First, Lorena O'English talks about various outreach ideas and progress; but her main theme is that the "academic opportunities don't stop at the classroom door". She even adds the suggestion of offering input to a university's campus recruitment office along with regular "library outreach and marketing efforts".[6] Second, Colleen Boff talks about how there is more pressure in this time of smaller budgets to find creative marketing methods to reach a diverse population -- especially potential students. She goes beyond that by saying that "… libraries should think creatively when drafting new positions. An innovative position that directly relates to recruitment …..[will] impress university administrator[s]".[7] Also, libraries need to be monitoring initiatives such as the legislators' consideration of how public universities should be giving back to the community in a tangible way.[8]

Much of this paper will give attention to diverse groups such as women and minorities in recruitment. Women are still a pronounced minority in engineering classes, even with recent years' increases in their enrollment. See for example, Franzway et al. (2009).[9] The working definition of "minorities" was given to us by Bruk Berhane from the University of Maryland Center for Minorities in Science and Engineering: it includes African-Americans, Hispanics, and Native Americans. Mr. Berhane is quite active with many programs and we have been of assistance to him and his Center's efforts. One is Women in Engineering (WIE), one of four pilot summer programs. WIE attracts upcoming ninth and tenth grade young women to our campus where they will, for example, build a solar-powered water heater while getting the chance to meet women engineers from the National Security Agency and Northrop Grumman.[10]

There are strong international recruitment efforts not only on campus, but worldwide. For example, the "internationalization agenda" was created by a consortium of Australian university libraries for overseas students to either be recruited or to teach in their countries.[11] Another example is Washington State University, where librarians collaborated on a program for incoming transfer students.[12]

University of Maryland Libraries Recruitment Efforts

To show what ways the University of Maryland Libraries can be of assistance for University of Maryland student recruitment efforts, several sources should be more closely examined. An October 2009 *Washington Post* article shows how minority programs such as the previously mentioned Academic Achievement Program have greatly benefitted provisional UM students. It is a part of TRIO, a program of national initiatives, to help disadvantaged students get good grades and graduate. About 92% of the incoming provisional students in this Academic Achievement Program return for their sophomore year. This is higher than the University of Maryland average, and is accomplished mostly through just raising confidence levels of these students.[13]

A Washington Post December 2009 article describes a program called Gear Up (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) that is another mentoring program for assisting minorities in their efforts to get accepted and then succeed in college. This particular article features U.S. – born children of Hispanic immigrants who were touring various colleges and universities, mostly in Pennsylvania. A summer 2009 enrichment camp for this program was held at the St. Mary's College of Maryland to create a "life changing" atmosphere, similar to University of Maryland's Academic Achievement program mentioned above. Statistics show that compared to the national average of 22.6% for all Americans (57.8% Asian, 35.5% White, 18.2% African-American), only 8.9% of Hispanic immigrants have a Bachelor's Degree or higher.[14] An EPSL Librarian helped twenty seven of these students in 2009, as described below. The Diamondback, a weekday student newspaper at the University of Maryland, reported in a July 2009 article about UM recruitment efforts involving the least represented minority --- Native Americans. University of Maryland admissions officials were courting applications from forty-one college-bound Native Americans who were touring various colleges and universities.[15]

Regarding international students not only finding out about University of Maryland, but also then attending school here in College Park; the *TERP* Fall 2009 Magazine reported some very

interesting facts. Currently, there are 3,500 students from 134 countries in attendance, most of them graduate students.[16] These figures tie in with the Libraries' User Education statistics that list at least sixty library staff responding to the call for International Student Orientation instructors, since 2002. Several librarians have recently given presentations on UM Libraries' resources to the University's Institute for Global Chinese Affairs. The IGCA is the only university based training institute for Chinese professionals in the United States (http://www.international.umd.edu/igca/). In December 2009, an EPSL librarian and an East Asia Collection librarian instructed an IGCA group of primarily aerospace engineers. Building on recruitment of international graduate students, the university wants to quadruple by 2018 the international undergraduate enrollment through various programs such as one initiated with China by Dr. C.D. Mote, Jr., University of Maryland President. Programs such as these are intended to fight through the obvious drawback of very high out-of-state tuition (international students are within this category in a state institution of higher learning).[17]

Our student newspaper, the *Diamondback*, has reported on the revamped efforts made by the Undergraduate Admissions Office to recruit this segment of potential students. In fact, they are sending out recruiters now on a regular basis, to places as widely scattered as Arizona, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Atlanta, and even Los Angeles.[18] For transfer students there are already arrangements with the University of Maryland Libraries User Education Department to give orientations on our library resources during their University orientations. Another seemingly small but significant group that can be overlooked is home-schooled students. Dr. Michael Hewitt, a major coordinator of these parent-student affiliations, started free music lessons in the daytime (since these students are not obligated to do public school hours) at the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center on campus.[19] Some of his students have made their way to the popular library located within the Performing Arts Center and have been assisted by librarians there with their research.

UM libraries assist numerous programs, including Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation Program (LSAMP), Summer Bridge Program, Esteem Research Mentoring Program, and Math Spiral. We explain what engineering, science, or math electronic journals and databases would be useful to the students for their research projects or papers. Since 2002, the Libraries conducted about 145 classes for high school and a few middle school students. Typical of these sessions is the one requested by Bruk Berhane in 2009 for twenty-seven Gear Up participants. Mr. Berhane's main goal was for these high school students to find literature related to future college choices based on career options with description of education/training, job prospects, job responsibilities and salary. We explained the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (www.bls.gov/bls/occupation.htm) and the State of Maryland's Career and Workforce Information (www.dllr.state.md.us/lmi/index.shtml) websites, both good places to start for information on jobs, salary outlook, and employment statistics. We demonstrated several different search strategies using *Masterfile Premier* and *Academic Search Premier,* Ebsco databases common in most public and academic libraries, respectively.

Engineering & Physical Science Library (EPSL) Initiatives

Since EPSL is a US Patent and Trademark Depository Library, several staff members are well-trained and equipped to offer assistance to prospective student inventors. Of the 151 total high school sessions mentioned above, thirty one were related to engineering, science, or patents. (See

Table 3). These included one instruction session in 2008 and two sessions in 2009 for students in the Project Lead the Way Program – Inventor's Camp (see link at: http://www.pltw.org/engineering/Curriculum/Curriculum-high-school.cfm). They were students at Charles H. Flowers and Oxon Hill High Schools, both of which are magnet schools in Prince Georges County, suburbs on the eastern side of the Washington DC metropolitan area. In 2008 the group included a mix of tenth to twelfth graders, but in 2009 we gave one session to ninth and tenth graders and the other to eleventh and twelfth graders.

Date	Name of Class or Program	Number of Classes	K-12 Students
2006-07	Academic Achievement Program	2	36
2007-08	Bridge Program (LSAMP summer program for upcoming Science/Engineering freshmen)	2	41
08/08/08	College of Computer, Mathematics & Physical Sciences pre-freshman Workshop	1	30
07/16/01	College Bound Program	1	12
2002-07	ESTEEM Program	3	33
2008-09	Gear Up Camp Step – Career planning	2	44
10/29/09	Home-Schooled Students	1	1
12/14/04	International Baccalaureate	2	68
06/05/06	Math Spiral Program	1	19
2008-09	Project Lead the Way Inventors Camp	4	50
03/11/04	Richard Montgomery H.S. Latino Students	1	12
2006-07	STAND (Science and Technology Addressing the Need for Diversity)	2	23
06/18/08	Summer Program	1	6
2003-08	Upward Bound Math & Science Program	7	98
07/14/04	Young Scholars Program	1	7

Table 3: High school Classes, UMD Libraries/EPSL 2001-2009

In all of the Inventor's Camp classes, we told the students about patents, what they are, and their importance as well as their function internationally. We showed how to use the United States Patent and Trademark Office free database (http://patft.uspto.gov) with word searching limited to

1976, stressing the importance of using patent classification numbers when doing a comprehensive search for new inventions. We referred them to Jim Miller's Patent and Trademark guide (http://www.lib.umd.edu/guides/patents.html). We briefly showed *Esp@cenet* (http://ep.espacenet.com/) and the German Patent and Trademark Office's *Depatisnet* (http://depatisnet.dpma.de/). We pointed out the advantages and disadvantages of each of these, such as Google Patents http://www.google.com/patents very fast word search, printing and downloading capabilities, but limited subject classification search.

One reason we covered all of these sources was that each pair or team of students had to use a different database in order to find one example of their summer program's project: hovercrafts. These magnet school students were highly motivated to do this exercise, since they could choose their own specific projects related to hovercrafts. To add interest to the class, the EPSL instructors used a method improving on the use of electronic "Clickers" to gauge student understanding of the class [We handed out laser pointer pens for the students to aim at one or more of four large squares on the screen, to choose the proper answer(s) to a question about patents posed in the main slide title above the four possible answer squares].

Reflecting the Libraries' growing interest in home-schooled students, in 2009 EPSL librarians explained Electrical and Computer Engineering resources to a middle school home-schooled young man and his mother. He needed help with a project that required detailed assistance with scholarly journals and with descriptive diagrams that can be found in the various patent databases such as USPTO (http://patft.uspto.gov) and Esp@cenet (http://ep.espacenet.com). The quality and intensity of this instruction was even more than what we typically give to new ECE graduate students at orientation time.

Other University of Maryland Ventures and How UM Libraries Participate

Maryland Day takes place on the last Saturday of April, 10AM-4PM, on the campus of the University of Maryland in College Park every year. Since its inception by President Dr. Mote about ten years ago, it has been a great success with upwards of 75,000 people, many young people, attending. It has activities and tents set up all over campus with the finale a red-white University of Maryland football practice game at 4PM at the football stadium. The UM Libraries took the initiative early to secure the services of Bob the Vid-Tec, a very popular Maryland Public Television children's show host for a number of years. In a very large tent on the Mall halfway between the McKeldin (main) Library and the Main Administrative Building, he has entertained these goggle-eyed kids (as well as adults, too) with his magic and mastery.

Library participation in Maryland Day has included a tent featuring the statewide online reference "AskUsNow!"(QuestionPoint), videos shown all day at the Nonprint Media Center, and a hands-on "how to make a book"- a surprisingly well attended event in a time of everything going electronic. The impact that this entire Maryland Day makes on potential future Terps as well as the nearby community is obviously huge. Being a state university and therefore open to the public has some drawbacks such as campus safety and competition for scarce services and resources. But it provides to our nearby citizens immeasurable resources, some of them unique. This is supported by a 2003 *Journal of Academic Librarianship* article by Nancy Courtney involving a survey of unaffiliated user's access to academic libraries.[20]

Another event that the UM Libraries have had much input into is "History Day" sponsored by the Special Collections Division at the University of Maryland Libraries. This division is affiliated with the state-wide active History Day group, Maryland History and Culture Collaborative. It also has been active with the annual June national finals of History day held on the UM Campus. One middle school brought 40 students to its December History Day sessions in 2003 and 2004. Two "History Day Resources in Special Collections at the University of Maryland Libraries" websites were: "History Day 2005: Communication in History: The Key to Understanding" http://www.lib.umd.edu/mdrm/historyday/2005/) and "History Day 2004: Exploration, Encounter, Exchange in History" (http://www.lib.umd.edu/mdrm/historyday/2004/). The Special Collections Division's Maryland History and Culture Team has continued to reach out to History Day students; see for example its 2008 Workplan at http://www.lib.umd.edu/CLMD/SpecColl/mdhist/workplan.html/ .

Conclusion

All colleges/universities are participating in many of these same ventures and what we mention in this article is just a small "tip of the iceberg" of these initiatives. But the consensus shown here strongly emphasizes how much impact there already is. This paper hopefully will inspire more academic libraries to increase their efforts to help recruit future students. This will be especially significant as the pool of available high school-aged students noticeably shrinks in upcoming years, when the children of Boomers complete their education. In addition, the direct competition of online schools will cut significant slices out of the recruitment pie. For engineering librarians especially, the upcoming recruitment challenge is indicated by a report released in September 2009 by the National Academy of Engineering that discusses the radical changes K-12 engineering education will undergo to adjust to the times we are in now.[21]

Final note: His Airness refers to Michael Jordan of the University of North Carolina (UNC), Tinchie is Angela Tincher, All American softball player at Virginia Tech[22], Kitchen is the name that a famous US PGA championship golfer gave to Stewart Cink, winner of the 2009 British (Golf) Open[23], Skeets is Renaldo Nehemiah, past track and field star at the University of Maryland[24], and Babsie is one of the author's sisters - who won an academic scholarship to Wake Forest University.

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