



CALA Occasional Paper Series

Using Internal Grant to Foster Faculty-Librarian Collaboration

By

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As colleges and universities begin to globalize their curriculums and to include global readiness in their institutional missions, New Jersey City University (NJCU) has provided grants that strongly encourage faculty and librarians to collaborate on curriculum development and/or revision to foster internationalization of the curriculum at the university level. Librarians can provide improved support for research and learning through actively investigating and informing faculty members about resources in respective disciplines. This paper describes a faculty-librarian partnership in a grant project to infuse international content into a revised macroeconomics curriculum. The paper presents a win-win collaboration that allows both the faculty member and the librarian to work together to build and enhance curriculum-specific resources, and to create a meaningful learning experience while improving students' information literacy skills.

Keywords: librarian, faculty, collaboration, curriculum, information literacy

Introduction

Efforts have been made on information literacy and collaboration between librarians and faculty, including the one-shot bibliographic instruction, credit bearing courses, and course-integrated instruction (Li, 2007). Research papers have presented concepts and practical models for faculty-librarian collaborations on library collection development (Tucker, Bullian, & Torrence, 2003). Some studies have discussed cases where librarians have evolved from traditional reference models to act as integral team members in course designs (Shepley, 2009). In his editorial "Working with Faculty," Riggs (1996) pointed out many fruitful areas of collaboration such as selecting print and online resources, designing library instructional programs for students, writing grants, collaborative teaching, etc. Gordon (2010) noted that in-depth collaboration is not always easy to achieve and internally funded grant projects may facilitate success.

As the importance of information literacy grows within the academic world, so does the importance of the role of the international aspect of teaching and learning at the college and university level. There is a growing emphasis on the international component of teaching-and-learning in different subject areas as a required component of twenty-first century teaching. At the same time, there is a budding effort in collaborative undertakings between librarians and

faculty to expand international information in courses to reach a larger number of students. This new form of collaboration is making wide inroads into new course development and academic programs (Brown, Murphy, & Nanny, 2003; Loehr & Gibson, 2006). Faculty members recognize the value and significance of reliable and current information in the library. Excellent academic work is built upon the highest quality and availability of information in the library.

Many colleges and universities offer grants for faculty-librarian collaboration on information literacy. The purpose of such a grant is to encourage research, create new course(s), or revise existing course(s). This paper presents a successful model of collaboration between faculty and librarians at New Jersey City University (NJCU) supported by an institutional grant. It focuses on a multifaceted collaboration between faculty and librarians in a course revision, collection enhancement for the course, and a course-integrated model of information literacy. It highlights new developments which have become an important part of future course offerings. This collaboration has augmented a macroeconomics course and increased/enhanced the library resources by adding new materials with international dimension in the collection, encouraged library advocates among faculty and students, and promoted the success of information literacy among students in the internationalized curriculum.

International Incentive Grant (IIG)

Awarding a financial enticement for a new project to faculty and librarians is not a new idea. At NJCU, there is an internally funded grant (IIG) that can be used to promote collaboration between faculty and librarians for developing or revising a course that includes an international component.

Cultural diversity is a hallmark of NJCU. Internationalization is the process of integrating a comprehensive international and intercultural dimension into the teaching, research, and service functions of the University. The University provides the IIG as one of the initiatives to support the University's mission and goals (New Jersey City University, 2010, pp.16-17). The purpose of such a grant is to foster internationalization of the curriculum at the university level. The grant supports faculty in the creation of new internationally-oriented courses or in the revision of an existing course by infusing international content. The university accepts proposals from all disciplines and especially encourages joint proposals between librarians and faculty to promote the collaboration of a diverse group of intellectuals and professionals.

The first awards of this grant were distributed in AY 2000-2001. Each year, on average, approximately 10 applications are received by the awarding committee. Eighty percent or 55 of these applications have been awarded thus far.

The IIG awards can be used for any of the following activities:

- Language study related to international course development;
- Travel related to international course development;
- Conference attendance to enhance a faculty member or a librarian's international expertise and thus facilitate course development;
- Purchase of equipment, books, DVDs, videos, supplies, etc., related to international course development.

Grant Rationale

Applying for in-house financial support is much less time consuming than applying for and managing an outside grant. It may require the participation and involvement of several people to be successfully funded.

Using a one-on-one faculty and librarian collaboration model allows the team to work closely together, and helps develop a stronger working relationship than might occur in a larger group setting. The purpose is to reach out, connect with and urge faculty and librarians to collaborate and develop or revise courses with an international component. This model has worked well at our institution, and several new courses have been incorporated with international components.

Two factors are important to ensure successful partnership and alliance as supported by research (Arp, et al., 2006; Ruth, 2003):

- Both faculty and librarians must be proficient, experienced, and knowledgeable in teaching students to use the current technology to access information as well as to employ critical thinking in the selection of information to be used in the course;
- Both faculty and librarians must share and recognize the objective and ambition of collaboration based on mutual respect, trust, and communication between them. The goal of this collaboration is to improve student learning through integrating an international component into the coursework.

In the summer of 2009, a professor of economics and a librarian jointly applied for the IIG at NJCU and received the award. The joint project was an effort to enhance global curricula and to support resources for a "macroeconomics" course. A traditional macroeconomics course objective is to study the application of the basic principles of economics to current public problems. It focuses on the macroeconomic issues such as national income/output, cost of living, production and growth, unemployment, saving, investment, and the financial system. It teaches

the operation of the economy as a whole. However, modern economies interact freely with other economies of the world. This grant allowed the faculty member to revise the current syllabus, and the librarian to update library resources through purchasing of books, DVDs, and videos to bring an international component into the course.

Planning and Implementation

Several planning sessions were scheduled for the faculty member and librarian to work together to develop strategies, and to outline a plan of action for integrating an international information component into the revised course syllabus. In subsequent sessions, the faculty member and the librarian worked independently on the course syllabus by incorporating international resources and selecting new materials for the revised course.

It was the faculty member's responsibility to research and revise the syllabus and share the course content information with the librarian. The project focused on the development of an enhanced macroeconomics course which would include how world economies interact with each other. The revised syllabus introduced a new discussion of the key macroeconomic variables --- exports, imports, the trade balance, and exchange rates --- to describe an open economy. The objective was to explain how these variables are affected by various government policies.

The librarian examined the existing course-related books and online databases, shared the information with the faculty member, and searched for new materials to support the proposed revised course. The librarian collaborated in the project by improving the bibliography and syllabus and gathering an expanded selection of bibliographic items for the course. The revised bibliography includes updated books on international macroeconomic theory, policy issues, and current global macroeconomic events. A selective list of useful web resources was also developed and posted on the Library's homepage.

As a result, the team developed a revised course in macroeconomics which includes a unit on the open economy. Thanks to the grant, we

were able to purchase updated books and DVDs on international macroeconomic theory, policy issues, and current global macroeconomic issues which were not available in our library. All these resources were donated to the library.

This grant was to motivate students to find out more about other countries of the world. Our desire was to stimulate a sense of inquiry and enthusiasm within the student community. One of the primary skills students need in writing a paper is critical thinking. For that they need to reach beyond course materials to discover new ideas and methods. Reading beyond course text book is essential. Students learn and develop a growing knowledge base to be able to articulate problems and probe them. In order to accomplish this goal, the faculty member must reinforce the lecture with a research assignment pertaining to global economics so students learn to use the library and engage in research methods.

Teaching Information Literacy

The need for information literacy continues to increase as universities emphasize internationalizing their curricula and include global readiness in the institutional missions. Embracing the critical importance of information literacy to student success, regional accrediting agencies, including the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, have stressed that "information literacy is an essential component of any educational program at graduate or undergraduate level." (Middle States Commission on Higher Education, 2009, p.55). The collaboration between the librarian and faculty member should not stop at the completion of the acquisition of resources. We looked for evidence of a student learning outcome as a result of this grant project. We learned that active collaboration between faculty and librarians was a key to achieving information literacy goals as well as content-specific learning objectives for students. The faculty member and the librarian collected sample data through an information literacy survey (Congressman Frank J. Guarini Library, 2009), to assess the computer literacy skills of the students in two economics classes (40 students). The results showed that students were curious to learn how to access information

through library databases. We inferred that students would benefit more if the session was subject-specific. The data collected from the survey yielded the following results:

Table 1

Q1. Did you learn something new today?	<i>Students n=40</i>	
	N	%
Yes	36	90
No	4	10
Not Sure	0	0

Table 2

Q2. Will the information provided today enable you to complete the course requirements more effectively?	<i>Students n=40</i>	
	N	%
Strongly Agree	21	52.5
Agree	18	45.0
Disagree	1	2.5
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Not Sure	0	0

Table 1 shows that 90% of the students responded positively to the question that they learned something new; 10% responded negatively due to the fact that they had already attended a similar session(s) before with another faculty member/librarian. Table 2 shows that 45% agreed and 52.5% strongly agreed that such a session will help them complete course requirements, including writing research papers, more effectively.

The revised international macroeconomic class was ready to be offered in Fall semester 2010. Students were introduced to the newly revised international component of Open Economies. They were required to write research papers that include the Global Economic Perspective concept. While most students are computer literate, few are research savvy. Students need to learn how to find the right information and use that information productively (Campbell, 2010). In an effort to reach and connect with all students, the faculty took the students to the library for a course-specific information literacy instruction session.

The librarian spent a class period discussing strategies including how to access the library's electronic catalog and a few databases pertinent to the course. This library session was rigorous and focused on global-economics content and subject matter. The students were taught and trained on how to use library research tools to transform the information into a well researched paper. They were made aware of the collection of books and DVDs purchased under the IIG, as well as all other resources electronically available through the library. Our joint project helped in assessing students' work based on how well they utilized and developed their research skills.

Conclusion

As more institutions of higher education recognize the importance of integrating information literacy in courses, the collaboration between librarians and faculty is also growing stronger. In today's global economics, the integration of information literacy with instruction has become the key to successful student learning in business and economics fields focused on global understanding. Both librarians and faculty are using various collaborative models in developing and revising such courses.

We selected books and DVDs to provide information about foreign economies. Over the course of these readings, students learned and developed a growing knowledge base on the course/topic. The new library resources sparked challenging conversations among students, sharpened their minds, and improved their performance. Reading comprehension is essential to all academic learning and depends on knowledge of the subject matter. Knowledge of content and concept enables better thinking, problem solving, reasoning, and critical analysis.

The books and DVDs funded through the IIG Project were donated to the NJCU library. This initiative has set a model for donating discipline-specific materials to the library which established a precedent for other departments to follow. This model may help fill the gaps in the library collection for academic disciplines. The web page of online resources relating to US and

international economies provides a research tool for the students. This model can also enhance the effective use of resources and delivery of services to facilitate the campus educational goals.

In summary, the internal grant (IIG) can enable successful, sustainable, and meaningful faculty-librarian collaborations to further student learning. Recognizing the significance of this productive approach to forging a partnership between librarians and faculty, the authors believe workshop sessions should be developed to have discussions with more faculty members and librarians to share insights on what we have done, what we have learned, and where we go from here.

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