Hot Topics in Community College Librarianship

ALA Midwinter Conference, Denver, CO   January 24, 2009

More than 40 librarians gathered for the Saturday afternoon discussion group. In addition to librarians in attendance, 2 representatives from a library vendor were also present.   State budget issues were on everyone's minds, but other "hot" topics came to the forefront for discussion in small groups. Topics included:

--Information literacy

--Information commons

--Embedded librarians

-- Standards/Accreditation/Assessment/Measurement

--Outreach

--Distance Education (including blended/hybrid course) Issues

--Promoting faculty involvement

-- Renovations

--Budget issues and challenges (growing student body, more demands, less $$, joint-use facilities)

--Media Literacy

--Staffing

The "hottest" of the topics seemed to center around Information Literacy, Standards/Accreditation/Assessment/Measurement, Distance Education, Involving Faculty, and Budget Issues and Challenges. The following are summaries of notes from each group. Thanks to the note takers from each table.

Accreditation/Standards/Assessment, etc.

Representatives from North Central, SACS, Western States. New standards for accreditation are focused on outcomes which are difficult to measure in libraries. However, the task is ours to define and prove. Q.E.P.'s are outcomes-based, an issue that each institution must work on. Librarians must be in on the Q.E.P. planning sessions and create programs to support Q.E. P.'s.

<u>Budget Challenges & Issues</u>

Reports from states (representatives in group): **Florida**, 25% budget cuts for public libraries, 12% cuts for Comm. Coll. **Ohio**—deficit projected for next biennium.   **Georgia**, some (higher ed.) institutions have been hit harder than others. **Colorado**, budgets getting tighter and tighter, 10% cut ordered by governor.

There was also discussion of e-books vs. print, is it a good investment of funds? Some libraries do not seem to have much use by students of e-books. Access is key. Arapahoe CC has e-books integrated in catalog through AquaBrowser.

<u>Information Literacy</u>

Read CJCLS list.

 What level of info. literacy? Palo Alto has: Information Resources Certificate, 7 classes, free Continuing Ed. Credit, introduction to Library, Databases, MLA, APA, Web search, Info. evaluation. Instructors can schedule a BI class, also available online (students take a quiz). No quiz in face-to-face. Palo Alto enrollment 8,000. Faculty offer extra credit for certificate completion. Some discussion of problem of babysitting for absent faculty. Palo Alto requires professor presence. They offer desktop instruction for faculty, face-to-face, one-on-one with librarian.

Faculty know their discipline but they don't know all library has to offer to support the discipline. Outreach to public—public can attend the courses.

Distance Learning—possibly create position to deal with distance ed., produce online content.

Vendor representative (Demco) talked about training issues. Their training is task oriented, based on marketing research, and is face-to-face.

Northampton CC (?) worked to get faculty involved. They wrote a grant for support to assess information literacy. Faculty members now advertise the Info. Lit. program to other faculty members. Another CC (?) has 10 Info. Lit. classes for "at risk" students. Total of 70 classes, 2 reference librarians. Online tutorials requested by faculty for their online students.

Another group also addressed information literacy, particularly in the online environment. Bucks Co. CC developing web tutorials.   Cuesta College is migrating workbook from PDF to interactive print to online. CA consortium pushing open access textbooks.

Bucks Co. CC & Oakton CC offering >12 credits free to recently laid off workers.

2nd part of this discussion

John Berry, past ALA president, spoke about the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and the 21st Century Skills program. There is an Eluminate group. A matrix of skills needed and how to address

them. Various literacies are included: Information, Media, Financial. Other skills to be developed are: creativity, innovation, critical thinking, problem solving, life & career skills, health literacy, science & number literacy, etc. He said this was "traditional, transitional, transformative." This grew out of a P-21 initiative. Idea is to use best practices, audience is educators, librarians, leadership, business. There will be a Conference Within a Conference at ALA Annual in Chicago—workforce development and innovation in Community College Libraries.

<u>Learning Commons</u>

One CC had money from a technology fee. Space came from re-purposing audiovisual area.   Issues as part of the LC--Tutoring department, does it use or not? Are librarians going to be part of LC?

Embedded Librarian/Distance Ed/Faculty Relations Group

Part I

-For blended (distance and on-campus) classes, faculty are more hesitant to use embedded librarians because they're protective of hours they have in person with their students

- There are still problems recruiting faculty members to even teach distance ed classes, let alone work with the library

-Talked about the "road of least resistance"—working with faculty you already have a good relationship with, getting one or two to buy into embedded librarian idea, and then other faculty will hopefully follow

-Buy-in from the campus as a whole also helps—faculty, administrators, etc. There is the problem of faculty already feeling they have too much to cover in their subject lesson plans—therefore they are hesitant to use instruction or embedded librarian services, thinking it will cut too much into class time

-Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools lists information literacy competency as a standard of excellence

-One school sets up two part sessions—Part 1, librarians come to the class, then in Part II, students come to the library to start on research with professor supervision

-The American Association of Community College (AACC) has a position statement on information literacy may be helpful in getting an information literacy program off the ground. You can find it here: http://webadmin.aacc.nche.edu/About/Positions/Pages/ps05052008.aspx

-People can meet the standards above differently—for instance different departments have to say how they will cover standards

- Outreach to faculty is important. One person described how his school has a position that just coordinates outreach, while others do it the more traditional way with different librarians being liaisons to different subject areas.

-Learning commons can facilitate instructional services at some colleges—Harrisburg Area Community College as example

Part II of discussion

-Discussed how distance ed programs are sometimes "growing in a vacuum" separate from other college services

-Some campuses are using distance ed programs to drive up enrollment without giving students the same level of service as on-campus students can enjoy

- Difficulty of actually getting to know distance ed faculty, especially adjuncts who live and work in other areas and don't often come to campus

-Mention of 24/7 Librarian service from Tutor.com

-Marketing things to faculty is important, showing them what the library has. Sometimes just showing teaching faculty how to use resources is better than nothing because they can at least be encouraged to get their students to use the resources.

- Trying to hit up new faculty is important, letting them know what library resources are available

- Two methods of getting information literacy more embedded were briefly discussed:

    A. Making some kind of concept map that illustrates the relationship between information literacy standards and a particular critical thinking model
    B. Working with an assessment committee to get people on board with critical thinking

-More problems working with some departments. For instance, nursing students need critical thinking skills on a day-to-day basis for their jobs, but nursing faculty sometimes sees the point of this quickly, sometimes they don't

-It takes time to do tutorials for distance students, and many community colleges don't have time do their own. We mentioned TILT (http://tilt.lib.utsystem.edu/) and Research Tutor (http://infotutor.sdsu.edu/icdev/htdocs/index.html)