

**The University of Iowa Libraries**

**Iowa Framework  
for Liaisons/Subject Librarians**

**Prefatory comments**

EXCO has approved the attached framework as a guide and toolkit for librarians who serve as liaisons to academic departments, colleges and programs to take effect for the 2010 evaluation year. Liaisons, whether for collection management, reference/instruction or both, and those who supervise them (chiefly Linda Walton, Kathy Magarrell and Ed Shreeves) should use the framework as a guide in identifying priorities and specifying activities for 2010 workplans. We should emphasize that we do not expect each liaison to show accomplishments annually in each of the more than 30 items listed in this framework. You and your supervisor as always should agree on priorities based on both your individual and departmental goals and the strategic goals of the library as a whole, while keeping in mind that this document articulates a range of activities seen as appropriate to a liaison.

We also recognize that liaison responsibilities for some subjects are divided between two and occasionally more people. In an ideal world we would like to see the duties combined in one person and hope to move in that direction as much as possible, but our current organization and staffing levels make this impossible at present. It is therefore important for those sharing liaison duties to communicate with one another to ensure that all aspects of the job are covered. Some, such as the tasks enumerated under scholarly communication, might be shared, while in other cases the responsibility could fall entirely to one person. Effective communication is therefore vital.

This document also articulates for the first time some new expectations for liaisons, particularly in the section on scholarly communication. During this season's annual review and revision of job descriptions, liaisons should revise their own job descriptions with the expectations outlined in this document in mind. The framework is not intended for use during the evaluation process for 2008-2009.

**Introduction to the Iowa Framework  
for Liaisons/Subject Librarians  
April 2, 2009**

Academic libraries continue to evolve and become more complex. Nowhere is this reflected more than in the changing and expanding roles of librarians who have liaison responsibilities for various academic colleges, departments, and programs. This framework is intended to serve as a “checklist” to help articulate both ongoing and new roles and responsibilities performed by these librarians and is intended to reflect the kinds of activities that match the Libraries’ strategic plan. In developing this framework for the University of Iowa Libraries, we acknowledge with appreciation the document and concepts on which it is based, developed at the University of Minnesota.

**NOTES**

- These expectations apply to librarians in Collection Management, Research & Instructional Services, Branch Libraries, the Hardin Library for the Health Sciences, and a few reporting to other supervisors. Some elements may be applicable to librarians in other units who also work directly with faculty and academic units.
- A 1:1 relationship (1 librarian for each subject area who performs the full range of duties described below) is desirable but is not feasible given the present staffing levels and assignments. This fact suggests a need to review assignments over time and determine where changes can and should be made.
- There may be areas where a team approach will work better than an individual approach to departmental support, even if a single librarian has responsibility. This is especially true for large and complex departments and colleges. As noted, where duties are shared, a team approach is essential.

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LIAISONS

**Overall Liaison Activities**

1. Actively engage with faculty, students, and staff in assigned areas, developing strong working relationships.
2. Promote current services and collections.
3. Analyze trends in departmental teaching and research programs, stay abreast of scholarship in the disciplines themselves, and use this knowledge to respond to departmental needs.
4. Provide information on a range of library issues, including scholarly communication.
5. Support the development of the emerging digital repository (IROnline) and new online tools, and the integration of information literacy skills into the curriculum.
6. Seek opportunities to collaborate and establish partnerships with departments, Examples include:
  - Collaboration with data producers and repository contributors to develop cost-effective and efficient strategies for managing data and information.
  - Partnering with researchers in projects or grants.
7. Maintain an up-to-date knowledge of relevant University and department curriculum initiatives, keep information literacy program consistent with University curriculum.
8. Work closely with faculty and students to understand their changing workflows and patterns of scholarly communication.
9. Seek participation in departmental, college and campus committees.
10. Attend and present at departmental meetings, seminars, and colloquia.

**Teaching and Learning**

1. Actively engage with faculty and graduate teaching assistants as partners in programmatically integrating information literacy concepts and skills into the curriculum
2. Using sound instructional design practice, develop learning materials and instructional sessions in a variety of formats that teach students to:
  - recognize information needs, create successful search strategies, and evaluate and effectively use information resources in all formats, including archival and other primary materials as well as secondary sources
  - understand the research and scholarly communication patterns of their chosen disciplines
  - understand the economic, social, and legal issues around the use of and access to information
3. Deliver effective instructional sessions as appropriate.

4. Conduct needs assessment as appropriate and selectively measure instructional outcomes in order to ensure effectiveness of instructional initiatives.
5. Develop and manage physical and/or online learning spaces.
6. Identify areas where new online learning and digital tools can place the Libraries into the flow of teaching, learning and research, with particular emphasis on ICON, the University's course management system
7. Actively participate in the development, coordination and integration of online tools in support of teaching, learning and research.

### **Collection Development and Management**

1. Build and manage library collections in assigned subject areas:
  - Systematically selecting material in all formats (print, manuscripts, digital, data sets, fixed and streaming multimedia), to serve the current and future research, teaching, and learning needs of University of Iowa clientele.
  - Building on collections of distinction that may also serve regional, national and international users.
  - Managing collection funds efficiently, effectively and in a timely manner.
2. Strategically assess and make decisions regarding the acquisition, retention and preservation of collections.
3. Discover and recruit institutional scholarly output, research data and other content for inclusion in the University Libraries' digital collections.
4. As opportunities arise, develop and maintain relationships with dealers and donors (of both in-kind and monetary gifts).
5. Work proactively with IT, technical and access services staff on appropriate arrangement, description, cataloging and provision of access to traditional collections and electronic resources, such as *LibGuides*.

### **Scholarly Communication**

1. Educate and inform faculty, graduate students, and campus administrators about scholarly communication issues. Examples include:
  - Helping faculty and graduate students to understand their rights as authors
  - Contributing content to copyright and/or scholarly communication web sites
  - Make faculty and graduate students aware of alternative publication models in their discipline.
  - Advocate for sustainable models of scholarly communication.
  - Assist in the development and creation of tools and services to facilitate scholarly communication.
2. Institutional Repository (IROnline) and Digital Initiatives. Examples include:
  - Help administrators, faculty, and students understand the role of the institutional repository in building and preserving digital collections
  - Work with faculty and departments to promote the institutional repository as a scholarly communication tool

- Assist in content recruitment; Identifying digital resources that require long-term preservation and merit sustained access
- Help to shape the infrastructure in which digital preservation and access can successfully evolve.

### **Reference & Research Services**

1. Actively seek opportunities to provide customized reference and research services, which include:
  - Provide consultations that involve subject or other specialized areas of expertise (e.g., in-depth knowledge of copyright or scholarly communication issues or specific collections);
  - Answer referred questions in all formats (chat, email, phone, desk/in-person) and individual/group consultations;
  - Apply knowledge of how research is conducted in certain disciplines;
  - Support use of citation management products such as *RefWorks* & *Endnote*;
  - Extend services via new and different technologies such as mobile librarian activities, administrative research service, blog creation in partnership with departments, etc.
2. Provide high quality reference and research support on demand by:
  - Provide assistance and one-to-one instruction in finding and evaluating information
  - Provide assistance in accessing library resources and services
  - Provide feedback about user success with resources and services
  - Provide support in using information effectively in all formats
3. Document reference transactions, both at service points and for customized reference transactions, as outlined by the Reference Statistics Plan.
4. Contribute to the identification of user needs and the measurement of outcomes of reference and research services.

**Outreach (external)** - Contribute to the University of Iowa's commitment to serve the citizens of Iowa.

## **Items that might be included in some but not all position descriptions**

### **Management and Supervision**

1. Coordinate overall operational activities of [name of unit or branch library]; facilitating relationships with other groups in the Libraries, evaluating needs and processes, addressing staffing requirements, physical plant needs, and the implementation of policies and procedures.
2. Provide direct supervision of [positions]. In consultation with director or AUL write position descriptions, hire, assign job responsibilities, coach and mentor, conduct performance evaluations, and facilitate staff development and training opportunities.
3. Prepare narrative and statistical reports for [name of unit or branch library] and prepare additional documentation on activities and progress as required. Prepare recommendations and proposals for long range projections in terms of staffing, space and equipment, and collection facility needs.

### **Fund Raising**

1. Identify and monitor relevant government agencies and private foundations for funding opportunities.
2. Identify potential projects/activities for grant funds; prepare and submit grant proposals.
3. Identify potential donors and work with the Libraries Development Office to cultivate donors as appropriate.
4. Seek input from academic department heads and faculty about needs that might be met with external funding