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Assessing Success, One Student at a Time

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Assessing Success, One Student at a Time

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The University of North Florida’s Thomas G. Carpenter Library offers a research consultation service that allows users to schedule one-on-one meetings with a research librarian to discuss their projects. These sessions may consist of a general orientation to library facilities and resources, or may focus on specific research needs. The service has experienced amazing growth since its inception in 2009. The research librarians decided to assess the consultations in large part to decipher why it has grown so significantly, and to ensure that the service remains high quality in the face of growth.

Following a research consultation, we send a six-question survey asking users to identify their grade level, major, impetus for scheduling a consultation, satisfaction with a variety of elements, whether they felt the consultation was useful, and with an additional space for comments. From January through mid-October 2016, we have had 55 completed surveys from 208 users: a 26% response rate.

Results

Changes Made

The team responded to mild criticisms voiced through the survey - concerns we likely would not have been alerted to otherwise. First, a few users did not enjoy meeting in a public location resembling a service point. Now librarians meet users in a more private but open study cubical-type space conveniently located within sight of the main 2nd floor entryway. Second, we adjusted the advance booking requirement so that users only need to book 24 hours before the consultation, rather than 48 hours ahead of time. Additionally, we have expanded modes of meeting with users. Most librarians now offer phone, online, and other campus locations as “meeting” places in addition to the Consultation Station in the library. Offering the choice of a more confidential 1-to-1 consultation should alleviate the concern of discussing sensitive research in public areas.

The Consultations attendance continues to rise in 2016 with a 34% increase over the same time period in 2015.

Methodology

Create Survey
IRB
Consultations
Send Surveys
Compile Stats

Next Steps

Research librarians continue to collect survey responses as we modify and update our research consultation service. Moving forward, we have agreements with certain faculty members to assess student grade data. We hope this data will answer whether there is evidence that research consultation attendance improves project and/or final course grade. Data from one Spring 2016 course show that there appears to be a positive correlation between research consultation attendance and improved scores. We need to collect data from additional courses to make a more accurate argument for impact. We will also work with our institutional research unit to determine whether there is a broad correlation for student grades in relation to those who have attended a research consultation.