Hello, I’m your Librarian
Outreach as a bridge between the library and the Users

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Introduction

When I first started at Geisel Library in 2015, everything was new to me.
1. New Librarian
2. First, full-time position
3. New State (From New Jersey - > California)
4. First Korean Studies Librarian at UCSD
5. Relatively new Transnational Korean Studies program

Looking at number 4 and 5, I immediately saw the need to connect with the people involved in developing the Korean collection: Faculty and students. And as the Liaison Librarian, I knew the best way to meet them was through persistent outreach.

Korean Collection/Program

UC San Diego started to collect Korean materials in 1987 for their Korea-Pacific Program in School of International Relations and Pacific Studies (now known as School of Global Policy and Strategy). However, UCSD lacked Korean faculty and they did not have any Korea-related projects, which hindered the collections growth.

Outreach Events

As Liaison Librarian, I proactively engage with my students and faculty to promote myself and the services the Library provides, to find areas of interest for collection development, and to establish a connection with my users for future collaboration.

To meet my users, I tried many different outreach methods:
• Tabling in front of classrooms/library walk and going to tabling events for Student Organizations (KSA, LINK, etc.)
• Going to faculty’s office hour to meet them 1:1
• Attending the faculty meeting
• Hosting events for students (possible collaboration)

Welcome Night in the Library

The idea for Welcome Night in the Library came from a faculty meeting I had with the Korean Studies Program. We had a very similar goal in mind when planning this event: The Program and I wanted to be more visible to the students as we were both new. We wanted this to be a fun, interactive event, where students who were interested in Korea could come and learn about the Program and how it could benefit them and to meet me and learn about what the Library offers.

Things we did:
1. Offer free food (mostly Korean food)
2. Collaborated with the International Center, Study Abroad Center, and a student Organization
   a) Staff from International Center talked about support
   b) Student who did study abroad in Korea talked about her experience living in Korea
   c) Student-run K-pop cover dance group
3. Book display with collection highlights and librarian’s info

As you can see from the things we did, this event required lots of cross-collaboration with other campus centers as well as with a student organization.

Korean Film Festival and Symposium

The Korean film Festival started in 2008 with huge support from the campus as well as the community. They were able to invite directors, scholars, and other guests to have discussions about the topic of the films, and become a unique event to promote Korea.

In the recent years, Mannam, a graduate student organization, came to manage the Korean Film Festival. I knew this event had great attendance and could become a good outreach event and wanted to get involved. After talking with the student president, I realized that the event was not what it used to be. They did not have the support they used to have and only worked with the Transnational Korean Studies Program, School of Global Policy and strategy, and the House of Korea in Balboa Park (community group). The Library was completely left out! I needed to change this.

I emailed the president of Mannam and asked for a 1:1 with them to talk about event planning. Mannam did not know that the library could provide assistance (picking a theme, purchasing the films, catering, etc) and was shocked to find out. It was too late to plan any big changes but I was still able to add a little Library flair to the event by having a book display to compliment the films.

In the future, we will be working together to host the Korean Film Festival together so we can promote Korea as well as the Library Collection. We would also like to bring producers, directors, and speakers as we did in the past to encourage growth of interest in Korean Studies on campus.

Conclusions

As a Liaison Librarian, I feel that outreach is the most important thing I can be doing to reach out and to learn about my faculty and students. The visibility of the librarian is essential. Through these events, I get my face-to-face time with them.

I consider these two events to be the most successful out of all my outreach events. In other outreach event such as tabling, I could meet many students but will also encounter students who are not in my specialty. Also, I have about a minute to explain everything before they wonder off to the next table. At these two events, I had students who were interested in Korea and I was able to speak to them before the event so I had their attention.

Questions and Next Steps

• Cultural events vs. Academic events?
• How can I enhance my visibility beyond these outreach?
• How can I get integrated into the curriculum?

Outreach never ends because we get new students and new faculty each year. However, through these outreach events, my goal is to reach more students and faculty and ultimately get integrated into the curriculum. Many times, outreach event can be a good way to collaborate with your department and it may open new doors for the librarian. For me, the Welcome Night was my way into the faculty meeting and after the Film Festival, I was invited to more events by the student organization. I will continue to outreach to my users to increase their interest in the Korean collection as well as to get into the classrooms.