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The Embedded Library: Beyond the Course Connection

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Several hundred articles have been published in the last few years on the role of the "embedded librarian" and the nature of "embedded librarianship" as well as books on the subject, e.g. *Embedded Librarianship: What Every Academic Librarian Should Know* (Daughtery & Russo, 2013). "The Art and Environment of Embedded Librarianship" (Saunders & Taylor, 2014) is a good example of an article examining the librarian's role in a specific course. "Embedded librarianship" has been established as a subject heading in Library and Information Science Abstracts.

With few exceptions, the pertinent literature focuses on the opportunities librarians have to collaborate more fully with students and instructors in providing course-related information guidance. This collaboration can be implemented in all course environments: courses taught completely online, hybrid courses, and traditional face-to-face classes. Embedded librarianship has clearly brought a new dynamic to library instruction and the literature supports the assertion that a robust, proactive embedded librarian approach can enhance student information literacy.

Representative examples of recent articles on embedded librarianship are "Virtually Embedded : The Librarian in an Online Environment" (Oberhelman) and "Retaining Students by Embedding Librarians into Undergraduate Research Experiences" (Knapp, Rowland).

A notable exception, however, to understanding the role and advantages of embedded librarianship for library instruction and faculty collaboration has been described recently by Barbara Dewey, Dean of University Libraries and Scholarly Communication at Pennsylvania State University, in her article "Leading the Library by Leading the Campus" (2014). Taking a different approach to the "embedded" concept, she describes how an academic library can position itself to embrace opportunities "for leadership at the institutional level." Building in part on the research done by Beverly Lynch, Dewey's focus is on the "need for library leadership to align the library's activities with areas of strategic importance to the university and articulate this alignment clearly and effectively."

An informal case study of the duPont-Ball Library at Stetson University, DeLand, Florida, illustrates how, particularly during the last ten years, by virtue of persistent and effective leadership, commitment, and hard work, librarians at this institution have moved well beyond the course-related concept of embedded librarianship to transforming a library which is truly embedded in the campus community in several significant arenas.

Stetson University, founded in 1883, is Florida's oldest private university. There are 4,000 students in undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs. The University's main campus in DeLand has an enrollment of more than 2,800 students in the College of Arts and Sciences, School of Business Administration, and School of Music. The College of Law is located in Gulfport, near St. Petersburg.

The University's mission is "to provide an excellent education in a creative community where learning and values meet, and to foster in students the qualities of mind and heart that will prepare them to reach their full potential as informed citizens of local communities and the world." In achieving this mission, the institution is committed to key values. "Stetson values the development of the whole person committed to engaging and building lifelong connections with the larger world through Personal Growth, Intellectual Development, and Global Citizenship. To that end, the University fosters policies, practices, and modes of inquiry to support and explore these values areas" (Stetson).

The Library's mission is to engage "in teaching and learning, collaboration, and innovation through its services, collections, technologies, and facilities" (duPont-Ball Library).

The significant arenas of involvement by the Library now include university policy formulation, faculty governance, collaboration with student development and retention initiatives, campus innovation projects, and leveraging enhanced and expanded university archival resources for curricular support, alumni involvement, and fundraising.

It is possible to trace the first step of many in the process by which the duPont-Ball Library at Stetson became a model of the embedded library beyond the course connection. Many years ago during a library faculty meeting, one of the younger librarians asked these questions: "Why are librarians able to serve on the Faculty Senate only when occasionally elected as an at-large member of the Senate? Why don't we have a regular seat on the Senate to represent the Library faculty?" The only answer to this question was: it has always been that way.

Within a year or two, the Faculty Senate bylaws were amended so that the membership of the Senate included a Library faculty member. This step, considered a small one

at the time, began to open many doors. There was no opposition to this amendment: it was seen as a reasonable and equitable provision, given that librarians at Stetson have had faculty status for more than fifty years. As the visibility of the librarians increased on campus, their responsibilities in faculty governance increased incrementally. From membership on University committees came leadership roles, including chairing important committees, such as Academic Technology, Administrative Computing, Admissions, Professional Development, Tenure and Promotion, University Council on Curriculum and Academic Policy, and other groups.

A key development was a re-structuring of University committee memberships to include, in many cases, a position for a librarian. Although librarians were sometimes included in faculty committee membership, there were no written requirements stipulating committee membership for Library faculty.

A key test case for librarian membership on University committees came during discussions of the membership of the University Tenure and Promotion Committee. More than any other committee, the work of this group deals directly with faculty evaluation and retention. There was substantial reluctance and prolonged discussion by some members of the Senate about establishing a position on the Committee for a librarian.

The librarians vigorously made their case in favor of this change. They forcefully made the point that faculty members on the Committee routinely are asked to judge the merits of publications in academic fields for which they have no specific expertise. It was argued that librarians have a good understanding of the scholarly publishing arena and indeed have subject expertise of their own, beyond librarianship, e.g. advanced degrees is various subject fields.

A compromise was reached which stipulated that a librarian would serve on the Committee but would be non-voting. That restriction was lifted a few years later. The first librarian to serve on the Committee was the Director of the Library. The expertise the librarian can bring to the work of the Committee in helping to evaluate the record of research and publication has become clear to the faculty on the Committee.

A major support for the Library's initiatives related to the University Tenure and Promotion Committee was the fact that as tenured and tenure-track faculty members, the librarians at Stetson are required to meet similar criteria for promotion and tenure as the classroom faculty, including specific requirements for scholarly publication.

Another highly important arena for the embedded library at Stetson is related to annual faculty evaluations. Those evaluations are now tied closely with the revised tenure and promotion criteria and related rubrics. An important goal of the new president and provost of the University was to secure a comprehensive revision of the tenure and promotion policies and criteria and to link them explicitly

with annual faculty evaluations. The Faculty Annual Report is now called the Faculty Annual Review. Implicit in the evaluation process is a post-tenure review element in which tenured associate professors are evaluated on the basis of progress toward meeting the criteria of full professors. Tenured full professors are evaluated on the basis of continuing work and achievement coordinate with the rank of full professor.

The Associate Library Director and Library Director were closely involved in the process by which the tenure and promotion guidelines and the faculty annual evaluation process were substantially revised and elaborated. These administrators made certain, over a period of several years, that the guidelines and evaluation process specifically outlined for librarians were detailed, rigorous, and complementary to the emerging, overall University objectives in this arena. As a consequence, the visibility and credibility of the librarians as faculty colleagues were enhanced.

The University places a high priority on scholarship. The Library faculty's tenure and promotion guidelines have detailed criteria about publication requirements for librarians to achieve promotion and tenure, which are as rigorous as those requirements for other faculty. Accordingly, in addition to enhanced visibility and credibility of the librarians as academic partners, tenure and promotion parity is clearly elaborated.

The Library Director, who now has the title of Dean of the Library and Learning Technologies, an endowed chair position since 2012, has worked closely with the provost in several capacities. The position title change from Director to Dean of the Library underscored the increased responsibilities, scope, and involvement of the Library Dean in the academic administration of the University. An example of this increased involvement is that the Dean, at the request of the provost, has been facilitating an interdisciplinary data analytics program under review by faculty from the College of Arts and Science and the School of Business. The provost is aware that the librarians have demonstrated strong organizational skills and can get projects done quickly and efficiently.

An overarching goal for the University, under the leadership of the president and provost, is an unprecedented increase in enrollment, from 2,100 undergraduates to 3,000. Related to this effort have been significant increases in staffing and resources for helping students succeed at the University. The major division title is indicative of this priority: Campus Life and Student Success. An Assistant Provost for Student Success was hired and a Student Success Center, in existing spaces, was organized. These initiatives are all closely related: increased enrollment, higher retention rates, and successful student success programs.

The result of the Library's is collaboration in this initiative has been remarkable. A $5 million gift was received this year to fund new and expanded space for the Student Success Center, which will be located in the Library. With

the Writing Center, Student Success Center, and 3D printing lab all housed in the Library, the central importance of the Library in supporting students will be even more visible and effective to all constituencies on the campus. The 3D printing lab is a tangible and prominent innovative asset for the University's academic program.

Faculty governance in colleges and universities is a perennial issue for review, debate, and change. One of the librarians was appointed by the provost to serve on a summer task force to develop guiding principles for a new shared governance model.

Directly following this development, the Faculty Senate, through its Committee on Committees, recommended a stronger and more independent role for the Senate and a new Governance Committee with major responsibilities. The Library's Head of Public Services has had a leadership position in this work and has served as Chair of the committee appointed by the Senate. That group is now at the forefront of advancing several major revisions in policy, procedure, and bylaws to accomplish several changes in faculty governance.

The Library has the responsibility to maintain archives for the University. When the Associate Library Director was assigned to take charge of the Archives Department several years ago, there was much work to be done. Staffing, resources, and organization of the archives had been inconsistent and limited. Services provided to the University community from Archives had not been a priority. Space constraints were problematic, as well.

Today, the Archives has achieved a significant role in leveraging its collections for research, alumni engagement, and fundraising. Going well beyond the basic improvements needed for better organization and inventorying of archival resources, the Associate Library Director, who now serves as Dean of the Library, developed a comprehensive digitization project utilizing OCLC's CONTENTdm digital management software. Under the librarian's direction and hands-on involvement, the project was staffed-- and continues to expand resources—by paraprofessional and student staff and vendors.

More than 150,000 items are in the online Digital Archives database. Because these digitized collections include thousands of photographs, University publications, including yearbooks and student newspapers, and other artifacts, the history of the University has never been so readily accessible. The alumni connection to University Archives continues to be enhanced.

Currently, the Library Dean frequently posts items from the Digital Archives on the Library's Facebook account, reaching out both to alumni and current students through social media. Students working on research papers relating to the history of Stetson rely, as never before, on the online Archives collection. The increased interaction between the University and its alumni

via the Digital Archives strengthens the bond between the University and potential alumni donors.

Also, a few years ago the Library Director took an important step in enhancing the Archives collections and operation by negotiating the acquisition of the papers of two prominent alumni, former U.S. Congressman Clay Shaw and U.S. Senator Max Cleland. These acquisitions were tied to carefully developed and successful requests by the Library for additional space and resources for Archives.

This development would not have been possible without the leadership and creativity of the Director and Associate Director. Instead of responding that there was no space for these collections, additional space and renovations were made possible by connecting the offers from Shaw and Cleveland with the need for expansion of the Archives and achieving the expansion and renovated space.

Barbara Dewey's statement on effective library leadership is instructive: "Like the flipped classroom concept, flipped leadership provides the opportunity for librarians at all levels to engage in meaningful leadership roles throughout the campus" (2014). This is precisely what has happened at Stetson, especially in the last ten years.

This statement by one of the librarians concerning their interaction with faculty colleagues is illustrative. "I think that librarian participation in committee work has been invaluable in developing professional relationships with the classroom faculty. Our fellow committee members have a chance to witness the librarian's professionalism, work ethic, depth of knowledge on the University and trends in academia, our eagerness to partner with other faculty, and our devotion to the University."

What are the attributes of the librarians which have helped make the Library embedded so well in the mission and culture of the University? Among them are:

- a sincere interest and commitment to the future of the institution.
- willingness to work hard as colleagues with the faculty on issues of governance, curriculum, special programs and initiatives, and assessment.
- the ability to produce peer-reviewed, published scholarship in librarianship.
- commitment to spend time--on and off-duty-- supporting faculty colleagues in the research and activities important to those colleagues and their students.
- technology skills and continued professional development to keep those skills current.

Two examples of supporting students and faculty members are that several of the librarians serve as judges for the University's annual showcase presentations of undergraduate research projects and assist students and faculty members working on 3D projects conducted in the 3D printing lab in the Library.

The Library received recognition recently by the Florida Library Association. "The Library Innovation Award was presented to the duPont Ball Library and Learning Technologies, Stetson University. Libraries have long provided technology to support academic programs. 3D printers are one more technology resource to add to the mix. Librarians discovered, however, that 3D printing has not yet been well-developed as a true learning technology integrated into curricular assignments. The Stetson Library implemented 3D printing as a curricular tool that supports faculty-developed assignments. The library takes a proactive approach in integrating technologies into engaged classroom learning. It is relatively rare to have direct curricular collaborations of this type. The goal is that the library not just be a repository for technology, but a catalyst for teaching and learning."

The extent to which the Stetson embedded library model can be applied to colleges and universities at which the librarians do not have faculty status is dependent on the attributes cited as well as a strong, persistent determination of the librarians to align themselves as substantially and visibly as possible with the most important goals of the institution.

According to one of the librarians, the way the librarians understand and can relate to the campus culture is a critical component for success. Also, if the president and chief academic officer of the institution "believe in libraries and librarians and what librarian can bring to the table," the opportunity for enhancement of the library's role on campus is possible and provides a clear way forward.

A signal recognition of how successfully the Library has become embedded in the campus community, in particular on issues of overall strategic priorities, budgeting, and long-range planning, was the appointment of the Library Director, following her retirement as a librarian, to the Board of Trustees of the University. The importance of the Library in the present and, indeed the future, of the University has become an operational reality.

Dewey's advice on how a truly embedded library can continue to play a key role in the University, well beyond support for course instruction and learning, relates to purposefulness: "The notion of overt purposefulness is a very appropriate and necessary strategy for embedding library deans, directors, and librarians in the central psyche of university administration…."

At Stetson, the leadership roles which have been achieved by the Library will serve the University well for years to come.

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