

# Fundamentals for the Academic Liaison

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FUNDAMENTALS FOR THE ACADEMIC LIAISON

by Richard Moniz, Jo Henry, and Joe Eshleman

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Richard Moniz, Jo Henry,  
and Joe Eshleman

**Neal-Schuman**



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# Preface

*The role of the library and librarians on campus has changed dramatically in the past two decades. As most librarians are well aware, the library is no longer viewed as an isolated warehouse of books and the librarian no longer seen as a disconnected player in the higher education workplace. Despite prognostications to the contrary, the library and librarians remain as relevant as or perhaps even more relevant than ever before with regard to the academic enterprise. Since the adoption by the Association of College and Research Libraries of information literacy standards, the transformation of the Internet from its days as a static resource into the fast-changing, interactive environment that most of us depend on reflects the new normal. Librarians must come to see themselves as much more integrated than in the past. The services performed and the educational role played by the library staff are what really makes a difference. Attending college is one of the most important decisions that one makes, and it is the total college experience that makes it so valuable. This is something hard, if not impossible, to replicate by Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) and similar efforts to relegate teaching and learning to some sort of rote, prepackaged activity. Teachers can still add enormous value to the learning process, as can librarians. We wrote this book because we believe that library liaisons are at the forefront with regard to the future of library services in this technological age.*

Our modern culture is clearly conducive to an approach to life where one plugs in headphones to one's iPhone and tunes out the "real world." One

communicates not in thoughtful face-to-face discourse but rather through texts and tweets limited by character counts and through the often trivial nature of “discussions” on Facebook. We are not Luddites. In fact, our book will touch on many of the exciting and innovative technologies that can be used to enhance and improve the role of the library liaison. A library liaison’s role is to act as a link or bridge between the library and faculty, staff, and students. Through this connection the academic liaison provides support and information on library resources and services to further the overall academic mission. Our contention is that much of what needs to be done by liaisons is best done, at least initially and when possible, in person. The establishment of relationships with the faculty they serve is the cornerstone of good liaison work. We will cover much in great detail in this book, but if forced to boil it down, we would say that this is the goal—establishing genuine and useful relationships with others. Interpersonal skills are at a premium and must be the focus of our overall intent.

As you read through our work, we hope that you will get ideas and be spurred on to consider new approaches and avenues for building and sustaining relationships with faculty. The writing of this book certainly forced us to consider our relationships and what we were doing or not doing well. Improvement in this regard is an iterative process that requires continuous implementation, assessment, and reflection. In our journey we have had the good fortune to work with a number of interesting colleagues. Without the input from and interactions we experienced with others, especially faculty, we would not have produced as comprehensive a work. We owe much to these colleagues as well as our friends and families for being supportive and encouraging. We would also like to express our gratitude and appreciation to college and university administrators who recognize the critical role played by library liaisons. The success of the liaison position is often predicated upon their overall understanding and appreciation for this role and what librarians in general can do in order to enhance the overall college experience.

In closing, and as you begin to explore our work herein, you are reminded yet again that library liaisons are necessary, in fact critical. Do not take yourself too seriously, but always remember that your role as a liaison is one that is fundamental not only to the academic enterprise and to the goals of all of our institutions but also to the students themselves, as you prepare them to live full, active lives with the information skills necessary to be successful in whatever they choose to do.

# Faculty/Staff Orientation Meetings

*Fall brings the arrival of a new academic semester, and for the academic liaison this means he or she will be giving library orientation meetings for faculty and staff. The library may have new holdings, database offerings, and services. Perhaps a computer lab has been updated or new spaces for group study created within the library facility. Maybe the new library website has been launched over the summer. The library liaison must quickly become familiar with all of these changes and include them in an orientation presentation. This individual is the link between the library and the college's or university's faculty, support staff, and administration. The liaison is also the expert on everything library related. Preparation is important because this is an especially critical time for establishing relationships that will lead to the long-term success of the liaison and the library overall.*

Establishing an early connection between the library liaison and the faculty and staff is at the core of liaison work. Without this interaction, an academic library is limited in the assistance and services provided to these personnel. The library becomes an afterthought to the educational experience as opposed to being a fully integrated component of a student's education. A successful liaison program needs a wide variety of interactions. The relationships established with faculty as well as support personnel such as administrative assistants, academic advisors, program developers, and other nonlibrary staff will enhance the library's role in achieving the overall goals of the academic center. Liaisons also can provide critical assistance to faculty,

support staff, and administration in other ways (such as supporting research and scholarship). It all begins with establishing a personal relationship, and the first connection will be the orientation meeting.

## Advanced Planning Basics

Each college or university is unique, and the orientation meeting must be tailored to serve both the institution as well as the attending audience. Understanding the goals of both the library and the institution is essential. How does the library fit into the overall educational objectives of the college or university? How does information literacy fit in as a component of broader curricular goals? Is the meeting for a community college or other type of institution that has a high number of new professors each term? How will the orientation change if delivered at a well-established college or university where most faculty members and staff have been working for years? Understanding the organization will help in making the decision of what to include and emphasize in the orientation meeting. With this information, it is possible to establish the objective of the orientation meeting. This is the first step.

As a presenter, you must do several other essential things before the orientation begins. If there is a budgetary component to holding the meeting, you must obviously plan out any costs well in advance. If you do not have direct access to a budget, this may require some thought before meeting with a library administrator as to the specific needs. This may not be a factor with a short, thirty-minute presentation, but some orientation meetings may include food, drinks, prizes, or other giveaways. Next, you should determine a location, date, and time. In some cases the library may be incorporated into a broader institutional plan for orientation. Rooms and necessary equipment should be reserved in advance. Along with deciding on the necessary meeting space you must estimate the number of attendees. This is also important to know if information packets or handouts for attendees will be prepared in advance. If the meeting has a food or snack component, the number of attendees is usually required. (Often the approved campus vendor needs a final head count forty-eight or more hours in advance to properly prepare.) Because of these needs, you should set a deadline for the orientation that gives enough time to put everything in place. It is worth noting that an RSVP

or sign-up process is ideal but faculty returning from a summer break may be overwhelmed. Accounting for attendees can be challenging but made easier if orientation is mandatory. By chatting with an academic department chair or by looking at the past institutional history of attendance at these sessions, you could be better prepared. Decide how the meeting will be announced and advertised. Again, is this orientation part of a larger faculty meeting that day? Will it need to be on the agenda of departmental faculty meetings or should reminder notices be sent by e-mail? Advertising should be part of the preparation. Remember, as part of this announcement the dates, time, location, and any attractive perks (such as food or giveaways) should be noted. See figure 1.1.

**FIGURE 1.1**  
**Advanced planning checklist**

<p><b>FACULTY/ACADEMIC STAFF ORIENTATION MEETING</b></p> <p>Assigned Liaison: _____</p> <p>Date: _____ Time: _____ Location: _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> New Staff/Faculty    <input type="checkbox"/> Returning Staff/Faculty</p> <p>Objective: _____</p> <p>Budget Allowance: _____</p> <p><b>Action Checklist</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Room reserved</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Equipment reserved/secured</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Meeting advertised</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Attendees reminder/confirmation notice sent</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Number of attendees estimated</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Food/beverage ordered</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Giveaways secured and organized</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Second attendees reminder sent</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Handouts printed</p>
--

Once the advanced planning is under way, it is then time to prepare for the presentation itself. While the orientation meetings will differ between organizations, some commonalities can be applied to any situation. These essentials will be combined in a variety of ways to form the core of the presentation.

### **Advanced Planning Checklist**

- Objective
- Budget
- Location
- Date/time
- Advertising
- Food/beverage
- Prizes/goodie bags
- Equipment/materials

## **Presentation Essentials**

Delivering the orientation will also require planning and preparation. There are specific topics of information to cover during new and returning faculty, support staff, and administrative orientations. However, other essential elements of the presentation apply to all audiences. These elements include the presentation medium, staff introductions, food, giveaways, handouts, and the possibility of a physical or virtual library tour.

The medium selected for presentations at orientation meetings may vary. This decision will be influenced by the presenter's preference as well as the actual location of the orientation meeting. In many cases, these gatherings will not take place in the library but in some convenient meeting room, classroom space, or auditorium. The extent to which technology is provided to assist with the presentation may vary considerably. When technology is available consider all alternatives, such as the use of an iPad, a wireless laptop computer, or an audience response system (i.e., clickers). It is possible, however, that the task of explaining how to navigate the library's web pages may have to be done without the use of a computer. Never assume what equipment and access is available. Always check ahead and plan accordingly. Allow enough time to make adjustments or changes to the choice of

medium. Always have backup plans in case disaster strikes or a glitch (such as loss of Internet access or flash drive malfunction) should arise. Liaisons must be mobile, plan ahead, and know all of the presentation options.

Regardless of the chosen medium, each orientation meeting will need to cover some basic topics. There are a number of ideas that can be incorporated into these presentations. Some of these may include the library mission and a summary of the numerous ways the library can assist faculty and staff. Also include in the presentation a list of resources, including books, newspapers, magazines, CDs, e-books, database collections, thesis and research papers, a library map, and key library web pages. Illustrate how to find important library information online. Everyone will also need to understand how to log in to access information, database materials, and e-books from remote locations. Rules regarding borrowing, material and equipment checkout, copyright, reserving rooms and computer labs, and interlibrary loans are all basic presentation topics. Additionally, the areas of information literacy (IL) assistance and arranging IL classes should be mentioned.

Keep in mind that depending on the audience, interest levels will vary on these basic topics and the presentation should be tailored accordingly. No orientation will cover every topic. In fact, sometimes it helps to discuss with other library staff or faculty ahead of time what is the most important information and what should be prioritized. Include information of interest to specific departments if possible. Show how the library can assist their department in meeting their specific information needs. For example, if the meeting is for science faculty members, introduce any new subscriptions to databases that would benefit their classes. If there is a special library on campus (such as a music library), have a representative attend to give highlights of the collection. If the orientation is for administrative support staff, mention any delivery service that brings library materials directly to the department. Faculty as well as administrators may be interested in conference rooms located in the library or equipment available for conference room presentations. These are all examples of illustrating how the library can help the various orientation attendees achieve their own specific goals. This will personalize the relationship between the library staff and the rest of the academic community and enhance the value of the library and its services. Ideally, all orientation attendees should be invited to tour the library in person to familiarize themselves with the location of materials, computer labs, and other resources. Library tours can follow the orientation meeting or be

offered at another time. It would be a plus for a library liaison to tour with faculty and staff as this further promotes the growing relationship that is so critical to success. Consider appointments for tours as well as select times for an open house. A virtual tour of the library could also be important. A tour of this kind could be accomplished in any number of creative ways, which include video production and screencasts. (Details on creating these types of tutorials are covered in chapter 4.)

Librarians often find orientation meetings limited to thirty minutes. In these cases there is often internal debate on topics and depth of coverage. Based on the audience, information relayed should be prioritized, with less critical information included as time allows. A presenter should use advance practice to correct timing of these presentation areas. Staying within a pre-assigned time allowance will allow for all critical information areas to be covered, even when time is short. Regardless of the amount of time, remember this is both a learning experience and a marketing pitch.<sup>1</sup> You need to hook the audience by getting them to understand the important role of the library and liaisons and how they can be utilized to meet their needs. Due to time constraints it may be necessary to “tease” their interest in library holdings and services. Inform them in concrete ways how the library can further their research projects and assist with class assignments. For example, share specific success stories using the names of their colleagues. Once they reach out to the liaison, the opportunity to promote more of the library resources and services is available. Often the orientation meeting is the first impression. Make it good! Leave them wanting to come back for more.

The orientation should include an introduction of the library staff. If possible, have the library staff attend or stop in during the orientation meeting to personally greet the attendees. (Sometimes library staff can participate as attendees in other nonlibrary elements of orientation as well.) Remember, when the goal is building relationships, you should not underestimate the value here of this participation. It is hoped that through the orientation process general faculty and other attendees will have a chance to link a face to their assigned liaison’s name. If possible, these librarians can introduce themselves, explain their areas of subject expertise, and summarize their library duties. For example, if only select liaisons actually teach information literacy classes or if one librarian handles interlibrary loans, it is important for faculty to know who these individuals are and how to contact them. If a librarian is unable to attend, be sure to show a picture or profile video link (if

available) and introduce his or her subject areas of focus. All library staff pictures, names, and contact information should be included in the PowerPoint presentation and on handouts. Make it easy to connect in whatever manner the nonlibrary staff or faculty member is most comfortable.

Using handouts with important information is also recommended during the orientation meeting. Even with a PowerPoint or Internet presentation, handouts are something attendees can take with them and refer back to at a later time. Included in the handout package could be a list of critical links, existing or new library resources, useful forms (such as materials or an interlibrary loan request), and library liaisons with contact information.<sup>2</sup> (Many library forms are electronic so include the appropriate links.) A list of databases with summaries and full-text availability would also be useful, including guidelines on accessing electronic information from both library and remote locations. You might also include general library policies, library hours, rules for checking out or reserving materials, how to access available equipment, and any other pertinent library information. Guidelines for booking an information literacy class, including lead time and assignment requirements, could be in the handouts as well. While these worksheets should be concise, including a hard copy of all areas covered in the presentation as well as important information for which time constraints may restrict in-depth coverage is a good idea.

Finally, an ideal orientation meeting would include food and be fun! While orientation presentations are often lost in day-long meetings, adding a twist would make it memorable. Including breakfast or lunch can not only extend interaction time with personnel but also increase attendance. What better way to get all the faculty and staff to the meeting? Make it a tradition! This is also a great way for library liaisons to interact with faculty and staff in a relaxed social atmosphere. Providing goodie bags or even a raffle giveaway at the end of the presentation will guarantee a positive experience.<sup>3</sup> It will also promote annual attendance at an event that many existing faculty members would rather skip. Make the orientation fun!

### Presentation Essentials Checklist

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Medium              | <input type="checkbox"/> Introduction of staff |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Audience assessment | <input type="checkbox"/> Handouts              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Topics to cover     | <input type="checkbox"/> Food and fun          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Library tour        |  |

## Faculty Orientations

Faculty orientations are often broken down into two different meetings—new faculty and returning faculty. Each group will have different needs and expectations for the orientation meeting. While some aspects of the presentations will be the same, new faculty will need an emphasis on the basic library information, collections, and services. Returning faculty will be more interested in additions and changes to the library resources and activities.

For new faculty members, coverage of information such as the library's location, material checkout, general library holdings, library services, document delivery, reserves (electronic, book, and media), navigating the library website, and available equipment is important. New faculty members also need to know how to request their own library cards as well as cards for graduate assistants and family members if these borrowing privileges are allowed. The importance of information literacy and the school's accreditation should be discussed as it relates to library services. Also, provide the URL for any specific faculty pages or helpful web pages that target faculty needs. If the presentation has a live connection to the library website, take attendees through the faculty pages and highlight the main areas of information. New faculty should also be made aware of special rooms for classroom instruction or faculty collaboration that the library provides. A general collection overview should be given to these new hires. If possible, lead these professors through the library website online and explain how to access a repository of faculty works and dissertations.

For returning faculty members, remember to emphasize what is new and different in the library from the previous school year. This would include additions to the collection, databases, multimedia, library guides, study spaces, equipment, computer labs, and any changes to library services impacting faculty. Once again, tailoring library resources specifically to departments is a plus. Changes to the library website for the returning faculty members should be mentioned and illustrated online if possible. Noting website alterations is important so returning faculty do not become frustrated in locating information that may have been moved. Be selective with information for returning professors. Keep them engaged, not bored!

It is important that all new materials (books and multimedia) and database holdings are reviewed in both new and returning faculty orientation meetings. Point out library collection improvements through print and database

additions. Also take a moment to mention that library liaisons are available to assist with these new information sources if a professor has to plan a class project or lecture presentation. Be positive about the collection and let faculty know the library is there to meet their needs and those of their students.

At most institutions faculty research is important to both professors and their departments. As a requirement of the position, especially when it involves tenured faculty, research projects are an area where librarians can help. Point out any special assistance the library or the liaisons provide with research projects and remind faculty that interlibrary loan (ILL) is available to access materials not within the collection. Review the ILL policy, including the ordering and delivery of materials requested. If faculty members have extended borrowing privileges, intrauniversity borrowing privileges, or checkout recall it is good to mention these perks. Also of value to faculty members who are interested in publishing are information about and links to academic journal rankings, acceptance rates, and citation usage information. Citation assistance such as RefWorks and citation guides may also be helpful to faculty members doing research. If possible, provide real examples of how the library has assisted with faculty projects in the past. This will help establish trust in the reliability of library services.

Copyright is another important area to touch on in all of the faculty orientations. While there may not be enough time to go into depth on this topic, faculty should be reminded of basic copyright policies and how these may affect their use of published information. An overview of the fair use of materials with regard to purpose, nature, amount, and financial impact should be considered. Special laws for online teaching (TEACH Act) is copyright information faculty need to know.<sup>4</sup> Provide the name and contact information of the library's copyright specialist. If the library or university website offers copyright assistance through website links (laws, compliance statement, organizations, and copyright records) or online tutorials, it also could be pointed out to faculty members.

Special faculty support can be delivered in different ways, and it can make faculty's use of library holdings and services easier. This support may be delivered through research guides, faculty information pages, class pages, plagiarism tools, or media equipment. The fact that the library has a computer lab or multimedia viewing room may be exactly what the professor needs to know. Many libraries may have a lab for audio and video creation and Macintosh computers with special design software. Mention any

additional means for faculty updates on library announcements throughout the year by newsletters, electronic discussion list feeds, or blogs. Faculty support may also come in the form of adding library liaison contact information, electronic reserves, subject guides, videos, and other pertinent information resources to classroom software (such as Blackboard or Moodle). Embedded librarians can provide these resource lists and other help to the students. Let the professors know this assistance is available and to contact their liaison for additional information.

Information literacy is a large component of libraries and liaison work at colleges and universities. Depending on institutional support, some IL services are conducted only at the request of the faculty and others are an integrated part of the curriculum. Proactive information literacy is often the result of accreditation requirements. During orientation meetings, the library's role and the services it can provide (including teaching IL classes) should be discussed. Guidelines for working with liaisons or IL instructors, scheduling classes, and understanding how IL is delivered (such as a web conferencing option) should also be reviewed. Again, the emphasis should be upon utilizing the liaison relationship.

Faculty need to know about the library's acquisitions process in their orientation meeting. How do they order new materials? How can a liaison assist in this selection? The budget allocation may be based on the number of students for a major, the number of courses offered, prior rates of spending, cost of materials, number of faculty, and usage statistics.<sup>5</sup> Also, the criteria used to prioritize requests need to be explained. Sometimes the final decision lies in the hands of the department while other times the library will make the final choice when ordering new materials. Faculty should be encouraged to contribute suggestions for expanding the holdings. Mention that liaisons can facilitate suggestions with sources such as Choice Reviews Online (which has its own Facebook page) or Yankee Book Peddler's Global Online Bibliographic Information (GOBI) alert system if offered by the library. If the library has materials the faculty need and use it benefits everyone, especially students.

Library collection strengths and weaknesses should not be ignored during orientation talks.<sup>6</sup> Not all libraries have everything, and faculty members should be tailoring projects to coordinate with library resources. Point out the positives in the holdings and services. However, also indicate areas that need improvement or where budget restrictions have limited resources. Faculty need to know what they realistically have at their disposal with regard to

research materials, services, equipment, and spaces. With this information they can more effectively plan their courses.

During faculty library tours, emphasize areas of the library these personnel may utilize, such as a computer lab for classes or a faculty-only media space. If a physical tour is not possible during the orientation, always invite them to the library. During virtual tours of the library website, review how to search for materials, access database articles, locate a faculty resource page, request materials, put materials on reserve, and contact their liaison. Both physical and virtual tours should be a part of all faculty orientations. Even returning faculty can learn something new about the library.

Finally, tell faculty members they are critical to the library's success. They need to know how important they are from the library's perspective, and they should hear this in the orientation meeting. These professors will be writing the assignments for which students utilize library resources and will be scheduling IL classes. They will be contacting liaisons for assistance with integrating information literacy and creating well-written assignments. These instructors will also be working with liaisons to locate or purchase collection materials to support their class instruction. Professors pitching a new course will need liaisons to assist with information regarding available resources to support the proposals. All these activities involve library assistance. Faculty members need librarians, but *librarians* need *faculty*. These professors are in many ways the most important segment of the library's "customer base." Just as Ken Blanchard and Sheldon Bowles suggest in their classic book on customer service, *Raving Fans*, make these faculty members raving library fans!<sup>7</sup>

When the orientation meeting is completed, it is important to do two final steps—evaluation and follow-up. Feedback from attendees can provide important insight into the effectiveness of the orientation meeting. Use short evaluation surveys (either on paper at the end of the meeting or by e-mail at a later time) that include questions about what information was most useful, which topics of interest were not covered, and recommendations for future meetings. Follow up after the orientation meeting with an e-mail to all faculty members that thanks the attendees and includes attachments of hand-outs, critical information, and links professors can save in electronic form. This also provides the essential information to faculty who may have missed the orientation gathering. Evaluation and follow-up should not be skipped. Next year the orientation will be even better!

### Faculty Orientation Meeting Topic Checklist

- Collection overview
- Research support/materials
- New materials/databases
- Library services and support
- Copyright information
- Information literacy assistance
- Library strengths and weaknesses
- Physical and virtual tour
- Marketing pitch—importance of faculty

## Administrative Staff Orientations

While connecting to faculty members is critical to the success of the library, often forgotten is an orientation meeting for the college's or university's administration and support staff. A key difference in planning this orientation meeting compared to one for faculty members is that these personnel will typically be coming to the library with one specific goal or project in mind.<sup>8</sup> The library may be just the place for information critical to projects and proposals. For example, information on demographics, marketing trends, educational trends, or academic studies found at the library may prove valuable to administrators, or a library conference room may be the perfect setting for a support staff meeting. Both groups need to know what the library can offer and understand the basic steps for utilizing the library to meet their needs.

The liaison should consider two avenues for reaching the educational support staff. First, returning employees can be treated in a similar manner as returning faculty members. This orientation meeting can be tailored to point out changes and modifications to library resources and services. A second avenue is to pursue the appropriate new employees at the college or university. Working with the human resources department will allow liaisons to tailor library information, a library tour, or even a presentation to the new hires who will utilize the library resources. It is a good idea for liaisons to employ the assistance of their library director when pursuing new hires through the human resources department.

In addition to information, the library can provide, as mentioned, meeting rooms, media equipment, and specialized software to support administration

and other staff members. Included in the orientation should be a list of all the available materials and services that may be useful to these personnel. This may include things such as video players or recorders, electronic readers, display tables, and laptop computers. Also include any meeting room spaces as well as video/audio labs that may be useful. Staff members may find special graphics, website, and design software useful, and if technology support is available, that is a plus.

Placing materials on reserve is a common request among faculty. Guidelines for accomplishing this along with any limitations on number of items or length of time should also be explained. A review of any necessary reserve forms (either on paper or online) and information on delivery of materials (if available) should be reviewed. Staff members should feel comfortable reserving materials for their departments.

The involvement of faculty members in the collection development process may extend to their support staff as well. A brief overview of the acquisitions process could be helpful for these personnel. Included should be the process for new material requests and the effect of funding on such requests. For example, if there are funds set aside for purchases throughout the year, what are the limitations? How far in advance must a request be made to ensure it can be added to the collection for use in a class? What are key budgetary dates for future purchases that may arise? If support staff has an awareness of the acquisitions process, they can better assist faculty members if requested.

The orientation meeting should also inform staff members as to the process of checking out resources such as a book, magazine, or DVD. Review library policies that affect their use and be sure to include steps for getting a library card for the new employees. What special privileges are extended to these staff members? Are items used for class purposes allowed to be checked out for longer periods of time? Also, encourage staff members to use the library to check out books to read for personal enjoyment. Once again, the overarching goal is about establishing relationships and the greater amount of contact, even if for personal use, benefits everyone in the long run.

Often libraries are the source for copy machines for staff members. Review the number and location of copy machines as well as their capabilities. For example, are two-sided copies and stapling options available? Does the machine group papers automatically? Does the library have a color copier available? The logistics of paying for copies by these staff members should also be

reviewed. For example, does the department have an electronic card for making copies outside of their immediate office? Are copies free or charged back to the department?

Reserving rooms and media equipment is something all support staff will do at some point during the school year. Many libraries now allow self-booking of rooms. In addition to indicating what rooms are available, their sizes and description, also review the policy for room reservation. How far in advance can a room be reserved? Are there any limitations? What spaces are available for class sessions and is there computer access? If there is a media room that can be reserved, bring this to the attention of the staff. Also note any rooms that may be suitable for a formal business meeting held by administrators. As in the faculty orientation meeting, provide a list of equipment available for staff members along with checkout guidelines and limitations, such as equipment (for example, audio/video equipment or in-house DVD players) that must be used only in the library.

All administration and staff should know how to use the library website. If possible, an online demonstration highlighting key areas of the website should be planned. The orientation meeting should deliver a review of how to search the catalog as well as sample searches in some of the library's subscribed databases. If any subject guides are available, point those out as well. These could assist staff members in locating the information they need. Make a special note if there is a library guide specific to assisting faculty and staff with basic library operations and services. Always encourage them to contact their department's library liaison for assistance and provide liaison contact information both in print and online.

Finally, encourage feedback during your orientation meeting. Ask participants about their potential projects and requests to see how the library may assist. Communication is essential to matching library support with staff needs. Consider a brief written evaluation at the end of the meeting to determine not only how informative the meeting was but also what topics and issues not covered may be of help. Often people are more comfortable writing a suggestion than voicing one. Always be open and receptive to staff and administrative needs. Once again, establish the personal connection as a library liaison so that these special personnel will be comfortable with asking for help.

**Administration/Support Staff Orientation Topic Checklist**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Available materials  | <input type="checkbox"/> Copy machines                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reserves             | <input type="checkbox"/> Reserving media and materials  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Acquisitions process | <input type="checkbox"/> Conference rooms or classrooms |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Retrieving resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Database review                |

## Conclusion

As preparation for orientation meetings begins, keep in mind that these gatherings are more than a presentation to the academic community. They are a piece of a relationship puzzle—liaisons connecting with other faculty and staff. As a library liaison, building trust with faculty and other academic personnel allows communication to flow from library to academic departments. If successful, this relationship not only positively affects the individual student in the classroom but also contributes to the overall goals of the academic community.

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