TITLE
Challenging the Traditional Library to Support Distance Education

Distance education is challenging academic libraries to change the way in which they support the learning environment of students. Traditional library resources and services are no longer acceptable for the distance learner. Special attention needs to be focused on making sure resources and services are available 24/7, and libraries need to facilitate the process by providing a seamless environment of support for the online user and the instructor. Services includes electronic reserves, virtual reference, delivery services, remote authentication, online tutorials, dynamic approaches to collection development, and electronic reading rooms. Key to success of any program support is collaboration between instructional faculty and librarians.

At Slippery Rock University librarians and faculty have worked closely to develop library services for students in the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program, now considered a model for other university distance programs. Located in northwestern Pennsylvania, Slippery Rock University continues to meet the nursing shortage crisis with innovative programs for undergraduate and graduate nursing students. Its traditional nursing program evolved into a totally online degree, beginning with the first online course in the fall of 1999. By the fall of 2000 the entire program was online. Now in its third year there are currently ninety-five students enrolled. Library support evolved in the process. With the advent of the online courses, the library liaison and the electronic resources librarian began meeting regularly with two nursing faculty to address unmet and emergent needs. Current efforts include working with vendors to have needed books available electronically, customizing online tutorials, replacing print journals with ejournals, and improving student/librarian interaction.

Participants will learn about special considerations regarding library services for distributed education and how to effectively collaborate with teaching faculty to support the distance learner.

CONTENT SUMMARY

Library services that were developed for one university program will be discussed as well as the impact this model program has had on other departments. Resources, services, and collaboration with instructional faculty are the focus. Presenter will discuss needed library support and how to provide it. Topics include the following:

- Authentication – remote access options, database license agreements, maintenance

- Databases – trials, usage statistics and assessment, considerations for low-end hardware

- Ejournals – cancellation of print, password problems

- Electronic Reading Rooms – browsing nursing journal collection, durable urls

- Ebooks – work with vendors, budget shift, purchase or provide access to latest edition

- Electronic Reserves – software, procedures, problems

- Book/Journal Delivery Service – policies and procedures, online forms, delivery options, budgeting

- Instruction – online tutorials, email, live instruction

- Reference Service – email, 800 number, live chat, 24/7, contacts

- Technical Support – FAQs, product and access contacts

- Communication – working lunches, web site, online guides, virtual library tour

A number of factors were involved in providing these services to students. Regular contact between librarians and instructional faculty was critical in understanding the needs and providing appropriate access. Instruction is currently delivered via BlackBoard and links lead students directly to library resources and services. To more fully understand the implications for students a librarian is enrolled as a distance education student and able to participate in discussion boards. Library faculty provides support in person and through the web, phone, mail, and fax. The collaboration with the Nursing Department has become a model on campus for other distance education initiatives.

Presentation experience
The presenter is the electronic resource librarian at Slippery Rock University and also facilitates distance education initiatives.

Society of Information Technology and Teacher Education Conference, Albuquerque, NM - March 2003, "Are Teacher Candidates Information Fluent: Assessment and Instruction Strategies for Identifying Strengths and Needs" Co-presenter.

Computers In Library Conference, Washington, DC – March 15, 2000 "Juggling Electronic Resources" Co-presenter