Chapter 38
Friendly, Flexible, and Fun:
Non-Traditional Ideas for Learning and Engagement

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ABSTRACT

This chapter outlines practical examples of library programs developed as a result of Kapi'olani Community College Library's collaborative efforts with campus organizations, clubs, faculty, and students to build community. The library worked with faculty and students to create stronger outcomes for all parties, including student engagement and specific student learning outcomes. The Kapi'olani Community College librarians share their process for implementing interactive programs, detail successes, assessment methods, and areas for improvement. This chapter also provides practical tips on applying for grants, connecting with faculty, marketing, and looking for ideas in your own community. The aim of these library activities is to promote the Library as a desirable collaborative "third place" where students engage in useful and user-friendly learning activities.

INTRODUCTION

Kapi'olani Community College librarians are attempting to transform the library into an essential "third place" on campus. The term "third place" was first coined by Ray Oldenberg in his book, *The Great Good Place*. Oldenberg defined a third space as one that "hosts the regular, voluntary, informal and happily anticipated gathering of individuals beyond the realms of home and work" (p. 16). A "third place" is neither where one lives nor where one works, but something in between. On a college campus, it is a place where students, staff and faculty go when they are between classes or meetings. They are

not obligated to be there, but want to be there. An effective "third place" is welcoming, inclusive, and inspires conversation and collaboration.

Much has been written about the library-as-place movement (Frey & Codispoti, 2010; *Library as Place*, 2005) and even more about marketing the library and library services to students and faculty (Adeyoyin, 2005; Garoufallou, Siatri, Zafeiriou, & Balampanidou, 2013; Gupta, Koontz, Massisimo, & Savard, 2006). The focus of research on "library as place" has largely been on improving the physical spaces, from providing comfortable furniture to creating the ultimate internet café (Gust & Haka, 2006; Waxman, Clemons, Banning, & McKelfresh, 2007). Even if complete rebuilding or refurbishing is not on the agenda nor possible given the economic climate, the internet abounds with relevant blogs and cost effective ideas on making the library a more attractive and welcoming place for its constituents.

Apart from increasing gate count, however, do these changes and activities successfully differentiate the library from any other place where these same activities can happen? How do these changes contribute to student learning?

As Bennett (2006) pointed out, "Our purpose is not to circulate books, but to ensure that the circulation of knowledge produces learning… Academic librarians need to make a paradigm shift from a service to a learning culture" (p. 11). In the modern age, "the library's core responsibilities ... lie not in the efficiency of its operations but rather in the effectiveness with which students learn" (Bennett, 2006, p. 21). Changes in library programs, events, outreach efforts, and new library spaces should all have one thing in common: they must keep learning in the forefront.

Hence, the primary objective of this chapter is to encourage academic libraries to focus on learning outcomes when building community; the real rationale for innovative ideas in building academic community is to promote learning.

BACKGROUND

Kapiʻolani Community College is one of ten campuses comprising the University of Hawaiʻi system, the public system of higher education in Hawaiʻi. It is located near Waikīkī Beach and Diamond Head Crater. Kapiʻolani Community College is a Liberal Arts commuter college known for its technical, occupational, and professional programs. Its culinary, health sciences, nursing, and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) programs have won national recognition. In 2013, there were approximately 5,000 part-time students and 3,000 full-time students enrolled in 45 day, evening, online, composite, and accelerated programs working towards 21 Associate degrees (Kapiʻolani Community College, Office for Institutional Effectiveness, 2013; Kapiʻolani Community College, 2014).

The student population is comprised of a diverse range of ages and ethnicities. The rich cultural diversity at Kapiʻolani Community College is reflective of the ethnic mix of Hawaiʻi. Hawaiʻi's geographical position in the middle of the Pacific attracts a large number of East Asian students which make up the majority of the 8% of international students at the College. 16% of all international students in Hawaiʻi attend Kapiʻolani Community College (*Open Doors*, 2013), which ranks 27 among U.S. community colleges with international students. The cultural backgrounds of the students inspired the library programming efforts to connect to the different sectors of its population.

The Kapiʻolani Community College Library's mission is to "be a gathering place, … for cultural exchanges and diversity in learning through the development of collections, creation of original content,

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