CUMU Libraries and Their Communities
Initiatives in Service and Outreach

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Abstract

• All university and college libraries have as their core missions serving the students, faculty and staff of their institutions; nevertheless, the great majority also serve to a varying degree unaffiliated users from the local community.
• While historically there has been periods of both openness to and wariness of the community at academic libraries, today libraries at metropolitan and urban universities are increasingly committed to assist their respective communities in the intellectual and cultural development of the citizenry through the development and provision of library services, programs and partnerships.
• This presentation reports on a study of libraries at the member institutions of the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities that identifies services offered to the community.
University of Arkansas at Little Rock

- Metropolitan University
- Enrollment of 13,000+ Students
  - Nontraditional
  - Commuters
  - Online students
  - 1st generation college students
- Carnegie Doctoral/Research University
Library Community Users

• “Individuals who have no affiliation with the institution as students, faculty, alumni or members of the governing board and individuals affiliated with an institution through a consortium agreement for reciprocal borrowing” (Russell, 1992)

• “Just about anyone who is *not* affiliated with the college or university as students, staff and faculty” (Wilson, 2005).
Existing Surveys

• 1964 ACRL survey of 1100 libraries (Josey, 1967)
  – 94% provided access to building
  – 85% provided borrowing privileges

• 1989 survey of 26 urban libraries (Russell, 1992)
  – 94% provided access to building
  – 83% provided borrowing privileges

• 2001 survey of 814 academic libraries (Courtney, 2003)
  – 96% provided access to building
  – 77% provided borrowing privileges
CUMU Library Survey

• Survey sent to 65 library deans/directors at U.S. CUMU member institutions
  – Fall 2011
  – Web-based Survey Monkey survey
  – Short, 13 questions (maximum)
  – 3 e-mail requests for participation
  – 39 participants (60% response rate)
CUMU Survey Participants

• Institution Affiliation
  – Public – 94.9 %
  – Private – 5.1%

• Highest Degree Offered
  – Baccalaureate 2.6%
  – Masters – 34.2%
  – Doctoral – 63.2%

• Student Enrollment
  – 5000 or less – 18.4%
  – 5001-20,000 – 55.3%
  – 20,000 or more – 26.3%
Computer Access for Community Users

- Library catalog and databases: 100.0%
- Internet from library computers: 91.4%
- Word processing and/or other software: 68.6%
- Wireless for personal laptops/mobile devices: 57.1%
How Community Users Are Provided Computer Access

- No authentication required: 42.9%
- General guest logon provided: 25.7%
- Individual user logon required: 31.4%
Goal of Charges for Community Users

- No fees are charged: 47.1%
- Partial cost recovery: 35.3%
- Cost recovery: 11.8%
- Limit use: 8.8%
Reasons for Providing Services to Community Users

- Community relations: 94.6%
- Tax-supported, public or state institution: 89.2%
- Federal depository status: 48.6%
- Membership in consortium: 45.9%
- Library has unique collections: 45.9%
- Recruitment of new students: 43.2%
- Inadequate public library: 13.5%
Potential Benefits to Institution of Offering of Services

- More likely to recommend the library to others
- More likely to attend or encourage others to attend your university
- More likely to donate money to the library or university
- More willing to support legislation to aid higher education

[Chart showing percentages for 'Yes', 'No', and 'Not Sure' for each benefit]
Observed Benefits

- Increased building and collection use
- Increased “Friends” enrollment and event attendance
- Significant archive donated due to public accessibility
- National Library of Medicine EnHIP grant received
- High school use has boosted applications/enrollment
- Contributions to workforce and economic development has increased library supporters
- Good public relations and improved community contacts
Observed Costs

- Loss of materials
- Competition with students for space and resources
- Requirements of staff time
- Requirements of computer maintenance
- “Undesirable” users and behavior
  - Increased costs of security
  - Increased costs of cleaning
Conclusions

• CUMU institutions overwhelmingly provide library services to members of the community
• Services are generally provided at little or no cost to the user
• CUMU institutions perceive the provision of services to be an obligation, opportunity and source of potential benefits
• Measurable benefits and costs exist but are generally small
References

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