Fifteen Campuses, One Librarian

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Introduction

Relay Graduate School of Education, an accredited national nonprofit institution of higher education, currently operates 15 campuses and serves school leaders in 24 U.S. states and the District of Columbia, reaching over 3,000 educators.

Relay has only a single librarian in charge of everything from cataloging to electronic resource management to reference to outreach to instruction. This poster explains the systems, strategies, and tools the Relay librarian uses to serve all campuses without negatively affecting the user experience of patrons or stretching the librarian’s workload beyond capacity. While each of the individual ideas in this poster are not revolutionary on their own, together they provide a picture of how a solo librarian can effectively and efficiently serve such a widespread institution.

Collections Management

- **Primarily Virtual Library**: An electronic-first collection development policy ensures that patrons at all campuses have immediate access to materials. Further, e-books are only purchased if an unlimited number of users may access the titles at one time.
- **Demand-Driven Acquisition**: A large DDA e-book program allows patrons to access more resources more quickly, reduces the amount of money the library spends on e-books, and minimizes time the library needs to spend on collection development.
- **Discovery System**: The discovery system Summon is the primary access point for the library; this makes it easier for patrons to find resources. Electronic holdings (for both books and journals) are updated automatically in Summon, saving the librarian time.
- **Small Reference Collections**: The main physical collection is located at the NYC campus; books are mailed out as needed. Most other campuses have small collections containing the 100 most frequently requested titles. These small collections are managed by local staff.
- **Shelf-Ready Materials**: Purchasing shelf-ready, pre-cataloged physical materials reduces the workload for the librarian and allows patrons to access materials more quickly.

Reference/Instruction

- **Chat**: AskAcademic, a 24/7 chat reference cooperative, is affordable and allows students in all time zones to get instant help.
- **Email**: Zendesk, an email ticketing system, allows reference requests to be easily tracked and efficiently responded to.
- **Video**: Zoom, a video chat system, allows the librarian to communicate with both individuals and entire classrooms.
- **Curriculum**: Curriculum at Relay is centrally designed, which means the librarian has to work with fewer people to integrate information literacy skills into the curriculum.

Marketing/Outreach

- **Newsletters**: Newsletters sent to faculty, staff, and graduate students are targeted to the department rather than the campus, allowing for efficient but effective marketing.
- **Local Staff**: As students know their local staff far better than their distance librarian, regular collaboration and communication with local faculty and staff is vital to ensure that students are aware of library resources.
- **LMS**: All students are enrolled in a single, non-credit, library "course" from which they can search the library. A link to this course appears in all other courses.