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Beyond Individual Relationships: Programmatic Approaches to Outreach and Engagement at UC Santa Barbara Library

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## **Beyond Individual Relationships: Programmatic Approaches to Outreach and Engagement at UC Santa Barbara Library**

Rebecca L. Metzger

### **Introduction**

Over the past 15 years, there has been a proliferation of new academic library positions devoted to outreach, engagement and student success. Libraries are recognising the imperative to position themselves as outward-facing organisations whose purpose is to contribute to the success of their faculty, students and staff. In order to stay competitive for resources, administrators realise they must be able to demonstrate the library's value to the larger college or university mission and strategic goals. The problem is that many of these new outreach and engagement librarian positions have been introduced in an *ad hoc* manner, without touching the library organisational structure or examining its mission, vision or values. By charging lone librarians to lead outreach and engagement initiatives, academic libraries have prioritised individual relationship-building over program development.

In 2009, the University of California Santa Barbara (UCSB) created a position for an Assistant/Associate University Librarian (AUL) for Outreach & Academic Services (later Outreach & Academic Collaboration). By placing outreach at a senior management level, the library signalled a commitment to managing and improving both its external relationships and image. Hired into the position in 2012, I was given staff, budget and the authority to implement events, outreach, communications and partnership programs that advance the library's visibility and impact.

In this chapter, I introduce some of the programmatic approaches implemented at the UCSB Library to build the division of Outreach & Academic Collaboration over the past seven years. I argue that a leadership role dedicated to outreach is essential in harnessing previously invisible relational work toward new and strategic engagement models. Administrators should commit to defining program goals and performance competencies for outreach and engagement work,

and invest in them in order to develop and sustain the relationships that support the reputation of the library. Having recently been tasked with overseeing the UCSB Library's subject liaison program, I then look ahead to imagine how an understanding of relational capital can shape public services more broadly in academic libraries.

### **Relational capital and invisible work**

The business concept of intellectual capital – sometimes called intellectual or intangible assets – has only recently been explored in the library literature (Kostagiolas & Asonitis 2009; Corral & Sriborisutsakul 2010). Intellectual capital captures the aspects of a library that go beyond its financial investments in collections, spaces and services to include the more invisible investments in people, processes, knowledge and technologies (Corral & Sriborisutsakul 2010; Town & Kyrillidou 2013). Relational capital is a type of intellectual capital that encompasses the external relationships developed by an organisation, whether with vendors, customers, partners, stakeholders or professional networks (Corral & Sriborisutsakul 2010; Corral 2014). It is closely related to the concept of human capital, or 'the knowledge, skills, competencies, and creativity that each person who works in a firm or organization has' (Kostagiolas & Asonitis 2009, p. 421). Town and Kyrillidou (2013, p. 12) have argued that libraries have become 'fundamentally relationship organisations'. Libraries spend a large portion of their budgets on human capital, relying on their staff to create and sustain relationships that contribute to the overall success and reputation of the organisation, and yet they don't have good methods for measuring the value of that investment (Kostagiolas & Asonitis 2009; Town 2014; Town 2015; Bracke 2016). In fact, the invisibility of some librarian relational work has contributed to the fragility of positions when libraries have been faced with the need to downsize or redeploy staff (Town 2015).

Marxist and feminist ideas around immaterial labour have been used to explore the cognitive and affective work that librarians are engaged in (Sloniowski 2016; Douglas & Gadsby 2017). As universities increasingly focus on metrics, many librarians perceive that their roles are undervalued, relegated to a support or service function rather than more centrally situated as part of knowledge production (Sloniowski 2016). In particular, the relational and care work that is expected of many academic librarians, and especially of women, to be successful in their jobs – such as teaching, mentoring, coordinating, advocacy and collaboration – is not measured as output and is, therefore, rendered invisible (Sloniowski 2016; Douglas & Gadsby 2017). Libraries inherently value relational work, but we rarely build it into our value systems, whether through our mission statements, strategic planning documents, annual reports, or performance evaluations.

'The failure of library assessment models to account for the relational value of librarian activities is problematic in justifying and incentivizing new strategic activities and understanding the importance of libraries' relationships with users and other stakeholders' (Bracke 2016, p. 135).

In order to elevate relational work, it needs to be named and integrated into the outputs that libraries measure.

### **Subject librarians and the turn toward engagement**

The most obvious category of academic library staffing through which to explore concepts of relational capital is subject librarianship. Subject librarians, or liaison librarians, are typically assigned as a first point-of-contact to work with academic departments and programs on campus, promote library services and provide research and instructional support. Domain and subject expertise is only one factor of liaison librarian success; relationship-building, which takes time, is a contributing factor in the library's overall image as a trusted partner (Bracke 2016; Schlak 2016). Relational or social capital 'provides a useful paradigm for exploring the often amorphous and sometimes invisible nature of the individual relationships that partly constitute a successful liaison program' (Schlak 2016, p. 412). Yet many liaison programs lack the organisation and administrative oversight that would provide a coordinated and consistent approach to managing the relationships that are central to this work (Miller & Pressley 2015).

Only relatively recently have libraries and the literature attempted to characterise the cognitive and affective ('soft') skills that subject librarians deploy in their roles. In two small-scale studies, strong relationships between subject librarians and faculty were shown to be the result of planning, patience, networking, bilateral communication, trust, shared interests and goals, sincerity, flexibility, responsiveness and reciprocity (Schlak 2016; Díaz & Mandernach 2017). Since 2009, libraries at the University of Minnesota, Ohio State University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology, among others, have taken the lead in creating local standardised responsibilities, competencies and best practices for their subject librarians (Williams 2009; Ohio State University Libraries 2012; Horowitz, Crummett & Gabridge 2016). For example, the Ohio State University's (2012) Framework for the Engaged Librarian introduces engagement as one of five core areas of subject librarianship.

Engagement marks a turn away from academic libraries as primarily collections-centric and service-oriented towards the new user-centric role of partner or collaborator (Williams 2009; Gibson & Dixon 2011). The engagement model seeks to position the library mission more broadly within the context of its larger home institution. Competencies of the engaged librarian at the Ohio State University Libraries include effective communication, partnership development, new service development, problem-solving and advocacy (Ohio State University Libraries 2012). Interviews with Association of Research Libraries (ARL) library administrators conducted in 2013 cited these as important skills for the engaged librarian:

'capacity to cultivate trusted relationships with faculty and others, the ability to engage and thrive in the messy and ambiguous, aptitude for systems thinking...and skills including political savvy, analytical and problem-solving skills, program development, conflict fluency, civility, and strong leadership' (Jaguszewski & Williams 2013, p. 14).

Despite the admirable goals of the engagement model, in most cases individual subject librarians are neither hired nor trained for the necessary soft skills, nor are they organisationally positioned to advance the strategic priorities of the library or the university. While a subject librarian may, through their relationships, develop a deep awareness of the needs of several departments and faculty members, those needs may be less-than-fully understood in the context of wider disciplinary needs or the potential for collaborative solutions with broader effects. A key finding from the ARL 2015 Pilot Library Liaison Institute report was that 'librarians tend to be unable to see or imagine the impact of their work in the context of solving larger institutional problems' (Rockenbach et al. 2015, p. 21). Many subject librarians direct their own work; our libraries fail them and our users by not creating the structures that can empower them to move beyond transactional service offerings to scalable and potentially transformational ones (Miller & Pressley 2015; Schlak 2015; Bracke 2016).

### **Outreach librarianship: lofty but vague expectations**

Academic outreach librarianship is relatively new, so the literature is scant and multiple definitions of the role abound. While subject librarians usually liaise exclusively with academic departments and serve faculty as their main target audience, outreach librarians connect with multiple groups, including students, parents, alumni, staff and community members. Results from a 2018 SPEC Kit survey on Outreach and Engagement indicate that outreach librarians at ARL institutions are responsible for engaging with constituents on campus and beyond, designing and implementing events, building partnerships and new initiatives, leading tours and orientation programming, and marketing library services (LeMire et al. 2018).

Competencies for the outreach librarian are completely undeveloped in the literature; this is an area ripe for exploration. One would expect such competencies to heavily emphasise relational work, as outreach librarians by definition create social networks to accomplish their jobs. Qualifications listed in outreach librarian job advertisements posted in the late 2010s point toward someone with strong skills in, among other things: communication, collaboration, marketing, instruction, planning, emotional intelligence, community engagement, navigating culturally diverse environments, user engagement and program development and assessment. Much is expected of outreach librarians, but there are little to no standard training or best practices for this type of role. Furthermore, outreach is often just a portion of someone's job on top of other public services duties, or there is only one librarian tasked with all things outreach.

The Outreach and Engagement SPEC Kit survey revealed that very few academic libraries take a programmatic approach to outreach, as signified by the setting of definitions and goals, as well as the allocation of staffing and budgets for outreach activities (LeMire et al. 2018). Without clear goals or success measures, outreach librarians are often left on their own to determine which activities to initiate, or are put in the position of being reactive to ad hoc requests and opportunities that arise.

## Strategic positioning and library leadership

The literature on social or relational capital as exercised by library leaders is sparse and this is another area that deserves deeper scholarly inquiry. The literature that does exist tends to explore the role of library administrators internally in managing staff development programs, relational networks among staff, organisational climate and change projects (Town 2014; Schlak 2015). The Library Leadership and Management Association (LLAMA 2016) published a set of competencies for library leaders that introduces relationship building as a subsidiary skill under the heading of 'collaboration and partnerships'. Included in the competencies are other cognitive and affective skills that could contribute to engagement and external relational work, such as: communication skills, emotional intelligence, problem solving, and marketing and advocacy.

Library leaders should play an essential role in staying abreast of institutional challenges and priorities, communicating those back to librarians and staff, and resourcing and directing work toward high-impact activities. The kinds of initiatives that serve to position the library strategically within the institution – such as partnering to establish new library spaces and services like learning commons and digital scholarship centres – all involve significant funding and leadership to launch (Cox 2018). The administrator's role in leading change in support of the engagement model is to 'realign the tools and human capital they have at their disposal' (Díaz 2017, p. 656). I believe that the 'engaged library' requires library leaders to create and sustain their own relational capital with key leaders across campus, position their employees appropriately within the organisation to effect change, hire and train librarians for the engagement competencies that we expect them to perform and assess the invisible work that we value, such as relationship building.

The 2012 job posting for my position was unique, setting the stage for a leader to take strategic and programmatic approaches to library outreach:

'Reporting to the University Librarian, the AUL provides administrative and programmatic leadership that shapes and guides the communications, promotion, strategic collaborative relationships, and events advancing the library's visibility and impact across a dynamic community of faculty and student scholars. The AUL is a critical member of the library's leadership and development teams, working closely within the organization and with other campus colleagues to reinforce the critical importance of the library through a comprehensive marketing and advocacy program.'

In my first weeks on the job, my boss arranged introductory meetings for me with deans across campus. Not only was this her way of providing me with starter capital, but it also indicated to her colleagues that the library takes seriously its collaborative role with colleges, departments and offices across campus.

## UCSB Library

### ***Events and exhibitions***

In the seven years since my appointment, I have led the UCSB Library in building several components of the Outreach & Academic Collaboration Division, including a robust events and exhibitions program with a dedicated staff, budget and goals. An Events & Exhibitions Librarian is responsible for defining, creating and implementing an events and exhibitions program that showcases the richness of scholarly and creative work at UCSB, and that connects researchers, instructors, students, librarians and audiences from multiple disciplines in our central campus location to learn, collaborate and engage with ideas. Recently, a Programming & Events Assistant has been added to the staffing portfolio for this program.

Before the program was established, individual librarians or staff would initiate and execute events and exhibitions with no oversight. This situation usually resulted in details falling through the cracks, as no one was paying attention to policies, procedures and best practices. Approaching events and exhibitions in an *ad hoc* manner puts last-minute pressure on staff who have not been informed in advance about a responsibility they might have, such as technology support, digitisation and printing services or re-arrangement of spaces and furniture. More importantly, novice organisers may view the audience as an afterthought, designing a program without input or intent. The Events & Exhibitions Librarian centrally manages a significant budget, but to access that budget, anyone in the library who wants to organise an event or exhibition must work through them to explore questions around goals, target audiences and success measures.

The driving objective for the UCSB Library's Events & Exhibitions program is to collaborate with faculty and students to integrate programming with the curriculum. A prime example of this is UCSB Reads, a program led by the library that brings the campus community together to discuss significant issues of our time through reading and engaging with a common book. Under the management of the Events & Exhibitions Librarian, the number of students assigned the UCSB Reads book as required reading in a course has tripled since we started recording these numbers in 2012. In 2019, 33 courses from 10 different academic departments listed the book on their syllabi, reaching a total of 2,100 students. Additionally, 44% of the 400-person audience at the culminating author talk were students who were assigned extra credit to attend. The work involved in this faculty buy-in requires careful analysis of the course catalogue and departmental websites, partnering with subject librarians, developing a toolkit for faculty involvement and collaborating directly with faculty. Additionally, the library's UCSB Reads programming across campus is co-sponsored or co-organised with academic departments, student organisations and others like UCSB's performing arts, film and multicultural centres. These partnerships are fostered, in part, by involving representatives from these organisations on the book selection committee.

Another example, the Pacific Views: Library Speaker Series, provides an opportunity for UCSB faculty and graduate students from diverse disciplines to speak about their current research,

publications or creative work (the talks are held in the UCSB Library's eighth-floor Pacific View Room, with stunning panoramic views of the ocean and mountains). In preparing for the launch of the series, our Events & Exhibitions Librarian conducted a needs assessment, reaching out and meeting with faculty from across campus to discover how the library can differentiate and add value to what is already happening in their home departments, such as research colloquia or symposia. Needs assessments are an essential part of program development. From the beginning, faculty and graduate students have embraced the opportunity to find broader audiences for their work, and the library collaborates closely with them to ensure their talks are shaped for mixed audiences that include students, faculty, staff and community members.

Events and exhibitions are an important way that members of the campus and community interact with the library. At the UCSB Library, the number of people we reach through events, exhibitions and outreach rivals the number we reach through our instruction program. Events and exhibitions showcase library collections and expertise, act as a gateway to other library services, establish the library as a platform for knowledge creation and distribution, and attract friends and donors. In measuring the success of the program each year, we look not only at attendance numbers, but at new partnerships and relationships that have been cultivated, with the goal of increasing both the number and diversity of partners.

### ***Student success***

In 2015, the UCSB Library transformed its Outreach Librarian position into a new role called Student Success Librarian. The purpose was to align the library's outreach efforts with the mission of the university and to focus our efforts in support of students' academic success. While UCSB had no campus-wide first-year experience or student success centre at the time, the library hoped to effectively position itself to be a part of evolving conversations and initiatives in these areas. Additionally, in 2015 the university was designated a Hispanic Serving Institution, meaning that at least 25% of the student population is Hispanic. The Student Success Librarian's job is to investigate challenges particular to students, especially first-years and those in traditionally underserved populations, and propose library programs to help them develop as early scholars and, ultimately, thrive as members of the UCSB research community. Defining specific goals for the Student Success program enabled us to stop doing some outreach activities that had less obvious ties to academic success, such as hosting flu shots or game nights in the library. The Student Success Librarian has increased the library's interactions, in particular, with the Educational Opportunity Program, Undocumented Student Services, and the Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities office.

The Student Success Librarian is responsible for organising annual meetings with student leaders from Associated Students (undergraduate student government/students' union) and the Graduate Student Association, quarterly student drop-in forums with the University Librarian and a Graduating Students Exit Survey. Results from the annual Graduating Students Exit Survey are shared with deans throughout the university to inform them about students' usage of the library and the services they value. All of these platforms provide the library with

important feedback about student priorities and concerns and, more importantly, the role the library plays in their learning.

One of the UCSB Library's strategic directions is to serve as a forum for students and faculty to share their work and knowledge. Toward this end, the Student Success Librarian coordinates the library's participation in a monthly Graduate Lunch & Learn series and Grad Slam and Undergraduate Slam contests (competitions designed to showcase student research). Recently, the program launched a new Library Award for Undergraduate Research to recognise students who produce a scholarly or creative work that makes expert and sophisticated use of library collections, resources and services. To support students involved in all these activities, the library designed a Presentation Practice Room where students can rehearse, refine and record their oral and multimedia presentations.

Assessment strategies for the Student Success program have evolved over the years, aided by pioneering literature exploring multiple methods for measuring outreach work that go beyond counting attendance numbers (Farrell & Mastel 2016). Surveys for our events and outreach activities seek to explore more information about our audiences and the success of our marketing and program design, asking: 'Have you been to the UCSB Library before?', 'Have you attended a UCSB Library program before?' and 'Did you learn something today?'

### ***Communications and marketing***

Some of the literature posits that what many libraries mean by outreach is really marketing, if marketing is understood as building relationships with users in order to design, deliver and improve valued services (Dempsey 2009; Ford 2009; Singh 2017). The Communications & Marketing Manager at the UCSB Library is responsible for directing a strategic communications plan that incorporates all aspects of library messaging, including publications, public relations, advertising and content for digital signage, social media and the web. They oversee a Graphic Designer as well as occasional freelance writers, video producers and web developers, and work in close collaboration with a Web Services Librarian. It is particularly important for libraries to place the communications role as high up in the organisation as possible, as there are brand management and crisis communications functions that this person may be called upon to perform. The UCSB Library's Communications & Marketing Manager advises administration on the potential public reception of decisions and 'listens' to what is said about the library on social channels and in campus and other publications.

Marketing today is no longer just about delivering superior services, but also unique experiences (Singh 2017). Like engagement, marketing is very much about putting the customer or user at the core of the organisation. Understanding and segmenting our users is an essential role of the UCSB Library Communications & Marketing Manager. The same messages cannot be replicated for faculty, graduate students, undergraduate students and community members, but must be authentically and strategically customised for distinct audiences. One of those audiences is student library assistants. In 2018 the UCSB Library's Communications & Marketing Manager launched a dedicated online Slack channel where student assistants who work in

different departments throughout the library can gather and communicate. The hope for the virtual space is to foster a greater sense of community among library student assistants as well as a greater sense of belonging with the library.

Using data from our e-newsletter platform, website and social media channels helps us understand our audiences and the kind of content they desire, and informs improvements to our communications messages and delivery. For example, by analysing data, the Communications & Marketing Manager was able to learn that content about the UCSB Reads common book program is particularly popular. In response, we launched a 'Sneak Peek' campaign that gives the public an inside view into the selection and planning process that takes place over the entire year leading up to the public portion of the program. The campaign includes social media as well as traditional broadcast elements, such as radio interviews.

Like outreach and subject liaison work, effective communications – especially social media – is all about relationships. Successful social media strategy involves not just pushing out library stories, but partnering to amplify them through likes, follows, retweets and hashtags. Social media actually offers an ideal opportunity to start to measure library relationships, with its built-in insights for tracking interactions. These quantitative indices might be interestingly adapted as measures of relationships that occur with the library outside of social media, whether in digital or physical environments.

### ***Partnerships***

During my tenure, the UCSB Library has invited two partner organisations to operate out of the main library building: the Transfer Student Center and the Center for Innovative Teaching, Research, and Learning. Like many other campuses, there is high demand and competition for space at UCSB, and we are approached often by groups who believe the Library might have extra space for their program or centre. From the beginning, the Library strived for cooperation or collaboration with these centres, rather than mere co-location (Bodolay et al. 2016). Library administration was involved in shaping the founding vision for these two new centres in partnership with the Division of Undergraduate Education. We developed memorandums of understanding (MOUs) to define the library's relationship with each centre, which cover everything from the library's role in governance (librarians sit on the advisory boards) to the logistics of who is responsible for technology and custodial support in the physical spaces. The library develops and delivers joint instruction sessions and workshops with both of the centres, customised for their target audiences. An email listserv was established to foster communication with and between all the UCSB Library's building partners (we also house a café that is run by campus dining services, a police satellite station for the University of California Police Department and an adaptive technology centre that is the result of a partnership with the Disabled Students Program).

Other partnerships range in scale and scope. On campus, the library has partnered with academic departments and research centres to share the cost of subscriptions to library databases, specialised web platforms and data collections. We have partnered with Associated

Students to deploy hand sanitisers and phone-charging stations throughout the library. A new and recent partnership with a locally-based open access monograph publisher is testing the ground for an economically-sustainable, no-fees press in the library. These kinds of projects may have their seed in personal relationships but cannot be realised without committing resources from across the library. All of the partnerships require MOUs outlining roles and responsibilities, which only the University Librarian or designate can sign. As authors from MIT assert in an article re-envisioning their subject liaison program:

‘Most substantive partnerships require cross-unit support from the library, and liaisons who are poised to engage this way will need an efficient and widely agreed on process to identify, vet, commit to, and support ... partnerships’  
(Peterson & Finnie 2018, pp. 26-27).

Relationships can serve as an important gateway to program and service development, but require administrative support, institutional resources and internal collaboration in order to progress.

### **Looking ahead for UCSB Library subject librarians**

My approach as AUL for Outreach & Academic Collaboration was an outside-in approach of bringing marketing principles from my previous career as a public relations and marketing professional into the UCSB Library. I was able to work with dedicated staff to define strategic goals around outreach programs that mapped to library and university goals, direct budgets toward those goals, and measure outcomes in alignment with those goals. Still, the outreach division remained small and, initially, did not intersect with the traditional public services side of the library. Now that my role has evolved to encompass leadership of reference, instruction, access services and subject librarians, I am working from the inside-out to take a more programmatic and engagement-oriented approach in all these areas.

In the next phase, the UCSB Library is organising its subject librarians into a dedicated Research & Engagement Department that brings together aspects of our liaison model with the former Outreach & Academic Collaboration Division. As the AUL overseeing this new department, I want the burden for developing and maintaining relationships to be situated as much as possible in teams. Other academic libraries have moved in the direction of re-organising their subject librarian programs around user groups, disciplines or functions. The University of Guelph was one of the first to restructure their subject librarians into teams:

‘The new model signalled a move from “individual-to-individual” to “program-to-client group” activity. Instead of relying on liaison librarians to push library services through their personal campus networks, programs were developed and targeted at specific user groups’ (D’Elia & Horne 2018, p. 11).

To start at UCSB, we are grouping librarians from across the library and functional areas (Data Curation, Collection Strategies, Research & Engagement, Teaching & Learning, etc.) into disciplinary teams to share information about engagements with faculty, serve as back-up for

each other in supporting them and identify opportunities for cross-departmental service offerings. Given that we need to redistribute subject librarian assignments in support of our reorganisation, the next step will be to identify techniques for success in taking on new liaison roles and transferring relationships or developing new ones. These techniques will form the basis for a toolkit that can aid subject librarians moving into and out of the role in the future, and for setting annual qualitative and quantitative targets to evaluate the program. Some libraries like the University of Miami and University of California, Riverside have initiated structured 'Faculty Conversation' projects as one technique that new liaisons can use in relationship building and to elicit areas of deeper understanding about faculty challenges (UC Riverside Library 2019).

We will be investigating the adoption of customer relationship management (CRM) software to document interactions with users that can serve to ease transitions between individual library employees, uncover opportunities for deeper connections with the library and contribute to assessment efforts. At the UCSB Library, we have just begun to record librarian engagements that take place off the Reference Desk, and this is presenting an important data point in informing the redistribution of subject librarian assignments. Team-based liaison approaches can also emphasise relationship development with key stakeholders such as department chairs, rather than just with individual faculty members in response to stated library needs (Eldridge et al. 2016). In order to broaden the perspective of subject librarians at UCSB, we will be inviting key leaders from across campus (e.g., Advising, Registrar, Admissions, Office of Research) to speak about their current priorities and challenges. Finally, we will be looking at how the Communications & Marketing program can support our subject librarians in their efforts to communicate strategically and effectively with faculty, using existing tools we have like e-newsletter software to deliver measurements of liaison engagement.

As early as 2009, Emily Ford provocatively argued in 'Outreach is (un)dead' that separate outreach positions and departments should be 'killed' as we strive to integrate outreach goals and activities more fully into our libraries. Inspired by Ford's (2009) suggestion, we are eliminating the Student Success Librarian position in favor of distributing the responsibility among librarians. New statements of duties and responsibilities for subject librarians include a section dedicated to their involvement in the Student Success program:

'Shares responsibility...for the design and delivery of orientations, workshops, and outreach activities that introduce students to the library's services, resources, and spaces, often in collaboration with other student support units on campus. Customizes engagement for distinct and diverse populations.'

A new Diversity & Engagement Assistant position has been added to support the Student Success program and the new shared model.

## **Conclusion**

There have been admirable efforts in recent years to introduce strategic thinking and assessment methodologies into outreach work, as demonstrated by the programming coming

out of professional networks devoted to outreach and marketing. Much of this work has not yet been incorporated into the literature, and more could be explored around defining standard competencies for outreach librarians, developing outcomes for successful relationship-building, and applying social capital concepts to additional categories of library professionals beyond subject librarians. The literature on subject librarianship is more mature and a few libraries have taken lead roles in advancing programmatic approaches to liaison work that recognise and value relational and other soft skills.

At the UCSB Library, I was granted the unique opportunity to lead an outreach program that was valued enough by the University Librarian to situate at a high level in the organisation, and I was able to develop strategic relationships in part because of my position. With dedicated staffing and budget, I created coordinated planning approaches to programs in events and exhibitions, student success, communications and marketing, and partnerships. In my newly-expanded role over public services and subject liaisons, I will be exploring the potential of using intellectual capital perspectives to recognise competencies and best practices for outreach and engagement work at both the director and librarian level. In particular, I envision working with the librarians in my division to describe, evaluate and improve the relational and other soft skills that contribute to the library's strategic directions.

Academic libraries rely on outreach librarians and subject liaisons to build relationships with key campus and community constituents in the delivery of quality service and the pursuit of a visible and trusted brand, but individual relationships are inherently subjective and tenuous. As academic libraries move toward engagement models that privilege people over collections, they may be even more inclined to emphasise the importance of relationships. However, individual relational work is largely invisible to library leaders in the day-to-day functioning of their organisations and is often not defined or measured as part of program or performance evaluation cycles. This places a burden on librarians to invest in time-consuming cognitive and affective work that continues to be undervalued. Library leaders need to move beyond prioritising individual relational work to create programmatic approaches to outreach and engagement that can deliver consistent and scalable services. In order to leverage relationships toward organisational success and sustain them over the long term, relationships should be strategic, team-based, documented and assessed.

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