



DELIGHT THE TEACHER, REACH THE STUDENT

Academic libraries – be they school, university, or technical college – face a unique problem when it comes to member retention: the majority of our members have a short term relationship with the institution they are enrolled in. The result is that library staff must continually promote and market the library to new groups of students who may have little relationship with a library, and no matter how successfully they do it, the student usually moves on in a short time and is lost as a member to the library. ShirleyAnn Summers offers a solution.

IF THE TEACHER IS DELIGHTED BY THE LIBRARY SERVICE THEY WILL BRING THEIR STUDENTS AND ALSO ACT AS AN ADVOCATE FOR US.

I work in the TAFE sector and, for us, many students enrol for as little as six months with most enrolling for 12–18 months and the rest enrolling for a course of two years or more. It is true that students may enrol in a further course, but often not immediately. One of my strategies to counteract this has been to promote strongly to the academic staff.

While the number of academic staff is small compared to the size of the student body, at least in the majority I see the same faces year in and year out. My efforts are to promote the library not just for what it can offer their students but

what it can offer them also, reasoning if the teacher is delighted by the library service they will bring their students and also act as an advocate for us.

To this end, St George College Library has successfully campaigned recently to have a new recording room outfitted. The original room was designed to be set up for teachers to use to record podcasts, audio interviews, film lectures, take still images, run a webinar or edit recorded materials. The original set up included two laptops, a high-end audio recorder, three studio-quality lights, a green screen, and a digital video recorder. All the equipment was to be left set up in a locked room, meaning a teacher would simply need to enter, press a button and be underway.

While the facility was still under development an opportunity arose to include a video conference unit. This is was eagerly agreed and a full video recording unit with ceiling microphones, two cameras, a smart board, a short throw projector and accompanying computer were included in the fit out.

Late last year, when the room was almost complete, Sydney Institute decided to trial two locations with Echo360 (technology to record lectures or screen captures and put them onto a server ready for immediate student access). Given that St George had a dedicated recording room almost ready to go, we were chosen as one of the locations. This equipment has now also all been installed and seamlessly integrated with video conferencing, smart board and projector.

Also now included in the room are 15 chairs, meaning that teaching staff will be able to conduct face to face as well as video conferencing to record for review or for non-attendees simultaneously. Sample lectures have now been recorded and a presentation to St George College senior staff was given in mid March.

Moving the library into this new field – and yes, library staff are going to need to up their ability to work all this technology – gives us an embedded place in the college community and, with luck, will encourage teachers and students into the library who would not normally come through our door. Once they are in, and see the other services on offer, my hope is that they will return again and again, and not just to use the recording room.

Now if I can just find funds to fix the crack in the brickwork...

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