Personal Librarians: can we help with student retention?

Elizabeth Yates, Liaison/Scholarly Communication Librarian
Brock University

3rd Personal Librarian and First-Year Experience Conference March 2018
Learning outcomes

You will recall details about:
• How Library use can enhance student success and retention
• Brock University’s Personal Librarian program
• Preliminary work on a Personal Librarian retention program
INTERSECTION

PSE Retention and Academic Libraries

Created by Kirby Wu from Noun Project
Brock University: Retention and graduation

- 87% continue to 2nd year
- 77% to 3rd year
- 70% to 4th year
- 68% graduate within 6 years

Brock ranks 11th of 19 Ontario universities
Retention & attrition in PSE

- Retention boosters:
  - Sense of belonging
  - Student achievement
  - Social involvement

- Attrition factors:
  - Socioeconomic status
  - High-school prep
  - Student IQ
Library role

- Positively correlated with increased retention:
  - Library as a social learning space
  - Attending Library programming
  - Using Library services and resources
  - Receiving Library instruction
  - Interaction with Library staff
Libraries can boost retention:

- Provide individualized research assistance and personal attention
- Build student research skills as key component of academic success
- Partner with other academic services
INTERSECTION

Personal Librarians & Retention

Created by Kirby Wu from Noun Project
Personal Librarians:

“...build long-term, one-on-one connections that allow students to have the confidence and resources to be successful in [their] skill sets...”

-- Moniz and Moats, 2014
“When librarians become part of a student's support network, the student performs better academically.” -- Bell (2014)
Brock PL program

● Est. 2014
● Aligned with Liaison Librarian roles
● 2017-18: 9 librarians, 5,044 students
● Low number of replies, but v. good email metrics & survey feedback
Brock retention grant program

- Goal: meet/exceed ON retention and graduation rates
- May 2017: $100,000 retention grant project open to all employees
- Library received $13,000
Personal Librarian for Retention

- $\frac{1}{3}$ of Library Retention Grant; focus on “at-risk” students
- Targeting transfer students:
  - Struggling to adjust socially, academically
  - Navigating complex information systems
Dear Subscriber,

The Library is here to help you succeed in your life at Brock. As a transfer student, you may not have had a chance to discover all we have to offer. So we’ll be touching base with helpful tips over the next couple of months.

First of all, this **guide** is a great intro to Library spaces, resources and services. Find out even more by attending our **Discover Your Library** orientation workshop on Feb. 27 - register via Experience8U and get a CWC Personal Growth Domain Credit.

We also offer **guides** for specific academic programs: these help you find the best resources to succeed on your assignments!

If you ever have a question, don’t hesitate to ask: You can visit our AskUs desk at any time; or chat with Peer Assistants who **chat with a librarian** are stationed closer to the coffee bar on the main floor. You can even reach out virtually by using our AskALibrarian chat reference service - just look for the logo on the Library website.

If you’d like more in-depth help, we’ve got librarians who specialize in your academic subject areas: just use the **Book a Research Consultation** guide to find the librarian for your program and get in touch.

And finally, if you’re interested in working in the Library, watch **Career Zone** for Student Library Assistant positions to be posted later in February.

All the best,

The Brock Library team
• 474 transfer students
• 2 messages:
  • Feb - Opens: 53%, Clicks: 2%
  • March - Opens: 35%, Clicks: 6%
Moving forward

- Do we need a “special” retention PL program?
- Investigate other populations with retention challenges e.g. International, Indigenous
- Assess success!
Key references

Bell, S. J. (2014). Retention matters, but it's not the only thing that counts: as higher education shifts its focus away from retention toward graduation, librarians are seeking new ways to connect with students and ensure their success. *Information Outlook*, (1). 11.


Questions?
eyates@brocku.ca