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SFU Library Liaison Review and Information Services

Janis McKenzie, ALPS December 2012

Information services:

Change has been incremental and ongoing.

Some of the factors driving recent, ongoing and upcoming changes to information services:

- *Activity patterns*: More online/virtual services along with slow but steady decline in in-person use.
- *Staffing changes*: Recent retirement of two longtime reference assistants (Bennett I & I).
- *Facilities*: Integrated Information/Loans service area for Bennett Library, coming 2013.
- *Liaison Review*: Institution-wide discussion of priorities for liaison librarians.

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Liaison review and implications for
information services (so far):

Liaison Review: Defining and clarifying librarians' roles and priorities

“Liaison librarians exist to partner with SFU researchers by effectively deploying **professional expertise and other library resources to access and interpret** the world of information.”

-- 2011 Liaison Review

“Liaison librarians focus primarily on the specialised activities of their portfolios which require their professional and subject expertise.”

“Liaison librarians continue to serve as the primary contact between academic departments and the Library, retaining responsibility for the full range of services to their liaison areas but no longer necessarily responsible for personally delivering all services.”

-- 2011 Liaison Review

“We can always rely on our safety net of trusted colleagues and shared tools.”

“When taking on new tasks, we will each first consider if we are the most appropriate person to do this task.”

-- 2011 Liaison Review

Recommendations included reducing hours of in-person (general) reference desk coverage.

Nuts and bolts (detailed) examples:

Bennett Ask Us Desk staffing: *Before*

Liaison librarians:

- Were scheduled as needed, had to mark their availability, made swaps
- Were included in evening and weekend shift rotation
- Were subject to same-day schedule changes

Reference assistants, limited-term librarians:

- Were scheduled as needed, had to mark their availability, made swaps
- Were included in evening and weekend shift rotation
- Were subject to same-day schedule changes

Reference associates (managers, AULs, librarians from other areas):

- Worked regular (unchanging) shifts every week
- Made swaps, volunteered for extra if/as needed

Bennett Ask Us Desk staffing: *After*

Liaison librarians:

- Work regular (unchanging) shifts every week
- Make swaps, volunteer for extra if/as needed
- Are not included in regular evening and weekend rotation

Reference assistants, limited-term librarians:

- Continue to be scheduled as needed, mark availability, make swaps
- Continue to be subject to same-day schedule changes

Reference associates (managers, AULs, librarians from other areas):

- Work regular (unchanging) shifts every week
- Make swaps, volunteer for extra if/as needed

Further reading:

Liaison Librarian Review Report and Recommendations, September 2011

- Linked from SFU Library Reports page
- http://www.lib.sfu.ca/sites/default/files/9035/Liaison%20Librarian%20Review%202011_Report.pdf



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