Library Liaison Services in US Community Colleges: Findings from a National Survey

ARTICLE

Mary Wahl
Pasadena City College

ABSTRACT

Evidence shows that community college librarians provide a range of liaison services; however, such services specific to community colleges are rarely discussed in the scholarly literature. This article summarizes the results of a 2019 survey of US community college librarians regarding their liaison efforts. Survey results confirm that a range of liaison work is being performed by community college librarians, including liaising with academic units (e.g., natural sciences division, business division) as well as other campus units, such as counseling, distance education, and first-year experience programs. The findings suggest that the majority of community college librarians provide liaison services, often to more than one liaison area, and that most liaison areas are engaged in some way, though an increase in engagement is desired. Data regarding approaches and operations were also gathered, and a number of opportunities for further inquiry were identified.

KEYWORDS

community college librarians; liaison librarians; library liaison services; community college outreach; survey research

Library liaison programs provide specialized, often discipline-specific, expertise to meet the information needs of higher education library users. Such programs serve as valuable resources in academia, most notably by providing students with specialized instruction and research assistance, and by collaborating with faculty in areas such as collection development and the creation of custom digital learning objects. Despite its history, the precise definition of *liaison program* or *liaison librarian* is rather difficult to pinpoint because of the fluidity and adaptability such work requires. Additionally, recent literature suggests that liaison librarianship is going through something of a renaissance, making the definition a moving target. Generally speaking, however, liaison work involves a librarian being "assigned to a specific client base (a school, department, college, research center, or co-curricular unit) in a personalized, relationship-centered system of service delivery" (Church-Duran 2017, 258). Though factors such as the type, staffing, budget, and mission of an organization will certainly affect what liaison programs may entail, one thing is certain—library liaison efforts play an integral role in meeting the information needs of students and faculty.

From a high-level perspective, liaison programs support many types of colleges and universities similarly, providing librarians who act as both collaborators and personal guides to the institution's library resources and

services. However, different types of educational institutions have distinct user groups with specialized needs, making it likely that liaison efforts at different types of institutions will look different from one another. Many librarians at four-year universities are subject specialists, requiring expertise in specific disciplines, whereas librarians at community colleges typically serve as generalists. Many universities have a large quantity of research output, whereas community colleges traditionally focus on teaching. Thus it is logical to expect that library users at community colleges would need very different things from a liaison program than users at four-year universities.

Perusing community college library websites, as well as performing web searches using terms such as *librarian liaison* and *community college*, reveals that many community college libraries have liaison librarians and programs in place. However, a scan of the literature reveals that liaison services are most often studied in the context of four-year universities and research institutes. The current state of collaboration and outreach between librarians and subject faculty within community colleges is consequently undefined; there is little discussion of factors such as user needs being met, successes being made, and work that remains to be done. This makes the task of comparing liaison activities between universities and community colleges a challenge. It also means that a community college library newly embarking on implementing a liaison program currently has little evidence or scholarly discourse to follow.

Literature Review

Library liaison services for academic institutions are well documented in the scholarly literature and have been for decades. Librarian liaisons "representing the needs of the faculty and students to the library," as well as the usage of the library to its users, have been discussed as far back as the 1970s (Kranich et al. 2020). The Association of Research Libraries (ARL) in particular has published three surveys on the topic of liaison librarianship since the 1990s as part of its *SPEC Kits* series (Latta 1992; Logue et al. 2007; Miller and Pressley 2015). These surveys provide a thorough look into liaison efforts at ARL member libraries, with the third survey focusing on the evolution of liaison librarianship specifically.

Several activities stand out as core to the role of liaison librarian. Collection development for an assigned subject area is one long-standing responsibility associated with this role. In fact, it has been tradition that liaison work be "rooted in the subject bibliographer whose expertise was focused on collection development" (Mays 2019, 1). The role of library instruction, "especially as a partnership between library and academic staff," is also a core role for the liaison librarian (Rodwell and Fairbairn 2008, 118). Outreach and advocacy are central to the role as well, wherein the librarian "prioritizes making connections with people and . . . promotes the work of the library to its potential users" (Cooke et al. 2011, 6).

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Interestingly, the role of the liaison librarian is evolving. In addition to the core activities noted above, literature published since the early 2000s points out the importance of liaison efforts related to research and scholarly communication, particularly at universities with high-ranking Carnegie classifications (i.e., R1 universities). At these institutions, liaison librarians provide guidance and outreach for activities, such as the moving of student and faculty research into an institutional repository (Cooke et al. 2011, 19), as well as bibliometric services in which librarians assist with "tracking of . . .

citations as evidence of [faculty] research productivity and its impact" (Rodwell and Fairbairn 2008, 120). Librarians are even at times collaborators on research proposals, "especially where there may now be requirements for applicants to address up-front issues around the capture, storage and dissemination of the research resulting from the grant funding" (120). Indeed, the liaison librarian role is "increasingly expressed through greater involvement in . . . supporting faculty research" (Silver 2014, 9).

Perhaps because of this evolution, the topic of revising existing liaison programs appears often in the literature of the last decade. In fact, it is not uncommon to find terms such as *evolving*, *re-visioning*, and even *extreme makeover* in the scholarly discourse (Johnson 2018; Banfield and Petropoulos 2017; Ippoliti 2017). Indeed, many academic libraries are redesigning their liaison programs to make them less structured toward serving specific disciplines, and more focused on multi-disciplinary areas such as research data management and data visualization. For example, the Humanities, Social Science and Education Library at Purdue University has moved away from a liaison model based on subject expertise to one that accommodates the need for specialists in subject-neutral skills such as data, digital humanities, and GIS (Heyns 2017). Academic libraries are also adjusting liaison programs to focus more on intangible activities like personal development and relationship-building. The main library for the West Research Campus of East Carolina University has revised its required liaison competencies to make them less task-oriented and more amenable to goal-setting and training (Shirkey, Hoover, and Webb 2020). Even the revision of job descriptions for liaison librarians has been discussed in the literature. In the case of Grand Valley State University Libraries, the librarians found that the liaison librarian position description in use had "stayed static" over the years, while the "responsibilities [had] evolved" (Rosener et al. 2016). A new position description was then written to reflect current practices.

A number of challenges in liaison librarianship are documented in the literature, most notably the difficulty involved in codifying immaterial activities such as collaboration and forming relationships with others outside the library. This leads to a related challenge in liaison work—that of assessment. Evaluation of liaison work is difficult as much of it centers on the unquantifiable notion of relationship-building. Nevertheless, a number of libraries and librarians have developed innovative ways to capture measurements of this aspect of the job. For example, the Rutgers University Libraries have developed a set of "impact indicators that document how liaisons can self-assess" their liaison work (Kranich et al. 2020). Sample indicators include whether a librarian was invited to participate in a project or other undertaking, and to what degree a librarian feels they are engaged with the academic life of students and faculty in their liaison areas. User perception surveys are also often undertaken; for example, a survey was conducted at Loughborough University Library in which librarians surveyed and conducted in-depth interviews of subject faculty to determine the perceived value of their liaison services; many librarians noted the difficulty in assessing the added value of this work (Cooke et al. 2011). Cooke et al. (2011) further note how liaison work is difficult to measure "in the absence of any before and after benchmarks, or any clear boundaries to the activities or end products impacted by the role" (14).

Studies that touch on liaison work at community college libraries can be found in the literature, though not in abundance. For example, Contrada (2019, 13) describes staffing and budgetary challenges commonly found at community colleges, resulting in there not often being "enough staff to designate each with a field or trade. Instead, community college librarians must be able to liaise with faculty and students in any field of study." Case studies can also be found

that describe embedded librarian efforts at two-year colleges (Kesselman and Watstein 2009; Hales, Ward, and Brown 2009). However, discussion of liaison work with regard to community college libraries and librarians is sparse in comparison to that of universities. Additionally, the most recent literature appears to focus more on liaison work as it applies to research and scholarly communication activity. This pushes the current study of liaison programs further from the arena of community colleges, where the focus is more on teaching and establishing critical thinking skills.

Thus, a key question presents itself: what is the state of liaison librarianship within community colleges? Below are findings from, and discussion of, a research study on the current state of liaison librarianship in community college libraries in the US. The study addresses three research questions:

- What is the extent to which community college librarians provide liaison services?
- What are the demographics (particularly student FTE and staffing size) of community college libraries and librarians providing liaison services?
- What do liaison services entail at community college libraries?

Methodology

Study Population. The population under study consists of librarians employed at community colleges in the US. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), 5,624 librarians, curators, and archivists (3,569 full-time and 2,055 part-time) were employed at two-year, associate degree-granting colleges in the US during Fall 2018[1]. To invite community college librarians to participate, a description and link to the survey was shared to national, regional, and state email lists and online discussion forums whose readership emphasized academic librarians[2].

Survey Design and Distribution. The author designed the survey, in part, based on questions and ideas gathered from surveys found in the literature, most notably three surveys created by the ARL and administered to its membership as described in *SPEC Kit* numbers 189, 301, and 349 (Latta 1992; Logue et al. 2007; Miller and Pressley 2015). The survey consisted of 28 questions regarding demographics, liaison areas, responsibilities, coordination, assessment, training, and challenges. Questions were primarily multiple choice and "select all [options] that apply" in nature, with one open text question at the end. Not all survey questions were required, and respondents were allowed to skip questions. The survey was pretested with six librarians (four community college librarians and two university librarians) via 30-minute phone interviews; the survey was then further refined. A version of the survey focused on librarians employed at California community colleges was also used before national distribution[3].

The online data collection tool SurveyMonkey was used to create and administer the survey. The survey remained open for four weeks, from April 6 to May 5, 2019; reminders were sent to email lists and discussion forums during the week of April 29, 2019.

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1 Numbers were gathered from NCES Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) summary tables. Search criteria included: Title IV participating; US only; Highest degree offered: Associate's degree; Institutional category: Degree-granting, associate's and certificates; Year: 2018.
2 See Appendix A for the list of email lists and discussion forums to which the survey was shared and Appendix B for the recruitment message used.
3 Results from this California-specific survey were presented by the author as a poster at the 2019 California Library Association annual conference, Pasadena, CA. See Appendix C for the complete survey instrument used for the study.

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Results

The survey received 242 responses. Twenty-nine participants responded that they did not provide (or plan to provide) liaison services (Q4) and were consequently taken to the end of the survey. These participants were eliminated from the dataset (leaving 213 responses), except to provide estimates of the response rate, and the percentage of US community college librarians with liaison roles.

Assuming the study population consists of 5,624 individuals, 242 participants constitutes a response rate of 4.3%. Not all participants responded to every question; consequently, results for questions are discussed in terms of the number of responses to that particular question rather than the total number of survey participants. The number of responses received varied across questions, and this amount is included for each question in the sections that follow.

Survey data were analyzed in 2020. During this time, it was found that Q24 of the survey—an open-ended question that asked respondents to describe up to three challenges faced in relation to liaison services—had garnered 1–3 responses from 175 participants, for a total of 436 challenges. After a preliminary review and coding of the responses, it was found that the challenges provided were more multifaceted than had been expected. Thus, because of the number of responses and the complexity of their content, data and discussion of the Challenges section of the survey (Q24) are not included below and will be analyzed in a separate paper, to give the topic more in-depth attention.

Demographics. Demographic information obtained by the survey includes full-time equivalencies of students (FTE) at the respondent's college, the number of full-time librarians employed, and the respondent's job position (see Table 1). The US state in which respondents are employed was also obtained. Overall, responses were received from librarians in 36 of 50 states in the US.

As shown in Table 1, about a third of the respondents (n=63, 34%) are at institutions with 1,001–5,000 FTE students, while another third are at institutions with 5,001–10,000 FTE students (n=58, 31%). About 21% (n=40) are at institutions with 10,001–20,000 FTE students, followed by additional FTE categories in lower frequencies. In regard to the number of full-time librarians employed at the respondent's library, the category with the highest frequency of responses was 4–6 full-time librarians at 39% (n=73). This was followed by libraries

Characteristic	Frequency	% of Respondents
Number of FTE students		
< 1,000	8	4%
1,001–5,000	63	34%
5,001–10,000	58	31%
10,001–20,000	40	21%
20,001–30,000	8	4%
> 30,001	5	3%
Not sure	6	3%
Total	188	
Number of full-time librarians employed		
None	1	<1%
1–3	55	29%
4–6	73	39%
7–10	33	17%
11–15	18	10%
16 or more	7	4%
Not sure	1	<1%
Total	188	
Job position		
Full-time librarian	170	90%
Part-time librarian	16	8%
Prefer not to answer	2	<1%
Total	188	

Note: Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Survey Participants (n=188)

with 1–3 full-time librarians (n=55, 29%), and libraries with 7–10 full-time librarians (n=33, 17%). The majority of respondents were full-time librarians (n=170, 90%).

Overview of Liaison Services. When asked "As part of your role, do you provide (or plan to provide) liaison services to one or more areas at your college?" (Q4), the majority of respondents (n=213, 88%) reported yes. About 12% (n=29) reported no; these participants were redirected to the end of the survey. Participants who reported yes were presented with the remaining survey questions (i.e., questions 5–28).

Q5, which asked whether the participant's library provides liaison services to academic units, received 205 responses. Of these, the vast majority (n=197, 96%) reported yes, leaving about 4% (n=8) who reported no. Q6 asked whether the participant's library provides liaison services to other college units (e.g., clubs, first-year experience programs, distance education programs). This question also received 205 responses, of which about 70% (n=144) reported yes, 24% (n=50) reported no, and 5% (n=11) reported not sure. When asked about what these other campus units are (Q7), 146 participants responded with a variety of units (see Figure 1). Respondents who liaise with distance education and first-year experience programs, as well as writing or tutoring centers, showed up in the highest frequency. The category "Other" included high school dual enrollment programs, honors societies, athletics programs, and satellite campuses.
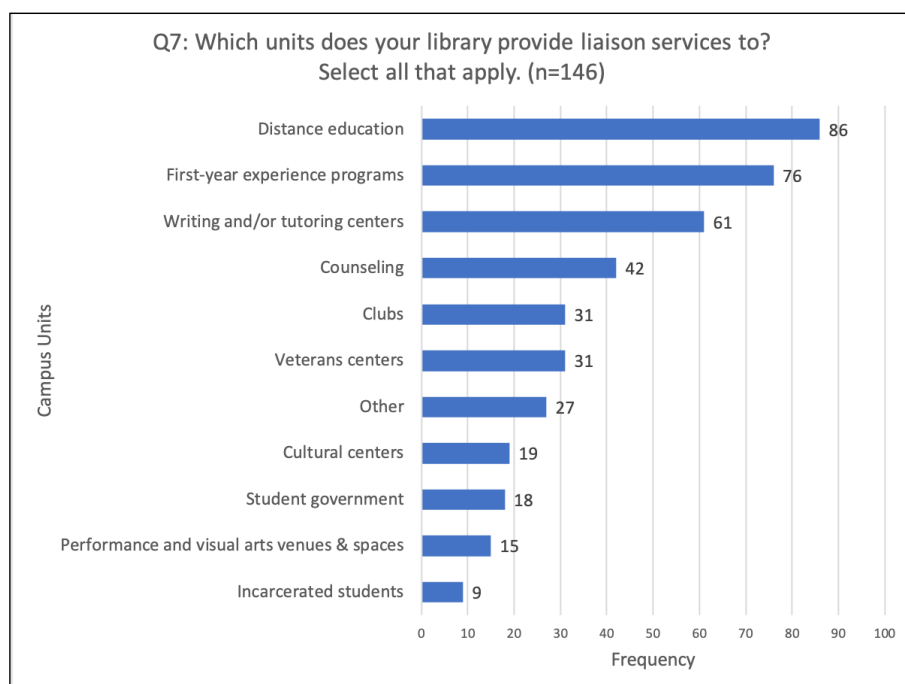

Figure 1. Q7 Results

Outreach and Engagement. Data regarding outreach and engagement was obtained through the *Liaison Area Participation* and *Liaison Services Offered* sections of the survey. When asked "Are the faculty, staff, or students in your liaison areas engaged in the services you provide?" (Q8), 199 responses were received. Of these, about 54% (n=108) reported that some of their liaison areas have been engaged, while 40% (n=80) reported that most have been. About 6% (n=11) reported that no one in their liaison areas has been engaged. Q9 asked if respondents were actively seeking ways to increase engagement from faculty, staff and students in their liaison areas, to which 198 responses were recorded, with the majority (n=180, 91%) reporting yes, and about 9% (n=18) reporting no.

Respondents reported informing their liaison areas of services in a variety of ways (see Figure 2). Q10 received 202 responses, of which the majority of respondents (n=181, 90%) reported that they inform their liaison areas via email. As shown in Figure 2, at least half the respondents also reported informing their liaison areas by meeting with faculty individually (n=159, 79%), attending meetings (n=140, 69%), using promotional flyers or brochures (n=109, 54%), attending special events (n=107, 53%), and attending new faculty orientations (n=101, 50%). The responses in category "Other" included informing those in their liaison areas via LibGuides, embedding in online courses (i.e., in a Learning Management System), and via library webpages geared specifically toward faculty.
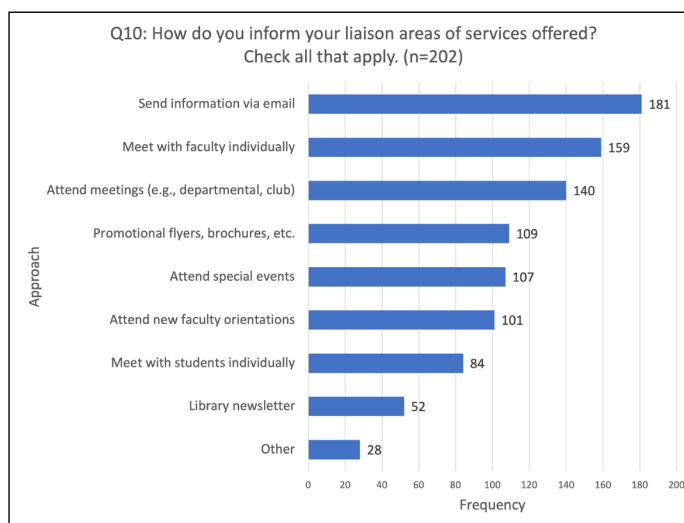

Figure 2. Q10 Results

When asked about the liaison services offered to their liaison area(s), 192 participants indicated a variety of services (Q17; see Figure 3). The majority reported that they offer collection development (n=172, 90%), library instruction (n=172, 90%), and outreach (n=163, 85%) as well as reference and research consultations (n=157, 82%). Creating digital learning objects for liaison areas (n=146, 76%) and communicating a liaison area's needs to the library (n=134, 70%) were also highly reported. About half the respondents (n=91, 47%) also reported embedding services into courses managed through a Learning Management System (LMS). Fifteen respondents (8%) selected "Other"; these responses primarily involved finding or providing Open Education Resources (OER) and consulting on textbook selection. When asked whether their library has a publicly available webpage describing its liaison services (Q18), 190 participants responded. About 48% (n=91) reported no, while 45% (n=85) reported yes; another 7% (n=14) reported that they were not sure.

Coordination and Responsibilities. Questions from the *Liaison Responsibility Assignment* section of the survey collected data regarding how liaison responsibilities are coordinated and distributed among library staff. Q11 asked whether liaison responsibilities were a primary or secondary responsibility, to which 194 participants responded. Of these, just over two-thirds (n=133, 69%) reported that their liaison responsibilities were of a secondary nature, while just under one-third (n=61, 31%) reported that it was of a primary nature. When it came to the question of *which* librarians have liaison responsibilities (Q12), 195 survey participants responded, with over half (n=112, 57%) reporting that *all* librarians have such responsibilities, and a quarter (n=50, 26%) reporting that *most* librarians have such responsibilities. Another 15% (n=29) responded that

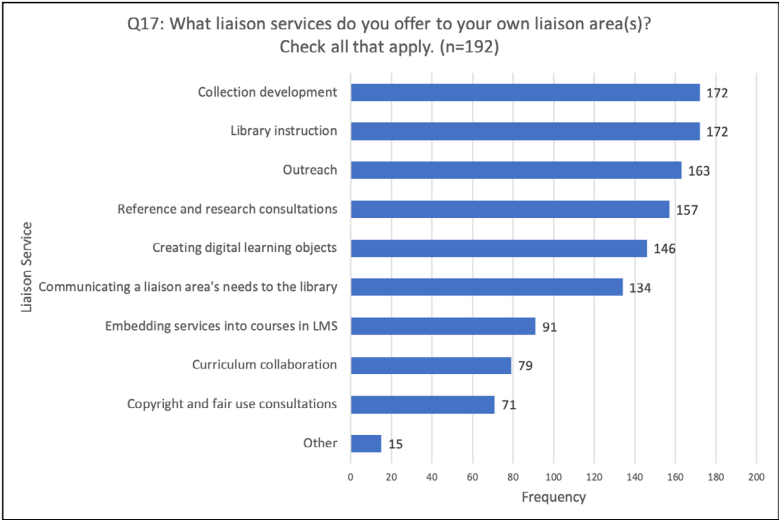*some* librarians have such responsibilities, while 2% (n=4) reported that they were not sure.

Figure 3. Q17 Results

When asked "How are librarians' assigned liaison areas determined in your library? Check all that apply" (Q13), 195 participants responded by indicating a variety of factors (see Figure 4). Nearly half these respondents (n=88, 45%) reported that librarians collaboratively select areas. Nearly half (n=85, 44%) also reported that areas are distributed in such a way as to balance liaison responsibilities, and that librarians' subject expertise was factored in (n=84, 43%). Responses to the "Other" category included indications that a librarian's liaison areas could be assigned according to a librarian's location or cultural competency; some notes also indicated that the respondent is a solo librarian, and so serves as a liaison to all campus units (see Figure 4).
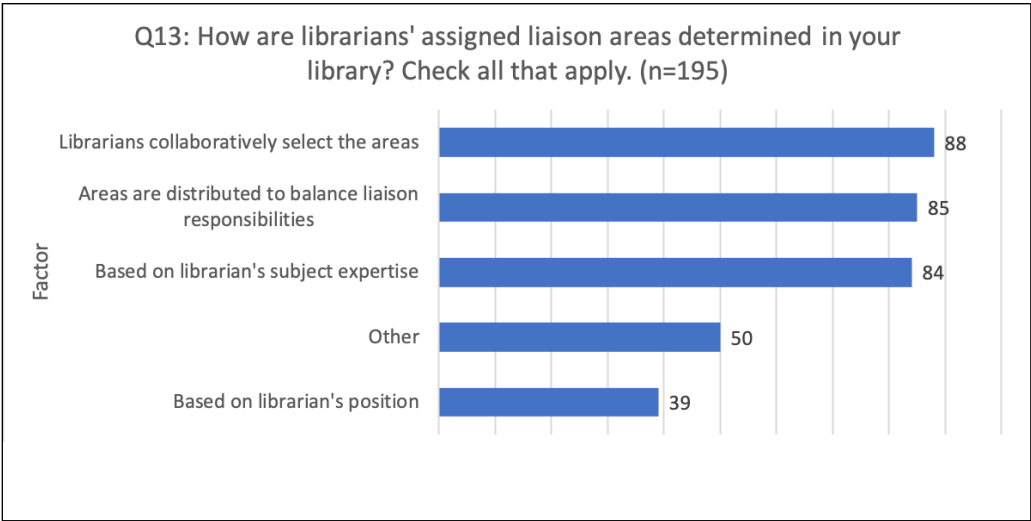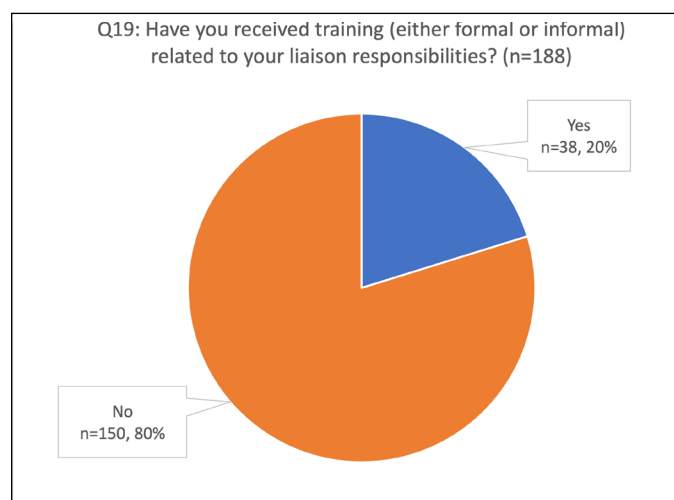

Figure 4. Q13 Results

Q14, which asked how many liaison areas were assigned to a librarian, received 194 responses. Just over half these respondents (n=100, 52%) reported that *all* liaisons are assigned more than one area; by contrast, about 32% (n=62) reported that some liaisons are assigned more than one area while others are assigned only one. About 6% (n=12) reported that all liaisons are assigned only one area. Another 10% (n=20) reported that they were not sure.

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When asked "Do staff in your library (i.e., paraprofessionals) have assigned liaison areas?" (Q15), 194 participants responded, with the majority (n=172, 89%) reporting no, while about 9% (n=17) reported yes and 2% (n=5) reported that they were not sure. When asked "As a whole, how are liaison services run at your library?" (Q21), 187 survey participants responded, with over half (n=107, 57%) reporting that each liaison manages their own liaison services. Almost a third (n=57, 30%) reported that liaisons collectively and collaboratively coordinate liaison efforts with one another, leaving about 12% (n=23) who reported that liaison services are coordinated by a single person (e.g., dean, chair, liaison coordinator) for the library.

Training and Assessment. Data regarding training for and evaluation of liaison work was obtained through the *Training* and *Coordination and Assessment* sections of the survey. When asked "Have you received training (either formal or informal) related to your liaison responsibilities?" (Q19), 188 survey participants responded, with 80% (n=138) reporting no, and 20% (n=50) reporting yes (see Figure 5). Twenty of the participants who reported yes also supplied additional information about the kind of training received. About half these described taking coursework in the discipline to which they were assigned, to gain subject expertise. The remaining responses described learning via informal on-the-job experience, by brainstorming with colleagues, and by completing training while in prior jobs as librarians at four-year institutions.

Figure 5. Q19 Results

When asked whether any assessment (either formal or informal) of liaison efforts had been taken (Q22), 189 survey participants responded, with more than two-thirds of participants responding with no (n=132, 70%) and 14% (n=26) responding with yes; another 16% (n=31) responded that they were not sure. Twenty participants who responded with yes supplied further information (Q23). Fourteen of these indicated that user surveys are taken by faculty, while three mentioned that a librarian's own qualitative reflection is called for as part of tenure review. The remaining responses were off topic for the question at hand.

Discussion

One of the primary objectives of conducting this research was to collect baseline data on the extent of liaison librarianship taking place in US community colleges. Based on anecdotal evidence, the author surmised that many community college librarians did such work. It is eye-opening to see that, indeed, the majority of survey respondents (88%) either provide or plan to provide such services. Additionally, it is informative to see that out of these respondents, 92% liaise with academic units and 67% also liaise with non-academic units. These outcomes alone provide a significant benchmark for liaison librarianship and related programs in community colleges in the US.

Another goal of this study was to collect demographic data on community college libraries and the librarians who provide liaison services. Looking at a high-level, bird's eye view of the demographics, over two-thirds of respondents (68%) work at libraries with only 1–6 full-time librarians. As there are often more than six main subject divisions at a college, this does raise the question of whether community college librarians' liaison assignments are typically to broad subject divisions rather than individual subject departments within those divisions. If so, this would indicate a significant difference from liaison librarianship at the university level, where a librarian generally liaises with one or more individual departments or majors.

One particular data point that stands out is that nearly a third of participants reported that their liaison responsibilities are of a primary nature. Before the survey the author assumed that this number would be much lower, given that community college librarians traditionally serve as generalists. Though it was assumed that many community college librarians act as liaison librarians as *part* of their responsibilities, in fact nearly a third of respondents act in this capacity as a *primary* responsibility. This suggests that community college liaison staffing has more in common with university liaison staffing than assumed. It would be interesting to learn the subject areas of those community college librarians who have liaison roles as a primary responsibility—for instance, would there be a trend in terms of the subject areas (e.g., nursing and other health sciences) that require a full-time, dedicated liaison librarian at community colleges?

Also of interest was how the vast majority of respondents reported that either *some* or *most* of their liaison areas have been engaged (n=188, 94%, for the two categories combined), which would indicate a level of success in the outreach efforts of community college librarians. It is encouraging to learn of such a high response rate for engagement. However, as noted in the literature review, it is difficult to determine accurate measures of success when it comes to concepts such as engagement and relationship-building. Additionally, the vast majority of survey respondents (n=180, 91%) reported that they are actively seeking ways to increase engagement from their liaison areas. This may indicate that, while there is engagement in liaison efforts, there is still much to be accomplished. Furthermore, the term "some" is not quantified in the survey question, and "most" could mean anywhere between half and all liaison areas. Assessment of the liaison services of community college libraries thus represents an opportunity for further inquiry.

Just under half the survey respondents (n=85, 45%) reported that their library has a public-facing webpage describing their liaison services, even though the vast majority provide (or plan to provide) such services. The author had presumed that the number of libraries with webpages on this topic would be higher and more aligned to the number of those offering liaison services. It is not clear from the data why the number of those with webpages is not higher, though this could be related to a lack of staffing power (39% of respondents are employed at libraries with 4–6 full-time librarians; 29% have only 1–3). It could also be related to the fact that, as 57% of respondents reported, liaisons often self-manage their liaison work (i.e., liaison services are not a unified effort). Further examination of this topic may present an opportunity for research. Content analysis of community college library webpages that provide information regarding liaison services may also represent an additional research opportunity.

Limitations. It is worth noting that, while promoting the survey via email lists and discussion forums, the author received several emails from community college librarians asking for clarification on terms like *liaison librarian*, and whether the work they do fits the requisite criteria. Though this only occurred

a small number of times, it does raise the question of whether the idea of liaison librarianship might not be as well-known in the context of community college libraries as assumed. Another possibility is that the term *liaison librarian* is simply not used to describe such work in community college libraries. As previously mentioned, the survey instrument used was pretested by community college librarians, each of whom was familiar with liaison librarianship. Furthermore, the term *liaison services* was operationalized in the survey's introduction. It is still worth noting that it is currently unknown how familiar community college librarians are with the term *liaison librarianship* and whether differences in terminology would have an effect on survey results. The fact that 88% of the survey respondents reported that they provide liaison services might be related to this, in that it is possible the percentage is high because librarians unfamiliar with *liaison services* terminology mistakenly believed the survey was not relevant to them and so did not participate.

Lastly, as is often the case with survey research, it was challenging to attempt to make all the individuals in the study population aware of the online survey. As shown in Appendix A, the survey was sent to dozens of library-related state, regional, and national email lists and discussion forums. Some lists are part of professional organizations while others are not. It is possible that many community college librarians do not belong to such lists and so would not have seen the survey recruitment message, which may have had an impact on the response rate.

Conclusion

Overall, this study contributes to the body of knowledge on the current trends of library liaison services in this US. Before this study, a significant amount of scholarly discourse had been written on liaison librarianship at four-year universities and other research institutions, but mention of liaison efforts as they apply to community college libraries was rare. Consequently, while evidence indicated that community college librarians provide liaison services, the extent and nature of such work remained largely undefined. The data presented here fill this gap and suggest that, in fact, the majority of community college librarians provide liaison services, and that a range of liaison work is being performed by community college librarians.

Community colleges are a large and essential component of the higher education system in the US, and having research on how community college libraries are reaching out to and serving their users is extremely valuable. The importance of this study is that there is now stronger evidence of liaison services at community college libraries to draw from. The data presented here provide a first look at the extent to which community college libraries provide liaison services, the demographics of those libraries providing it, and what these efforts entail. Having this baseline data lays the groundwork for future studies such as the comparison of liaison activities between universities and community colleges. In addition, libraries investigating liaison services particular to community colleges now have evidence and scholarly discourse to follow.

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Author Details

Mary Wahl, Technical Services Librarian, Pasadena City College, Shatford Library: mwahl@pasadena.edu

Appendix A: Listservs & Online Discussion Forms

- ACRL-NW
- ALA Connect
- Academic Library Association of Ohio
- Alabama Library Association (ALALA-L)
- Alaska Library Association
- Arizona Library Association, ACRL Chapter
- Arizona Community College Library Consortium
- Arkansas Library Association
- California Community College Librarians (CCLibrarians-ALL)
- CARL
- CARLI
- CALIX
- California Library Association, Academic Interest Group
- CoALA
- Community & Junior College Librarians (CJCLS-L)
- CONNTECH
- CULIBS-L
- CULS-L
- CTCRT-L
- Hawaii Library Association
- Idaho Library Association
- Idaho Academic Librarians Chapter
- Illinois Library Association
- Kansas Library Association, College and Universities section
- Kentucky Library Association, Community & Technical College Round Table
- LIBS-OR
- Maryland Library Association
- Mississippi Library Association
- Missouri Library Association
- Montana Library Association
- New England Library Association (NELA)
- New Mexico Consortium of Academic Libraries
- North Carolina Library Association
- North Carolina Community College Library Association
- North Dakota Library Association
- Oklahoma Library Association
- Pacific Northwest Library Association
- Rhode Island Library Association
- South Carolina Library Association
- Southeastern Library Association (SELA)

- Tennessee Library Association (TLA-L)
- Texas Library Association, College and University Libraries Division
- Utah Library Association
- Vermont Library Association (VTCSL)
- Virginia Library Association
- West Virginia Library Association
- Wisconsin Library Association
- Wyoming Library Association

Appendix B: Recruitment Message

Subject line:
Library Liaison Services at Community Colleges survey - call for participation!

Message:

Help inform the current landscape of library liaison services at community colleges! If you are a librarian at a community college in the US, you are invited to participate in a brief survey about liaison services. The survey includes 28 questions and is expected to take 5-10 minutes to complete.

About the study: Though the topic of library liaison programs is well established in the literature, not all types of academic institutions are discussed, and community colleges are notably absent. Anecdotal evidence shows that many community college librarians provide a range of liaison services; This study aims to understand the scope of these efforts.

This is where you come in! Please consider completing the survey and sharing your experiences regarding liaison efforts at your college. Your participation in this survey is voluntary, and no sensitive information will be gathered. The survey has been reviewed by the Office of Institutional Research at Pasadena City College. If you have questions regarding your rights as a participant, you may contact the Office of Institutional Research at (626) 585-7759. For questions regarding the study, please contact me (contact information provided below).

You may begin the survey by going to this link: https://www.surveymonkey. com/r/GRKZTYT. The survey is open through April 30, 2019.

Thank you for your consideration!
Kind regards,
Mary Wahl
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Mary Wahl, MLIS
Technical Services Librarian
Pasadena City College, Shatford Library
1570 E. Colorado Blvd.
Pasadena, CA 91106
mwahl@pasadena.edu
(626) 585-7756
orcid.org/0000-0001-7871-3842

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Appendix C: Survey Instrument

Welcome to the Library Liaison Services at US Community Colleges survey. Your participation will help inform the current landscape of library liaison services provided at community colleges.

For the purposes of this study:
• Liaison services is used to generally describe efforts that involve librarians communicating and/or collaborating with students or faculty in a targeted discipline or other campus unit. It includes efforts such as outreach, attending departmental meetings, soliciting input for collection development, and embedding services into online courses. These efforts do not necessarily need to be part of a formalized liaison program. They are often targeted to a particular subject area (e.g. Math, Journalism), but can also be targeted to other campus units such as clubs, first-year experience programs, and distance education.
• Liaison area is used to generally describe the discipline, program of study, or other college unit that a librarian liaises to. It includes subject areas (e.g. Math, Journalism), broader academic divisions (e.g. Social Sciences, Business), and other units such as clubs, first-year experience programs, and distance education.
• US community colleges refers to public community and junior colleges in the 50 states and Washington, D.C.

No sensitive information will be gathered as part of this survey. Your participation in this study is voluntary, and no risks are anticipated for you as a result of participating. You may refuse to participate or withdraw from the survey at any time.

If you have questions about the study, you may contact the following researcher:

Mary Wahl, MLIS
Technical Services Librarian
Pasadena City College, Shatford Library
1570 E. Colorado Blvd.
Pasadena, CA 91106
mwahl@pasadena.edu
626-585-7756

The survey has been reviewed by the Office of Institutional Research at Pasadena City College. If you have questions regarding your rights as a participant, you may contact the Office of Institutional Research at (626) 585-7759.

1. I have read the information above and voluntarily agree to participate in this survey.
o Yes, take me to the survey.
o No, I decline to participate. [If selected, respondent was disqualified]

Background Information
2. Are you currently employed as a librarian at a community college in the United States?
o Yes
o No [If selected, respondent was disqualified]

3. Where is your library located? If employed at more than one, select the one that you have worked at more during the 2019 calendar year.

[Select state from drop-down list]

4. As part of your role, do you provide (or plan to provide) liaison services to one or more areas at your college?
o Yes
o No [If selected, respondent was taken to the end of the survey and the response was recorded]

Liaison Areas
5. Does your library provide liaison services to academic units (e.g. departments, divisions, areas of study)?
o Yes
o No

6. Does your library provide liaison services to other college units (e.g. clubs, first-year experience programs, distance education)?
o Yes
o No
o I'm not sure

7. If yes, which units does your library provide liaison services to? Select all that apply.

0 Clubs
0 Counseling
0 Distance education
0 First-year experience programs
0 Incarcerated students (current or former)
0 Performance and visual arts venues and spaces
0 Student government
0 Veterans center
0 Writing and/or tutoring centers
0 Other (please specify) [Free form text box]

Liaison Area Participation
8. Are the faculty, staff, or students in your liaison areas engaged in the services you provide? Select the option that best describes participation.
o Yes, one or more individuals from most of my liaison areas have been engaged.
o Yes, one or more individuals from some of my liaison areas have been engaged.
o No, no one has been engaged.

9. Are you seeking ways to increase engagement from your liaison areas?
o Yes
o No

10. How do you inform your liaison areas of services offered? Check all that apply.

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0 Send information via email
0 Attend meetings (e.g. departmental, club)
0 Meet with faculty individually
0 Meet with students individually
0 Attend new faculty orientations
0 Promotional flyers, brochures, etc.
0 Attend new special events (e.g. technology fair, student research events)
0 Library newsletter
0 Other (please specify) [Free form text box]

Liaison Responsibility Assignment
11. Please indicate whether your liaison responsibilities are a primary or
secondary responsibility.
o Primary
o Secondary

12. Please indicate which librarians in your library have liaison responsibilities.
o All librarians
o Most librarians
o Some librarians
o I'm not sure

13. How are librarians' assigned liaison areas determined in your library? Check
all that apply.

0 Based on librarian's subject expertise
0 Librarians collaboratively select the areas
0 Based on librarian's position
0 Areas are distributed to balance liaison responsibilities
0 Other (please specify) [Free form text box]

14. How many liaison areas are assigned to a librarian?

0 Some liaisons are assigned to more than one area, some are assigned to only
one
0 All liaisons are assigned more than one area
0 All liaisons are assigned only one area
0 I'm not sure

15. Do staff in your library (i.e. paraprofessionals) have assigned liaison areas?
o Yes
o No
o I'm not sure

16. If yes, please briefly describe staff roles that have liaison areas.

   [Free form text box]

Liaison Services Offered
17. What liaison services do you offer to your own liaison area(s)? Check all that
apply.

0 Outreach (e.g. updating liaison area on new library resources)

0 Library instruction
0 Collection development
0 Reference and research consultations
0 Creating digital learning objects (e.g. online tutorials, course guides)
0 Other (please specify) [Free form text box]
0 Embedding services into courses in LMS (e.g. Canvas, Moodle)
0 Communicating a liaison area's needs to the library
0 Curriculum collaboration
0 Copyright and fair use consultations

18. Does your library have a publicly available webpage describing its liaison services?
o Yes
o No
o I'm not sure

Training
19. Have you received training (either formal or informal) related to your liaison responsibilities?
o Yes
o No

20. If yes, please briefly describe the training you received.

[Free form text box]

Coordination and Assessment
21. As a whole, how are liaison services run at your library? Select one choice below that best describes the situation at your library.
o Liaison services are coordinated by a single person (e.g. dean, chair, liaison coordinator) for the library.
o Liaisons collectively and collaboratively coordinate liaison efforts with one another.
o Each liaison self-manages their own liaison services for themselves.

22. Has there been any assessment (either formal or informal) of liaison services at your library?
o Yes
o No
o I'm not sure

23. If yes, please briefly describe the assessment.

[Free form text box]

Challenges
24. Please briefly describe up to three challenges you face related to liaison services.

[Free form text box #1]
[Free form text box #2]
[Free form text box #2]

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25. Approximately how many full-time equivalent (FTE) students are enrolled in your college for the 2019 spring semester?
o <1,000 FTE students
o 1,001–5,000 FTE students
o 5,001–10,000 FTE students
o 10,001–20,000 FTE students
o 20,001–30,000 FTE students
o > 30,001 FTE students
o I'm not sure

26. How many full-time librarians are employed at your library?
o None
o 1–3
o 4–6
o 7–10
o 11–15
o 16 or more
o I'm not sure

27. Which of the following best describes your position?
o Full-time librarian
o Part-time librarian
o Prefer not to answer

Additional Comments
28. Please enter any additional comments you have regarding liaison services at your library.

[Free form text box]