Breaking the Glass Walls: Outreach to a Hybrid Masters Program

Gast Business Library
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The Broad College of Business offers a Master of Science in Supply Chain Management (MSSCM) aimed at students who work full time in various professional settings. This two-year academic program is unique in that it offers a nontraditional blend of "in-residency classes" and e-learning segments.

- Students participate in eight week-long, semester-based online courses or modules.
- Students meet on campus four times during their two-year academic program, for three days each.
- Students have access to the full suite of MSU Libraries' electronic resources while enrolled.

Gast Business Librarians worked with the Director of the MSSCM program to identify areas of need for students as well as opportunities for librarians to speak with students about available resources.

INTRODUCTORY SESSION (New Cohort)
- 15-minutes immediately following lunch.
- Topics include the Gast Business Library's website, electronic resources list, off-campus access to these resources, the Supply Chain Management research guide (LibGuide), and the library's 24/7 help line.
- Handout provides links to useful websites and librarian contact information.

ADVANCED SESSION (Returning Cohorts)
- Students have either just started their capstone project or are in the midst of their research.
- 20-25 minutes
- Provide a quick review of the library website, mainly what the URL is and why it is good to know.
- Topics focus on specific databases the students might find useful in their research: IBISWorld, ABI/Inform, Business Source Complete, and Panjiva.

COMMON STICKING POINT
Uncertainty about which databases to use and not being able to find anything.

RESPONSE/SOLUTION
Expand on keyword and research topic formation. Provide a short slide deck covering the databases demonstrated.

"The students really found value in your presentation." —MSSCM Assistant Director

Hidden Barrier to Accessing Library Resources

Students reported being unable to access research databases while completing coursework. Upon investigation, it was determined that these students had delayed their completion of their final capstone project. While they were not enrolled in a credit-bearing class they also had not turned in their final project or graduated so were stuck in limbo.

- Access to electronic resources is limited to currently-enrolled students.
- Students are encouraged to stay on schedule with their research.
- Students are reminded about the loss of access upon reaching the end of the MSSCM program, regardless of graduation postponement.

Outreach

TUTORIALS
Students in class asked about the use of Google Scholar.
- Discussed the potential benefits and disadvantages of using Google Scholar.
- Created a short recording showing how to set up Google Scholar with MSU’s full-text link resolver.

CHAT SERVICE
Chat is available weekdays, 9am to 5pm.
- Implemented on the Gast Business Library website in the Fall 2017 semester.
- Provides a way for distance business students to access research assistance without needing to visit the library.

Future Goals

EXPANDED CHAT SERVICE HOURS
Chat is currently staffed until 5pm on the weekdays. This is limiting for MSSCM students who are often working full time during business hours & completing coursework at other times.
- The newness of chat & the current staffing limits our availability for expansion at this time.
- Our goals are to market the chat service more heavily & expand our hours of chat service operation once staffing has been added.

EXPANDED CLASSROOM TIME
We would love to have more opportunities to meet with students & discuss research.
- Ideas include a longer, more traditional information literacy session with MSSCM students, research workshops, & research drop-in sessions with students.

NEW TUTORIALS ON VARIOUS TOPICS
Creation of online, self-paced, tutorials is a major area of needed growth for the Gast Business Library.
- Potential topics: Keyword creation, searching in various databases, company and industry research, & use of specific databases like Panjiva.