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Get Them in the Door

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Abstract

If blowout sales bring crazed shoppers to department stores on Black Friday and the perfect 75° day draws people outside to enjoy the fresh air, then what brings the students to the library? With countless books, journals, and videos available at the click of a button, it might be easy or obvious to suppose that the library building would be an empty space gathering dust. It might be surprising, but quite the opposite is true. What makes a college library appealing? How can the academic library, as a place, continue to be important to the life of campus? [*excerpt*]

Keywords

Musselman Library, Gettysburg College, Reference Intern, Academic Library

Disciplines

Library and Information Science

Comments

The Interns at Gettysburg College's Musselman Library captured their internship experiences since the spring of 2011. Over time the blog has featured Fortenbaugh, Smith, and Holley interns. They shared updates on semester long projects, responded to blogging prompts, and documented their individual intern experience.

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Get them in the door

December 4, 2013

By: Sarah Myers

If blowout sales bring crazed shoppers to department stores on Black Friday and the perfect 75° day draws people outside to enjoy the fresh air, then *what* brings the students to the library? With countless books, journals, and videos available at the click of a button, it might be easy or obvious to suppose that the library building would be an empty space gathering dust. It might be surprising, but quite the opposite is true. What makes a college library appealing? How can the academic library, as a place, continue to be important to the life of campus?

Although plenty of students may freely come to the library for a multitude of reasons, there are plenty who might not willingly stop by without a good reason or incentive. On an academic campus, no department has all the resources or man power they may need or desire. Libraries can increase the opportunities for attracting students by having **campus partners**. Through partnerships, the word can be spread more effectively, reach more students, and meet diverse needs.

For example:

I can imagine teaming with **career services** to offer job searching workshops. In a one hour session, a member from the Center for Career Development and a librarian could help showcase the wealth of sources each entity can offer. For example, the library has the resources to help upperclassmen write the perfect resume, CV, or cover letter, while the career center has the expertise to perfect it in order to help you obtain the perfect job. Likewise, underclassmen can utilize resources about choosing the right career path and searching for internships.

Another learning opportunity could be found in hosting wellness workshops, and possibly partnering with the **health center**. Yoga, Pilates, Zumba, tai chi, or any number of fitness routines could be paired with a short conversation or discussion on how to find more library resources. The library could provide the space for the instruction, and also casually feature relevant health, nutrition, and fitness resources found at the library. The library offers everything from current yoga journals to nutritional books to fitness DVDs. The

activity would be fun and utilize library resources. Students would likely be surprised at the wealth of tools available to them that are not just class related.

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How about partnering with **Residence Life** to offer any number of library/resource related hall programs to students in the residence halls? The librarian can bring the library to the residence hall through an interactive presentation or host an information literacy game about finding sources, plagiarism, or a zillion other specific topics related to researching and library resources. How about showing off how to access the hidden gems of the library—all the recreational ebook, DVD, and music collections?

Finally and purely for fun, the library could partner with **clubs and organizations** to host any number of experiences that encourage students, community members, professors, and others to come in the doors. These fun activities allow students to interact with librarians and come to the library with an informal purpose, yet through this, hopefully students will feel more comfortable in the space, learn to be familiar with the faces found in the library, and utilize the help of librarians more frequently. This week at Gettysburg, the library is host to a worthwhile campus event. All this week (12/2 to 12/6/13), the brothers of Sigma Nu have been selling hot chocolate and cookies on the main floor of the library from 7-11 PM. A tasty study break during the always-busy last week of classes benefits the Helping Hands organization.

College libraries are meant for acquiring knowledge, but this is not restricted to academic or curriculum based learning. Libraries are scholarly, recreational, and social spaces that meet the diverse needs of users. Just as the library building is used to meet these varied needs, so too can library programming. Through partnerships across campus and engaging all aspects of the campus community, the library, its staff, and its resources will be more utilized, relevant, and familiar.

****Note**** All of the resources featured above can be found at Musselman Library in [MUSCAT](#).

<http://blogging.musselmanlibrary.org/2013/12/>