Mind the Gap: Collaborating to Provide Equitable Services to Distance & Online Students

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Overview

- What distance & online learning look like at SUNY Oswego
- Interlibrary loan and document delivery
- Course reserves

The Division of Extended Learning

- Manages distance learning at two sites: Syracuse (branch campus) & Watertown / Fort Drum

- Manages online learning; instructional design team works with faculty to create or update online courses

- Manages a number of other academic services (ex. concurrent enrollment of high school students, English for academic purposes)

- Provides support services for non-traditional students, veterans, ROTC

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Distance Learning

- 246 undergraduate students enrolled in distance programs (graduate student numbers unknown)
- Undergraduate degree programs:
  - Business administration
  - Criminal justice
  - Human development
- Graduate degree programs include:
  - Business Administration
  - Teaching (Childhood Education & Adolescent Education)
  - Mental Health Counseling
- Graduate certificate programs include:
  - Educational Leadership
  - Health Information Technology
  - Integrated Health Systems

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Online Learning

- 200 undergraduate students enrolled in online programs (graduate student numbers unknown)
- Undergraduate degree programs:
    - Broadcasting and Mass Communication
    - Business Administration
    - Criminal Justice
    - Public Relations
    - Wellness Management
- Graduate degree programs include:
    - Biomedical and Health Informatics
    - Business Administration
    - Career and Technical Education
    - Health Services Administration
    - Strategic Communication

Online Learning

- Advanced (post-baccalaureate) certificate programs include:
  - Behavioral Forensics
  - Health and Wellness
  - Health Information Technology
  - Integrated Health Systems
  - Nursing Home Licensure
  - Trauma Studies

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Extended Learning & the Library

- Distance & online learning librarians were two separate positions until 2018
- Online learning librarian served as liaison to the LMS Support Team, which includes the instructional designers, two representatives from Campus Technology Services, the Assistant Dean of Extended Learning, and the academic videographer; team meets monthly
- Relationships strengthened by considerable outside collaboration

Exploring equivalent services

In 2018, the online learning librarian took on distance services and began exploring the ACRL Standards for Distance Learning Library Services - particularly the access entitlement principle:

> All students, faculty members, administrators, staff members, or any other members of an institution of higher education are entitled to the library services and resources of that institution, including direct communication with the appropriate library personnel, regardless of where they are physically located in relation to the campus; where they attend class in relation to the institution's main campus; or the modality by which they take courses. Academic libraries must, therefore, meet the information and research needs of all these constituents, wherever they may be.

We found something we could improve right away…

Getting materials to and from our distance and online students

Extended Learning utilizes a weekly courier service between the Oswego and Syracuse campuses.

- The library began using this service to deliver books from Penfield or interlibrary loan, to the Syracuse campus
    - Piloted in Spring 2019 with Syracuse faculty & staff
    - Opened to students in Fall 2019
- Benefits to users and library - eliminates shipping costs and the hassles of lost labels
- Usage not high -
    - Faculty: 1 has used the service
    - Students: 3 used the service to return items; 2 items sent and returned via the courier service in Spring 2020

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Ideas for the future

- Use Alma RS & Circulation to allow users to check out and return items at other SUNY campuses
- Challenges:
  - Document delivery requests must go through ILLiad, as we don't have a way to identify and filter distance students within Alma, or request owned items from other campuses
  - All distance student requests must be checked against a list retrieved from Banner, to confirm whether they are fully online, a Syracuse campus student, or somewhere in the 315 area
  - COVID-19: SUNY campuses may limit library usage by community users

Course Reserves at the Syracuse campus

- Physical materials
  - Textbooks provided by professor, circulated manually
- Electronic materials
  - Prior to Alma/Primo migration, ARES was utilized to host digital content
  - Basic scan & upload model
    - Faculty could either submit their own files, or ask for materials to be scanned
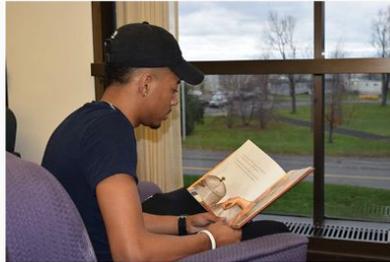   - Problem - no quality/accessibility control

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Switching from ARES to Primo

- In Fall 2019, we notified faculty of the upcoming changes
- In Spring 2020, we discontinued ARES and set up our first course reserve reading lists with electronic articles

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Electronic Reserves in Primo

To Find Readings for a Class

You can search course reserves by:

- **Course Name**
  Example: Communication Theories

- **Course Number**
  Example: COM 301

- **Professor's Name**
  Example: Jane Doe

- **Title of Reserve Item**
  The title of the book, article, video, etc. that you're looking for

Course Reserves after COVID-19

- This is just a small start; we need to start thinking of all our students as distance/online students as many of them will continue studying from a safe distance
- Working with our Acquisitions Librarian to look at professor requests as well as textbook lists from the campus bookstore
- Encouraging communication between faculty and liaison librarians to select content for electronic reserves