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Supporting Community Transformation: Becoming a Community-Engaged Academic Library

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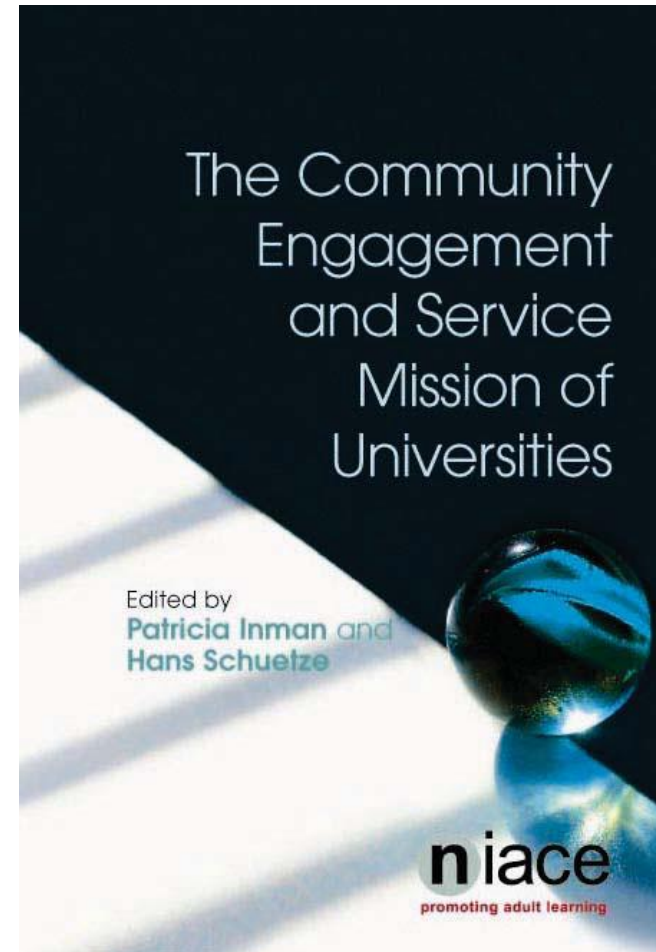
Supporting Community Transformation: Becoming a Community-Engaged Academic Library

Patrick Griffis

Business Librarian-University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Community Engagement and Service as Third Mission

- Community engagement and service is considered to be third mission of academic institutions
- Third mission complements teaching mission and research mission



Access available handouts at ala.l4.ala.org/sessions/handouts.



Targeting Who to Engage in Community

- Focus on groups and organizations that can benefit from the unique resources of your academic library
 - Provide resources and services that complement offerings from local public libraries in order to minimize competition and mission creep
- Potential Target Groups
 - Entrepreneurs
 - Small to medium sized businesses
 - Non-profit community

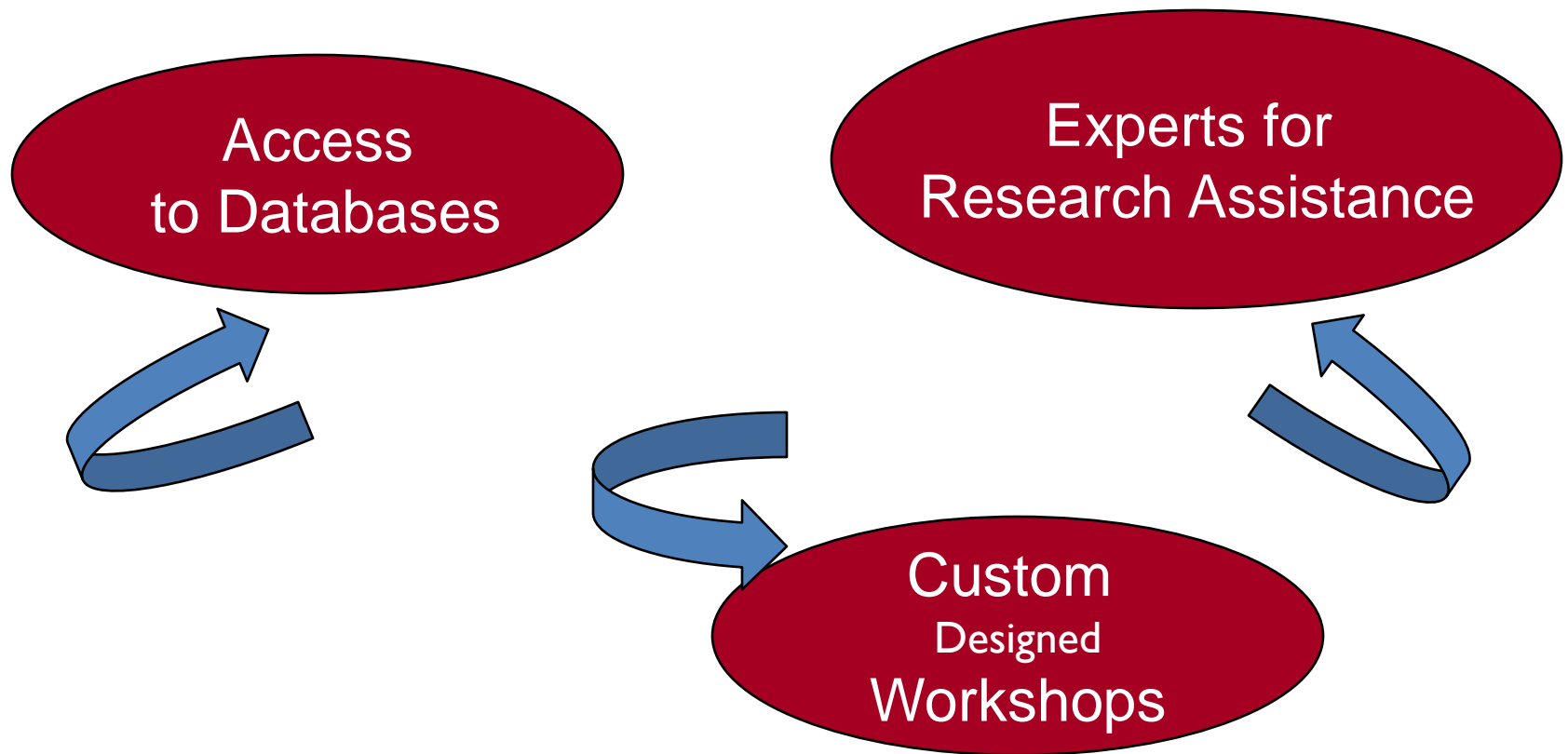
Community Organization Needs

- New venture creation (entrepreneurs)
 - Information for business plans & funding sources
 - Assistance with patenting a product or service
- Business expansion
 - New product/service or entry into new markets
- Grant funding for non-profits
- Research for organization newsletters/articles
- Personal investment research
- Career research

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Academic Library Community Services



Access available handouts at ala.l4.ala.org/sessions/handouts.



Benefits of Community Engagement

- Promotes value and awareness of academic libraries in a community
- Provides fundraising and friendraising opportunities
- Connects academic libraries to other community agencies
- Increases academic libraries awareness of community services

Challenges of Community Engagement

- Licensed database restrictions on commercial use
- Difficulty navigating campus and library (directions, parking)
- Resource sufficiency for meeting research needs
- Requires staff with specialized skills and availability
- Stakes of research extremely high
- Providing reference services without expert advice

Supporting Infrastructure

UNLV Libraries Business Community Resources

This website outlines useful resources and services available to the Southern Nevada business community. It includes free local and internet resources as well as commercial databases licensed and paid for by UNLV Libraries – the only research library in the region – which are available to community users when they visit the Libraries.

BUSINESS COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Business Resources Home »
Libraries Business Databases »
Nevada Business Websites »
Directions & Parking »

- Access privileges/user accounts
- Professional collaborative spaces
- Professional research guides
- Directions and parking information
- Clearly articulated database licensing & other access restrictions (minimizing negative language)

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Community Engagement Strategies

- Supporting community engagement initiatives of academic institution (partnership model)
- Developing academic library community outreach initiatives (direct outreach model)

Supporting Community Engagement Initiatives of Academic Institution

- Support institutional initiatives that serve community
- Latent demand for services
- Clear scope of services and well defined audience
- Less outreach work for academic library
- Less acknowledgement of academic library
- Difficult to determine and demonstrate impact

Co-Curricular Experiential Learning Community Projects

- Service learning projects
 - Students engage with community via projects
 - Typically engage with non-profit organizations
 - Research assistance on social causes
- Student consulting & competitions
 - Projects to assist organizations with a problem
 - Student competitions (business plan, marketing)

Service Learning Courses

- Community-based research service learning is incorporated into many courses at UNLV
- First year seminar course in UNLV College of Business requires students to work with community organizations to help solve a problem in the local community
 - Requires students to conduct research on social problems within their local communities
- UNLV Office of Civic Engagement and Diversity serves as a liaison between community organizations and students, student organizations, and faculty seeking service opportunities

Small Business Development Centers

- Small Business Administration funded centers within academic institutions which support entrepreneurs with business start ups
- Powerful partner in initiatives to engage local business community
 - Provides referrals to help entrepreneurs with business plan research
 - Provides access to a strong network of current business owners and business topic experts
 - Provides opportunities for co-branded events and workshops for the local business community

Developing Academic Library Community Outreach Initiatives

- Academic library must identify needs, target audience and scope of service
- More outreach work for academic library
- More acknowledgement given to academic library
- Easier to determine and demonstrate impact
- More opportunity for academic library to fundraise and friendraise

Going Out to the Community

- Visit meetings of local business and non-profit professional groups
- Visit non-profit and business networking events
- Visit rotary club meetings
- Visit chamber of commerce meetings
- Visit business development events

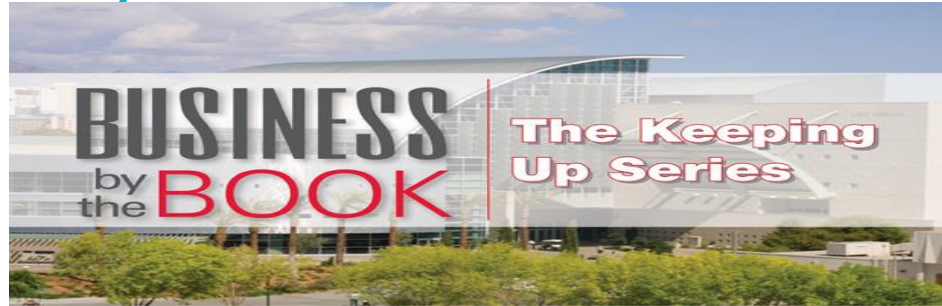
Access available handouts at ala.14.ala.org/sessions/handouts.



Bringing the Community in the Library

- Library research workshops
 - Entrepreneurship & business expansion
 - Non-profit funding opportunities research
 - Opportunity for networking
 - Branding is key
- Expert speakers from the local community
 - Library provides a forum for learning
 - Opportunity for academic libraries to learn about community

Business by the Book Workshop Series



- Community engagement initiative from UNLV Libraries Advisory Board
- Intended for existing small businesses
- Networking meet and greet followed by hands on library workshop on a business topic
- Co-sponsored and co-branded by UNLV Alumni Association

Access available handouts at ala.l4.ala.org/sessions/handouts.



Following Up & Closing the Loop

- Tell the library story in community interactions
 - Have information packets available at the ready
- Include community patrons in mailing lists
 - To send updates, newsletters and other communiqués
 - To send fundraising and friendraising materials
- Invite community patrons to share their library experiences

Communicating the Value of Community Engagement Initiatives

- Track interactions to provide an account of outreach activities to administrators and donors
 - Solicit testimonials
 - Anonymous surveys
 - List of interactions
- Publicize community engagement initiatives
 - Emphasize impact on community
 - Include personal accounts of patrons (testimonials)
- Invite patrons to share experiences with library stakeholders