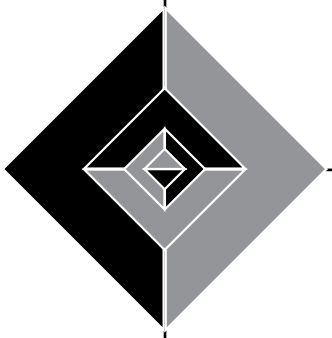

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Evolution of Library Liaisons

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Introduction

As research libraries develop new directions and priorities in response to changing needs of the students, faculty, researchers, and staff at their institutions, the role of library liaisons continues to shift and evolve. Library liaisons traditionally have helped support academic departments, faculty, and students through outreach and communication, teaching one-shot instruction sessions, offering customized research consultations, and participating in disciplinary collection development. However, in her 2014 report *Leveraging the Liaison Model*, Anne Kenney writes that many research libraries are beginning "to shift the focus away from the work of librarians to that of scholars and to develop engagement strategies based on their needs and success indicators."[1] Overall, Kenney notes that the current liaison model simply does not meet the needs of the twenty-first century university and research library. While many libraries are developing new strategies for evolving their liaison programs in order to meet new challenges in research, scholarship, and engagement, there are unanswered questions about how successful, impactful, and effective liaison programs can be developed and supported.

The purpose of this survey was to gather data about the evolving role of the library liaison and the shifting goals and strategies of liaison programs at ARL member libraries. In particular, to identify emerging trends and themes in the changes occurring in the library liaison model and the factors that influence these changes on an institutional level. Because each institution and its needs are unique, this survey focused on not only the specific changes occurring in liaison programs, but also the general conditions that contribute to both the need and support for these changes.

This survey was distributed to the 124 ARL member libraries in July 2015. Seventy members (57%) provided seventy-two responses by the August 12, 2015 deadline, and the responses summarized here continue to indicate that the evolving liaison model is a critical component in ARL member libraries' ability to meet the broad challenges of today's research libraries and take advantage of opportunities to move in new strategic directions. By providing data points, examples, and trends that will contribute to the growth and direction of liaison services, we hope that this report will contribute to library leaders' ability to support their surrounding community in new and exciting ways.

Evolution of Liaison Roles

Background research reveals that there is no shortage of literature related to the topic of liaison services in all types of libraries. Indeed, as the third SPEC Kit devoted to liaison services, this publication has the opportunity to compare data and trends from the 1992 and 2007 SPEC surveys with the data gathered in 2015. The 1992 report, SPEC Kit 189, focused on defining practices, definitions, and policies of library liaisons, but in her summary, author Gail Latta noted that "effort should be made to continue exploring non-traditional and expanded roles for liaisons, as contributing members of research teams and instructional programs."[2] Latta presciently identified one of the major shifts in liaison services when writing that, "as the physical collection becomes less central, the user is becoming the focus of library services."[3] These observations also

resonated with the authors of the 2007 report, SPEC Kit 301, as they noted a general increase in attention given to services beyond collection development, including information literacy instruction, scholarly communication education, and digital project consulting.[4]

Both the 1992 and 2007 reports provide evidence that liaison services represent one of the most dynamic areas of library organizations, constantly evolving in response to or in anticipation of the surrounding communities' activities, needs, and expectations. This survey explores the directions of these shifts. However, it also considers what these shifts mean for the professionals filling the role of library liaison and the leaders who are helping to define, guide, and assess the success of library liaison programs.

Background of Liaison Services

Sixty-seven respondents (93%) indicated that their library's organizational structure includes librarians or other library staff with liaison responsibilities. Of the five respondents that indicated they did not have library liaisons, three are non-academic libraries, in which liaison services are not relevant. Several respondents indicated that, while their organization includes library liaisons, they may call these positions something different or use a team-based approach to work with their surrounding communities. Many respondents placed the birth of their liaison programs prior to or during the 1960s and 1970s, but acknowledge that the general beginnings of the programs are unclear and that their labels and scopes have changed over time. A general trend seems to point to an evolution from subject specialists, bibliographers, and selectors in the early days of liaison activities to what a number of libraries are now framing as "engagement" facilitators.

Because of the overall uncertainty about the start of many libraries' liaison services and programs, responses to questions about how these liaison roles originally were determined indicate that there are a lot of unknowns about the process. Fifty-six respondents (84%) identified a library administrative decision as the manner in which the roles were determined, and 48 (73%) identified libraries' perceived needs of departments as a factor in the role-defining and decision-making process.

Liaison Roles

As the liaison role has shifted over time, so have the staffing categories, qualifications, and requirements of the individuals who fill these roles. Of the 67 libraries that have staff in liaison roles, only 13 (19%) responded that every professional librarian in their institution held liaison responsibilities. The majority of respondents (54 or 81%) indicated that some professional librarians' job descriptions included liaison duties and some did not. At organizations where this mix of responsibilities occurs, librarians typically assume liaison duties for a number of reasons, including being hired into a liaison-specific role, having prior experiences, education, or interest in a subject area or liaison role, and serving in a public services position where outreach is considered a primary component of the position. Many library staff members who are not professional librarians are also assuming liaison duties. Forty-two of the responding libraries (63%) indicated that some other professionals, support staff, and other library staff are serving in the role of liaison. Examples of other types of positions taking on liaison duties include archivist, bioinformationist, curator, director of communications and outreach, GIS analyst, diversity intern, library assistant/specialist/technician, research assistants, and language experts.

While a variety of staffing categories may be given liaison responsibilities, the responding libraries converge on several key qualifications for library liaisons. Although 42 libraries employ non-librarians in liaison roles, sixty-four respondents (99%) indicated that an MLS from an accredited school is a moderate to very important qualification; 44 of those (68%) reported the MLS is a "very important" qualification. In comparison, only four respondents (6%) listed a second master's degree as a "very important" qualification. Sixty-three (96%) identified "demonstrated communication skills" as a moderate to very important qualification for liaisons, with 40 (61%) listing these skills in the "very important" category. Interestingly, respondents to the 1992 survey also identified communication skills as a key qualification for library liaisons, and one that should be addressed in graduate degree programs in library science. Other qualifications that were identified multiple times in the current survey include collaborative/teamwork skills, user-centered

focus, and teaching skills. Overwhelmingly, respondents regard subject expertise as the primary reason for deciding how a liaison receives a department assignment (65 responses or 97%). Forty-five (67%) make decisions based on the liaison's position, and many libraries consider additional criteria, including a specific need or gap in the library's coverage of departments, and the liaison's interest or passion.

Liaison Assignments

There appears to be a wide spectrum of how liaison responsibilities are carried out in ARL member institutions. While there are some positions completely devoted to liaison work, in their responses to questions about liaison duties and percentages of liaison duties most respondents indicated that liaison responsibilities are often added to existing positions in order to help fill a need, help a professional grow in his or her position, or to help a professional meet a particular interest.

The number of departments assigned to a liaison ranges from one to 100, but in only seventeen libraries (25%) do all liaisons work with more than one department. Explaining the assignment of liaison responsibilities can be complicated, since there is also a wide variety of organizational structures within respondents' parent institutions. One respondent commented that questions about departmental assignments are difficult to answer because it "depends on how you define departments...some liaisons are assigned to schools within universities that may consist of multiple departments." Even so, there is evidence of a real effort among ARL libraries to ensure that various groups that comprise the surrounding community be paired with a liaison; 59 respondents (88%) have assigned a library liaison to every department within their institution or community. Within the departments, 100% of the responding libraries provide services for or reach out directly to teaching and research faculty. The majority of libraries also provide services for other faculty (99%), graduate teaching assistants and graduate students (96%), undergraduate students (94%), administrative staff (88%), and other community members, including alumni, community members (public), fellows, visiting researchers, and administrators. These numbers show a significant increase since 2007 in the support offered for undergraduates and administrative staff, when around three quarters of the responding libraries offered services for these groups.

Many libraries are also evolving toward creating liaison relationships beyond academic departments. The 1992 and 2007 surveys focused primarily on academic departments, but over half of the respondents to the current survey indicated that their libraries have developed liaison relationships with non-academic departments such as academic computing offices, athletics, career centers, centers for teaching and learning, educational technology groups, student affairs, and diversity groups. Further, when asked if library liaisons work as partners, rather than full-fledged liaisons, with various non-academic departments, 54 respondents (89%) identified centers for teaching and learning as a partner with which library liaisons work. The majority of respondents also identified information technology (74%), student affairs (67%), offices for institutional research (64%), offices of accessibility (57%), and offices of sponsored programs (56%) as partners with which library liaisons often work.

Perhaps because of this evolution in the types and numbers of departments that are assigned to library liaisons or with which library liaisons work as collaborative partners, data from the 1992, 2007, and 2015 surveys show that liaisons are clearly working with an increasing number of stakeholders. In 1992, the largest number of departments assigned to one liaison was 12, and in 2007, the largest number was 31. In 2015, the largest number is 100. While this number is definitely an outlier, since only one response included a number this high for number of departments assigned to one liaison, 23% of the respondents indicated that 10 or more departments have been assigned to a single liaison.

Department Participation and Communication

While this survey established that ARL libraries are creating support for an increasing number of departments within their communities, there is still some question over how often liaison services are used. Nearly half of the have assigned indicated that departments within their communities do not take

advantage of liaison services. Several remarked that, while most of the departments that are offered liaison services use them in some way, the extent of participation varies among departments. Nearly all survey respondents (96%) are actively seeking ways to increase participation from departments, and the rest are planning to soon. Again, nearly all of the responding libraries encourage liaisons to attend departmental meetings (98%) and actively market liaison services (97%). Other methods that ARL libraries are using to actively increase participation from departments include attending orientations and other campus events, co-authoring papers and presentations, collaborative teaching opportunities, social media, inviting departments to library events, and embedding librarians in various department-related opportunities.

A recognized method of increasing departmental participation is ensuring that libraries fully understand the needs of the communities that they serve. All of the responding libraries use communication, such as conversation, email, or other methods, with faculty, students, and researchers to attempt to assess needs and understand departmental priorities. Forty-nine libraries (75%) also use documentation from departments, such as strategic plans and promotion and tenure guidelines for this purpose, and 47 (72%) have surveyed faculty, students, and researchers to gain insight into their work. Examples of other methods that library liaisons are using to better understand departmental needs include: bibliometric analysis of faculty publications, university-level strategic plans, curriculum review, town halls, focus groups, LibQUAL+®, and collaborative research. Survey responses indicate that many libraries are using a diverse portfolio of methods to investigate community needs, which enables them to be both reactive and proactive when identifying new areas of support for library liaisons.

Liaison Core Duties and Services

The definition and core duties of a library liaison have changed fairly dramatically over the past two decades. The 2007 SPEC Kit on liaison services reviewed the 1992 and 2001 RUSA guidelines for liaisons, noting that in 1992, the RUSA guidelines mainly focused on the liaison's responsibility to gather information for collection development.[5] The 2001 RUSA guidelines expanded to include five components: three still centering around collection development and two dealing with public relations and communication with the surrounding community. RUSA's guidelines were updated again in 2010 and include a wide variety of activities related to liaison work in academic libraries, including developing collections, identifying users, and activities such as participating in campus organizations and encouraging wide library use.[6]

In this survey, nearly all the responding libraries identified the following as core liaison duties: providing one-on-one research consultations (99%), managing library collections in disciplinary areas (97%), outreach and communication (97%), and teaching one-shot information literacy sessions (96%). The majority of respondents indicated an additional suite of liaison core duties, including providing consulting on scholarly communication issues (82%), reporting news from disciplinary departments back to the library (79%), embedding in discipline-based courses (76%), providing data management support and consulting (63%), and regularly staffing the reference desk (61%). Nearly half of the respondents (46%) listed additional core duties taken on by their liaisons. Listed multiple times were citation analysis and impact metrics, using and teaching new technology tools, digital scholarship support, and literature review help.

The full menu of services offered by liaisons at ARL libraries covers a wide breadth of support areas. In 2007, primary areas of liaison services included departmental outreach, communication of departmental needs back to the library, reference, collection development, library instruction, and scholarly communication education. Each of these areas remains at the top of the current menu of liaison services (90% of all respondents named all of these services). However, the majority of respondents also named at least eight additional services that are now on the liaison menu: assistance with scholarly impact and metrics (88%), promotion of institutional repository (83%), consultation on open access issues (82%), creating web-based learning objects (80%), e-research support (80%), data management support (79%), consultation on intellectual property issues (71%), and new literacies education (58%). Examples of other services are data visualization support, GIS support, help with systematic

reviews, text mining, and promotion of open access journal development.

It is clear that each liaison doesn't offer every one of these areas of support, and that they often develop functional areas of support in addition to disciplinary areas of support. A number of respondents indicated that liaisons are not expected to meet all of the diverse needs of their departments. Rather, they are expected to leverage the strengths of other liaisons within their library, work collaboratively with other liaisons, and act as a connector between their departments and other library liaisons or community partners who may be able to help them move forward on projects and resolve complicated teaching and research situations. We continue to see this more collaborative method of work emerge through responses to questions about how library liaisons define their roles, communicate with each other, grow in their professional roles, and assess and evaluate their work and the success of entire liaison programs.

Policies and Guidelines

This expansion of liaison roles and services can make it difficult to define what, precisely, it means to be a library liaison. Even when core duties are articulated and programs are structured, many libraries find it helpful to develop policies and guidelines that advise liaison work. Nearly three-quarters of the responding libraries (47) have written policies or definitions that describe liaison work. Fewer libraries (36 or 56%) have written policies governing the functions, activities, and responsibilities of library liaisons. Liaisons continue to take a major role in defining their own work, as seen in the 55 libraries (83%) where liaisons participate in establishing the policies that do govern their activities. In 42 libraries (65%), liaisons have written goals and objectives that guide their activities, as well. Overall, this data demonstrates that liaisons generally have agency and some level of independence in defining their own roles, areas of expertise, and goals.

Administration, Communication, and Workflow

As the need to work together and leverage different individuals' expertise continues to emerge within library liaison programs, it becomes more important for liaisons and those who lead liaison programs to develop methods and strategies for communication and collaboration. Indeed nearly all of the survey respondents (97%) indicated that they actively encourage liaisons to share expertise and solve problems collaboratively. The few libraries that do not yet encourage team-based work are planning to start doing so soon. A number of respondents mentioned that collaborative work goes beyond liaison collaboration, and actually ends up looking more like a three-way conversation, including the faculty/researcher role, the library liaison, and a functional specialist who may focus on an area such as data, copyright, or GIS. Additionally, some library organizational structures bring subject and functional specialists into one, shared department where these sorts of conversations and collaborations are able to take place, and at least one respondent discussed using project-based teams that encourage various library liaisons and specialists to work together to support specific projects or initiatives.

The coordination and facilitation of library liaisons within the overall library structure has a significant impact on the ability of liaisons to form the sorts of teams and collaborations that enable them to meet the emerging needs of the surrounding communities. Survey responses indicate there is no consistent method of administering and facilitating liaison programs, though. Within the wide spectrum of methods used to organize and administer liaison programs, the most frequently used is self-administration by each liaison (27 responses or 41%). Fewer libraries use any sort of central administration structure. Nine libraries (14%) use a central liaison coordinator or manager, six (9%) use a liaison committee, and four (6%) manage liaisons through central administration. Nearly one third of the responding libraries use a unique organizational and administrative structure, examples of which often include liaisons reporting within multiple departments and to multiple supervisors, a combination of self-directed and central management, and various types of liaison leadership teams. Just as liaison duties have expanded and become more complex, the reporting lines and administrative structures of liaison roles and programs have also become more complex and messier. For comparison, in the 2007 report, about half of the responding libraries reported their liaison programs as self-directed and

a quarter reported their liaison programs as centrally administered.

In light of the data regarding the management of liaison programs, it is not surprising that the current survey indicates that liaisons report to supervisors in nearly every possible area of library work. At 40 of the responding libraries (60%) liaisons simply report to their respective department heads. At 29 libraries (43%) there are different reporting lines for different liaisons, which supports the idea that the central management or coordination of liaison programs is increasingly challenging. Part of this challenge, then, also includes communication between library decision makers and liaisons. Fifty-three respondents offered various examples of how this communication occurs within their libraries, including regular group meetings between administrators and liaisons, one-on-one meetings between administrators and liaisons, email, the use of an intranet, library administrator and liaison co-participation on library committees, liaison participation in strategic planning initiatives, regular collection of data and statistics, and other informal methods of communication. It is significant to note that multiple libraries reported that there is no effective method of this sort of communication in place or that it is currently being reviewed or explored within those libraries.

Even though communication between library liaisons and library decision makers can look messy, many libraries have developed effective methods for liaisons to communicate with each other about projects, issues, and best practices. Most respondents mentioned regular departmental meetings as an effective method for sharing ideas and knowledge. Others discussed more focused learning opportunities, such as teaching communities, brown bags, symposia and fora, retreats, internal workshops, journal clubs, and disciplinary or subject-based teams.

Training and Professional Development

Structured training and professional development also becomes an important discussion as liaison roles expand and shift. Nearly all the responding libraries (91%) provide training for new library liaisons. This data is consistent with findings from the 2007 survey on liaison services, which also found that nearly all libraries provide some sort of training for new liaisons, although about one fifth of these training opportunities were unstructured or informal. In the current survey, several respondents still mentioned that training opportunities are unstructured or informal, but many others indicated that their liaison training is "robust" or "rigorous." For many libraries, the training program appears to be customized to the liaison and the tools, skill set, and knowledge that each one will need to work with his or her assigned groups. Respondents often mentioned mentoring as a large part of the training process, and many also mentioned specific tools that new liaisons needed training on, including the Open Access Harvester tool, LibGuides, LibAnalytics, data management tools, institutional repositories, ORCID, and local online ordering systems. General areas of training mentioned multiple times include data management, scholarly communication, collections, reference, instruction and information literacy, special disciplinary topics, and outreach. Of the 51 responses received regarding new liaison training, only two specifically identified areas of "soft" skills, such as presentation skills or communication skills. This is a particularly interesting finding, since communication skills ranks so highly as a key qualification for library liaisons.

For ongoing professional development opportunities, nearly all the responding libraries (62 or 97%) offer library liaisons dedicated funding and support for attending conferences. The majority of libraries also offer continuing education and professional development in the form of internal cross-training (94%), funding for external workshops (92%), and participation in formal degree and certificate programs (70%). Other types of continuing education and development in which library liaisons participate include dedicated research days, web-based tools like lynda.com, and internally developed training programs.

Evaluation of Liaisons and Programs

Measuring the success of individual liaisons and entire liaison programs represents one area that has been identified as very challenging within relevant library literature. Overall, the majority of survey respondents indicated that the responsibility of evaluating individual liaisons on their liaison responsibilities falls to a

variety of supervisors. In nearly half of the responding libraries, the liaison's primary supervisor provides the main evaluation. However, nineteen libraries (28%) indicated that, while a liaison's primary supervisor conducts the evaluation, other library leaders provide input to the evaluation. Half of the respondents reported that the liaison's evaluation is completed based on evaluation criteria that include the liaison functions. Nearly a third reported that liaisons and their supervisors set goals on which the liaisons are evaluated. Other libraries use peer review and quantitative data to inform the evaluation of individual liaisons' success.

Sixty-three of the responding libraries (94%) do collect statistics that document liaison activities, which can be used to gain insight on the effectiveness of both individual liaisons and entire liaison programs. Most libraries collect data beyond the required ARL statistics in order to gain a broader view of the activities conducted through liaison relationships. The types of liaison activities on which statistics are collected at most responding libraries include classes and instruction sessions, research consultations, reference questions, outreach activities, number of searches conducted, collection development spending, circulation data, grant funding received, number of web-based learning objects created, and uses of objects created.

Beyond collection of these types of statistics, fewer libraries consistently evaluate the effectiveness of the overall liaison program. In fact, responses were evenly split between those libraries that do conduct formal evaluations of liaison programs (32 or 49%) and those that do not (34 or 51%). These numbers are consistent with the findings from the 2007 report; however, current data suggests that many libraries are moving beyond collecting numbers, which was the main means of evaluation reported in the 2007 SPEC Kit, and are starting to try to measure the overall impact of their liaison programs. Over half of the current survey's responding libraries (63%) conduct user surveys about their liaison programs, and over a third (38%) interview members of their constituent departments. About a quarter (28%) also document departmental meetings attended by librarians, conduct focus groups, and use other methods of exploring the impact of their programs, including external reviews with community leaders, working with library science graduate students to review liaison programs, and using matrices to gauge overall engagement.

As libraries think about how to evaluate the impact of their programs, they look for a number of different things as indicators of success. Nearly all the responding libraries use the development of new partnerships across campus as a major indicator of success (58 or 95%). The majority of libraries also look at the growth rate of research consultations (85%) and classes (80%) as indicators of success. A third also use professional recognition (39%), the retention of liaisons (33%), and additional funding from the university or institution (31%) as further indicators of liaison program success.

Challenges and Benefits

In the 2007 survey on liaison services, the top three challenges for liaisons were described as establishing and maintaining contact with faculty, time constraints and competing responsibilities for liaisons, and internal and external communication. The current survey data indicate that these are still challenges, and perhaps even more so. The two words that appeared most frequently in responses about the top challenges for library liaisons were "balance" and "scalability." Library liaisons are balancing a workload that often includes responsibilities beyond liaison activities, and are also trying to balance the more traditional types of liaison work, such as reference consultations and collection management, with growing new areas of liaison engagement, such as scholarly communication and data management consulting. A number of respondents mentioned that getting liaisons to understand these new areas of service and integrate them into the liaison role is a challenge, as it requires constant learning, growing, and training. Perhaps because of this, many respondents also mentioned communication issues, inconsistency within liaison programs, and a lack of understanding about the value and abilities of liaisons both internally and externally as major challenges. One respondent succinctly stated that the challenges with governing and growing liaison programs can fit into three categories: people, time, and money.

Although there are clear challenges as liaison programs move into new and uncharted territory,

the benefits of these programs remain clear. Library liaisons provide a "human face" for the library and ultimately allow libraries to engage more deeply in the life of the surrounding community and better understand that community's needs and trajectories. Many respondents reported that library liaisons "keep the library relevant" because they are engaged in relationships and partnerships that enable the library to grow and evolve in appropriate and valuable directions.

Discussion

After comparing data from the 1992, 2007, and current surveys on library liaisons, it is clear that liaison services and programs represent some of the most visibly evolving components of twenty-first century libraries. Some of the major areas of change for library liaisons include skill sets, core duties and responsibilities, stakeholders, methods of internal and external communication and collaboration, and the definition of impact and success. Much has changed over the previous twenty-three years, and we can anticipate that this rate of change will continue as libraries work with new partners and embrace new roles within their communities. When asked if the liaison role at their institution has undergone major changes recently, three-quarters of the respondents answered in the affirmative. Twelve others (18%) responded that changes were currently in process or about to happen. In addition to changes to core duties and responsibilities, respondents identified a number of significant changes to services. Many mentioned that liaisons were decreasing or completely jettisoning reference desk hours, embracing new modes of research, scholarship, and literacies, exploring and gaining expertise in sophisticated technology, and working collaboratively to leverage the expertise of internal and external partners.

These changes have been driven by a number of factors that are fairly consistent among responding libraries. Fifty respondents (82%) reported that changes to the liaison role have been driven by the changing landscape of scholarship and publication. Forty-two libraries (69%) developed changes based on the identification of new needs within the community, and roughly half of the responding libraries initiated liaison changes because of new library leadership. Other catalysts of change include changes in various disciplines, library reorganizations, reduced staffing, and changes in federal policies. Liaisons and administrators appear to be working together to initiate changes to liaison roles, an aspect of this evolution that situates liaisons at the center of rapid and profound change in research and higher education. The data from this survey plainly demonstrate library liaisons' facility for growing in new directions in order to enhance the libraries' value and reach. However, it is less clear that liaisons are working to shift some responsibilities in order to embrace new ones. About half of the respondents reported that liaisons have relinquished responsibilities to take on new ones. A quarter reported that no liaison duties have been relinquished, but that there is a plan to shift responsibilities over the next 1 to 3 years. Ten libraries (16%) reported no plans to formally shift liaison responsibilities in order to make room for new areas of growth. The two most commonly reported responsibilities that have been shifted away from library liaisons include staffing public service points and in-depth collection development. This becomes possible as libraries use demand driven acquisition and centralize collections work and create alternate staffing models for public service points. Library liaisons are reaching new stakeholders, participating in new conversations, and developing new areas of expertise. It will be critical for library administrators and liaisons to continue to consider ways that liaisons can shift responsibilities in order to evolve and innovate.

Conclusion

One respondent commented that "liaisons are more important than ever in the work we are doing to support campus priorities and strategic directions." Another observed that liaison roles, even within a single library, are "nuanced...given the degree of variability across units, and across individual approaches to liaison roles." The data from this survey show that successful liaisons are both independent and collaborative workers, proactive rather than reactive, and discriminating in the scope of their work, yet also flexible and open to new areas of working and partnering. As libraries move to outcomes-based assessment and strive to measure the impact of their work, it becomes

increasingly important for liaisons to participate in these conversations and articulate their goals and ideas for measuring progress or success. In 1992, SPEC Kit 189 called for library liaisons to "explore non-traditional and expanded roles" and to act as "contributing members of research teams and instructional programs."[7] It feels safe to write that this is exactly the direction in which the library liaison role has evolved, and that liaisons are now partnering in ways that were unimaginable twenty-three years ago. At this point in time, library liaisons have the opportunity and resources to move beyond a "contributing" role in these partnerships. Data from the current survey provide strong evidence that liaisons are proactively leading community conversations and initiatives in the areas of data management, teaching and learning, and scholarly communication. We will continue to see the liaison role shift and evolve, as library liaisons move from contributing partners to full-fledged leaders in the education and research enterprise.

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