

Understanding Ways to Initiate Student Interaction with Academic Libraries to Promote Student Success

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

A. RESEARCH PROBLEM.....	3
B. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	3
Student Engagement.....	3
Student Success	4
C. RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	5
D. DEFINITIONS.....	5
E. DATA COLLECTION.....	6
Individual Interviews – Undergraduate Students.....	6
Individual Interviews – Librarians and Library Staff.....	7
Focus Groups.....	8
Event Observations	8
Qualitative Surveys	9
Research Relevance.....	9
Advisory Board and Stakeholders.....	9
F. ETHICS REVIEW	10
G. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	10
H. DISSEMINATION PLAN.....	11
I. PROJECT BUDGET	12
1. Personnel	12
2. Supplies	12
3. Services	12
4. Travel	13
Totals.....	13
APPENDIX.....	14
A. Marketing	14
1. Sample Interview Advertisement	14
2. Sample Focus Group Advertisement.....	14
B. Screening Forms	14
1. Sample Student Interview Screening Form	14
2. Sample Student Focus Group Screening Form.....	15
C. Questions	15
1. Sample Student Interview Questions.....	15

2. Sample Space Librarian Interview Questions	16
3. Sample Student Success Librarian Interview Questions	16
4. Sample Focus Group Questions	17
5. Sample Post-Event Survey Questions	17
D. Communications.....	18
1. Sample Email to Advisory Board Members.....	18
2. Sample Request to Research on Premises Email to Dean of the Library	18
3. Sample Outreach Email to Librarians	19
4. Sample Outreach email to Stakeholders.....	20
REFERENCE LIST	21

A. RESEARCH PROBLEM

The goal of this research study is to identify the best methods to initiate student interaction with academic libraries to promote student success. There has been research done on what social media platforms libraries should use to increase student interaction (Howard et al., 2018) and on user satisfaction with academic library services (Adeniran, 2011), but there is a lack of research exploring the broader question of “why are students choosing to initiate their interactions with academic libraries” and the way that continued interaction ties in with students’ success. The purpose of this study is not to track students’ GPA, rather, to focus on initial student engagement with the library, what draws students to the library spaces, and what brings them back, as well as considering broadening the definition of student success to include student mental health and wellbeing. Finding out the reasoning behind why students engage with academic libraries, whether that be events, social media, information sessions, or others is important to ensuring that students are getting the most out of their campus library spaces, as we all know that libraries are an important resource for students (Whitley & Burger, 2019). This project uses a qualitative framework to allow for a more personal connection with the students, which will in turn provide more valuable insights into the reasoning behind their interactions. This study will greatly benefit LIS scholarship by providing a new level of insight into college students’ minds as they interact with the library and will benefit LIS practice by providing academic librarians with a framework from which they can base their outreach and engagement strategies.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

Student Engagement

Student engagement is a crucial part of the success of an academic library. Academic libraries serve to aid students throughout their college careers and beyond and should provide multiple resources and services to help students to succeed. In the past, the majority of research on student success revolved around GPA, providing results proving that students who took college courses that included a library instruction segment resulted in a higher GPA (Gaha, et al.

2016; Wright 2021). It seems that studies assume that the majority of engagement students are getting with the libraries are through those library-incorporated courses. Engaging librarians in the instruction of students is important, as it allows for greater recognition of their teaching and instructional abilities (Detmering & Payette 2021) and is important to ensure that future assessment methods are going to be effective (Goss 2021), however, libraries should be striving to go above simply serving as additional instructors to students and providing other ways for them to get engaged with library spaces. Libraries should strive to engage students beyond just through coursework, to ensure that students understand the full range of services that academic libraries have to offer.

Whitley and Burger (2019) provide an interesting interpretation to this matter of how to engage further with students. Their review article informs other academic librarians about the importance of making the library spaces seem welcoming and friendly, as this is an important step to encouraging student interactions with the library. They explain the current state of student interaction with academic libraries then provide examples of their own programming efforts to show ways in which they can dispel a common students' fear of library spaces. They draw on the research of Constance Mellon who talked about library anxiety, as well as from Kuhlthau's research on students' information seeking behaviors. Their main conclusion was that going forward, they would need to make more effort to collect data from students who attend their events, in order to better prepare for future endeavors. They believe that hosting events that aren't primarily focused on dumping a bunch of information onto students is the most important step into gaining students' trust, as students will be more likely to attend a fun event first, get used to the library environment, then come back for other types of programming.

Eschbach's (2020) research supports Whitley and Berger's claims. She discusses how early research primarily focused on these matters of retention and GPA but turns to focus on what it would look like to have academic libraries pursue other means of student engagement. She discusses the importance of hosting social events in the library to "showcase the library as a welcoming environment" which will in turn aid in "widen[ing] a student's support system and can help create a sense of belonging." Making students feel welcome in the library will greatly help to increase engagement, as well as increase the number of initial interactions with the space.

When it comes to engaging students in other ways, some college academic libraries will turn to social media to garner those first interactions. Social media can provide an excellent way for students to interact with their campus libraries in a more casual manner while also allowing them to gain a sense of familiarity with the library and how it can assist them in their academic journey (Howard et. al, 2018). Academic libraries can utilize social media to their advantage to not only promote online interaction, but also to promote events to increase student library engagement.

Student Success

Many libraries have their own individual student success initiatives, something that is of utmost importance to assisting students during their college careers. Brown & Malenfant (2015), conducted a research assessment in an action initiative from ACRL that aimed to gather together a variety of institutions from across North America to all conduct research on their academic libraries' student success initiatives. This survey alone shows the importance this topic has, as it

was funded by the ACRL, a leading organization for academic libraries. In their assessment they noted that each institution was able to approach this subject in their own way, leading to a variety of different approaches to the student success definition, and resulting in a wide range of research questions and research methods. They concluded that while all types of research were successful, the mixed-methods research types were the most effective at producing usable results that benefited their institutions.

While they were able to create their own research questions and individual approaches to student success, all the colleges seemed to come to very similar conclusions about the definition of the term. “Student learning and success encompasses a multitude of possible outcomes, and higher education institutions often define the outcomes in slightly different ways. Outcomes are typically delineated in relation to such factors as student enrollment, retention and persistence, performance and achievement, career preparedness, and graduation” (Brown & Malenfant 2015). The problem I see with this particular approach is that it is the educational institutions that are creating the definition of student success, and not the students themselves. While educational institutions have a history of knowledge about past students and their needs, students’ needs will change over time, and student success initiatives should evolve along with those changes.

Including student perspectives is important when considering student success initiatives because they are the ones who should be getting the most out of the services the library provides to them. In their study, Mayer et al. (2020) found that students were particularly interested in the study spaces the library had to offer as well as how the library provided a safe environment for them. The notable thing that this study left out was any analysis on library events, which is odd, because library events are something that they should have asked students about in the interviews. Ensuring students are satisfied with the space and the quality of services in the libraries is important to make sure that students have a reason to come into the library in the first place (Adeniran 2011). If students aren’t seeing any value in the programs and services being offered, libraries will arrive at a stale point and no longer be able to provide help in student success efforts.

C. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study will address the following research questions:

1. Why are students being drawn to the library?
 - a. Why are they interested initially?
 - b. Why do students return?
2. When students are not in the library, how are they hearing about library events, activities, and services?
 - a. Why do those promotional materials garner student interest?
3. How do students perceive “student success”?
 - a. Do students feel like the library is helping them achieve success?

D. DEFINITIONS

Engagement – according to the Glossary of Education Reform (2016), “engagement [with reference to students] refers to the degree of attention, curiosity, interest, optimism, and passion

that students show when they are learning or being taught.” For the purposes of this study, engagement will be determined by event attendance, social media interaction, visual observation, and student interest through select interviews.

Student Success – student success, according to Nazareth University (2014), is measured in “how well students are prepared to accomplish their current and future academic, personal, and professional goals through the development of knowledge, a sense of responsibility and self-reliance, and a connection to the college and wider community” (p. 1). In this study, the goal is to see what ways students are most likely to interact with the library to figure out the best ways to create new student success initiatives.

Qualitative framework – Qualitative research “tends to seek explanations and predictions that, in most cases, will generalize to other persons and places. The intent is often to identify relationships among two or more variables and then, based on the results, to confirm or modify existing theories or practices” (Leedy & Ormrod, 2018, p. 113) This research study uses a qualitative framework as there is valuable information to be found in student interviews and from direct observation.

E. DATA COLLECTION

This study will be conducted through a variety of individual interviews, focus groups, event observations, and qualitative surveys. Individual interviews will allow for one-on-one casual discussion, and perhaps make some students feel more comfortable in sharing their opinion, as some people don’t feel comfortable talking in a group. The focus groups will provide a setting where students are able to bounce ideas off one another, perhaps encouraging further discussion on topics they hadn’t yet considered. Event observations will allow the PI to see first-hand how well certain programs are doing, and also allow for on-the-spot questions and answers to collect more information on student’s opinions of the libraries’ services. Qualitative surveys will be sent out after events to allow for more detailed feedback on particular services and will also be posted around the library to gather information on general student satisfaction with daily library services.

The University of Rochester River Campus Libraries will be the focus of the study, and there will be events and surveys across all the various library branches to ensure that the entirety of the library and their services are represented by the results of the study. The branches include: Art and Music Library, iZone, Lam Square, POA Library, Robbins Library, Special Collections, and Studio X. All of these locations have help desks and host events. Ethics approval from the IRB board for researching human subjects will be needed for individual interviews, focus groups, and qualitative surveys. University of Rochester approval will also be needed to conduct this research study at the University of Rochester River Campus Libraries. (See Appendix D-2 for a sample request to research email.)

Individual Interviews – Undergraduate Students

The participants in this study will be undergraduate college students from the University of Rochester. This research project will not be involving any special populations that are considered vulnerable by the IRB, to avoid uncertainties that may arise from those groups.

The participants will be recruited through a series of promotions both physically in the various libraries on campus as well as through social media advertisements. (See Appendix A-1 for a sample interview advertisement.) If a student is interested in participating in an interview, they will have the opportunity to fill out a short Qualtrics survey that will determine whether or not they meet the criteria for participation in the interview process. The only requirements for participation will be that they

- a) Are an undergraduate student at the University of Rochester
- b) Have used a university library space during their time at the University
- c) Are not part of any of the populations that the IRB determines to be vulnerable

(See Appendix B-1 for sample screening survey.) There should be approximately 20 interviews in total to allow for a variety of student opinions and to get approximately three students per library space represented in the study.

The participants who meet all the criteria will be asked to conduct the interview within the library campus space in any room that can be made into a private space (a room with a door.) The location and timing of the interview will vary depending on the student's knowledge of the library space and daily availability. After it has been decided that a student meets the criteria, they will be sent a follow up email asking which library space they would like to meet in and what times they are available to meet, to ensure that the interviewer can accommodate the students' busy schedule. They will also be compensated for their time. (More information in the budget.)

The interviews will be conducted in person through the method of semi-structured questions. However, if a student is eager to participate but is unable to make the time to meet in person, a Qualtrics survey can be created from the interview questions to allow for asynchronous student participation. A zoom interview option will also be available to participants if they are worried about in-person interviews. The in-person and zoom interviews will be recorded, and in addition, the interviewer will be taking down notes to assist in the coding of the data later on. The interview method was selected for this particular research problem because interviews allow for a deeper level of connection with participants, something that is particularly important when you are trying to figure out ways to better understand what those participants want to see from your library space and resources. (See Appendix C-1 for sample interview questions.)

Individual Interviews – Librarians and Library Staff

To allow the PI to get a deeper understanding of the current state of the library, interviews will be conducted with eight librarians/library staff, one to represent each of the library spaces impacted by this study, as well as the student success librarian. These participants will be contacted via email during the preliminary research phase to ensure they are willing to participate in the study. (See Appendix D-3 for a sample outreach email.) If the first point of contact for a space is not willing to participate, the next person, in order of power, will be contacted. If no leading staff from any library space is willing to participate, that branch of the library will be removed from the study. The librarians will be compensated for their commitment to the 2-year study. (More information in the budget.)

The participants who agree to participate in the interview will be asked to meet in person in the library space in which they work. The timing of the interview will depend on the participant's schedule. The interview will be conducted through a series of semi-structured questions, as this format allows for a deeper level of understanding to be garnered from the participants. (See Appendix C-2 and C-3 for sample interview questions.)

Focus Groups

The purpose of the focus groups is to serve as a way to share the data collected from previous interviews and to present some future solutions to increasing student engagement in the library spaces. Having semi-structured focus groups will allow for students to share their feedback on the research, while also allowing participants to bounce ideas off the other people in the room. There will be a total of seven focus group sessions, one to represent each library spaces being impacted by the study. The focus groups will consist of the librarian or library staff member representing their space, as they have provided prior consent to assist with the project, and five to eight students who frequently use that library space.

The library staff will be contacted via email. To recruit student participants, a series of promotional materials will be dispersed throughout each of the targeted library spaces and on their respective social media pages. (See Appendix A-2 for a sample focus group advertisement.) To determine eligibility, a process similar to the screening for individual interviews will occur. The students must meet the following criteria:

- a) They are an undergraduate student at the University of Rochester
- b) They have used a university library space during their time at the University (results will be filtered to determine which students will participate in which focus groups)
- c) They are not part of any of the populations that the IRB determines to be vulnerable

(See Appendix B-2 for a sample screening survey.) If the students meet the criteria, they will be contacted via email (the email will be collected during the short Qualtrics survey) and a meeting time will be arranged. In order to ensure the success of these interviews, participants will also be asked to indicate whether they would prefer to conduct the interview in person or over zoom. If a majority of participants ask to participate over zoom, that will be the method through which the focus group will occur, otherwise, there is a preference for in-person in the library space in question for that group. (See Appendix C-4 for sample focus group questions.)

Event Observations

Event observations will take place at each of the seven library spaces across the entire duration of the project. These observations will allow the PI to see first-hand how students interact with different types of events, as well as gather information from the library staff about their processes behind the event creation process, to see if that has an impact on student preference.

The observations will begin when a staff member alerts the PI that they are planning to host an event in their library space. The PI will have asked for a general event plan at the beginning of each semester, so the PI may initiate the observation as well. The PI will observe the staff members as they plan the event and take notes of their strategies and promotion practices. When the event takes place, the PI will be present, and will take note of how many students attend the

event, but more importantly, how they are interacting with the library staff and the event itself. The PI may ask students some questions about how they are enjoying the event, but the majority of this information will come from the qualitative surveys sent out after the events have concluded.

Qualitative Surveys

The qualitative surveys will be to collect data on library events to see if there is any relationship between certain events and student preference, as well as to determine what events are getting students to interact with the library for the first time and what events are bringing students back into the spaces. Ideally these surveys will be sent out to students via the university's emailing system, as they operate using LibCal to keep track of event attendance and collect students' emails in the process of registering for the events. (See Appendix C-5 for sample qualitative survey questions.)

Research Relevance

This research will be quite relevant to all academic libraries, as the goal of this research is to inspire other libraries to complete this type of research on their own facilities. The redefinition of student success would be quite relevant for other libraries, as it could change the way they approach their own definition of the term. There are some limitations when it comes to sample size and relevance, as all the research is being done on one campus, but this isn't something that should be of concern because of the intent for other libraries to conduct similar studies. In addition, with the research being conducted in various library spaces on the same campus, there will be some variation in the student responses depending on which library space they use the most.

As mentioned earlier, with the research being conducted at the University of Rochester's River Campus Library spaces, permission from library administration would likely be needed to conduct this study. See Appendix D-2 for a sample request to research email. However, the PI of the study has contacts within the library, so this should not be difficult to get.

When it comes to limiting the scope of the research, the ultimate goal of the project is to determine a handful of key methods to initiating student interaction with the libraries that will help to garner student success. In addition, the consideration to redefine student success to include mental health will be important to future research studies. What this project does not intend to do is examine students' GPA, as studies that conduct GPA examinations as a method for determining student success already take up the majority of the research done in this area. The purpose of this project, and the reason for the qualitative methodology, is to connect with students on a more personal level and determine what they want from the library, and to see how they define student success.

Advisory Board and Stakeholders

To assist in ensuring that this research stays on-track and remains relevant to the River Campus Libraries, an advisory board consisting of key administrative personnel will be constructed at the beginning of the study. They will be compensated for their expertise in the field and for their 2-

year commitment to the study. (See Appendix D-1 for sample email to potential advisory board members.)

In addition, at the conclusion of the study, the PI will gather a meeting of the advisory board as well as key stakeholders in the River Campus Libraries to ensure that the findings of the research are disbursed to everyone it impacts. This will also help in ensuring that the findings of the research are implemented to the library spaces. (See Appendix D-4 for sample email to stakeholders.)

F. ETHICS REVIEW

Ethics approval will be needed from the UB IRB in order to proceed with this study. There will be no participation without consent as the participants will be the ones reaching out to the PI to ask to participate. They will be reminded at the beginning of the interview/focus group that they can ask to stop participating at any time, and they may also choose to not respond to any question they would not like to answer. The interviews/focus groups will be recorded with a portable audio recorder, so consent for recording will be obtained before the interview/focus group begins. No participants will be withdrawn from the study without their consent. The recordings for all synchronous interviews/focus groups will be stored in UB Box in a folder only accessible to the PI. The data will not be copied or stored out of the UB Box folder for any reason, only analyzed and shared as data for papers and conferences.

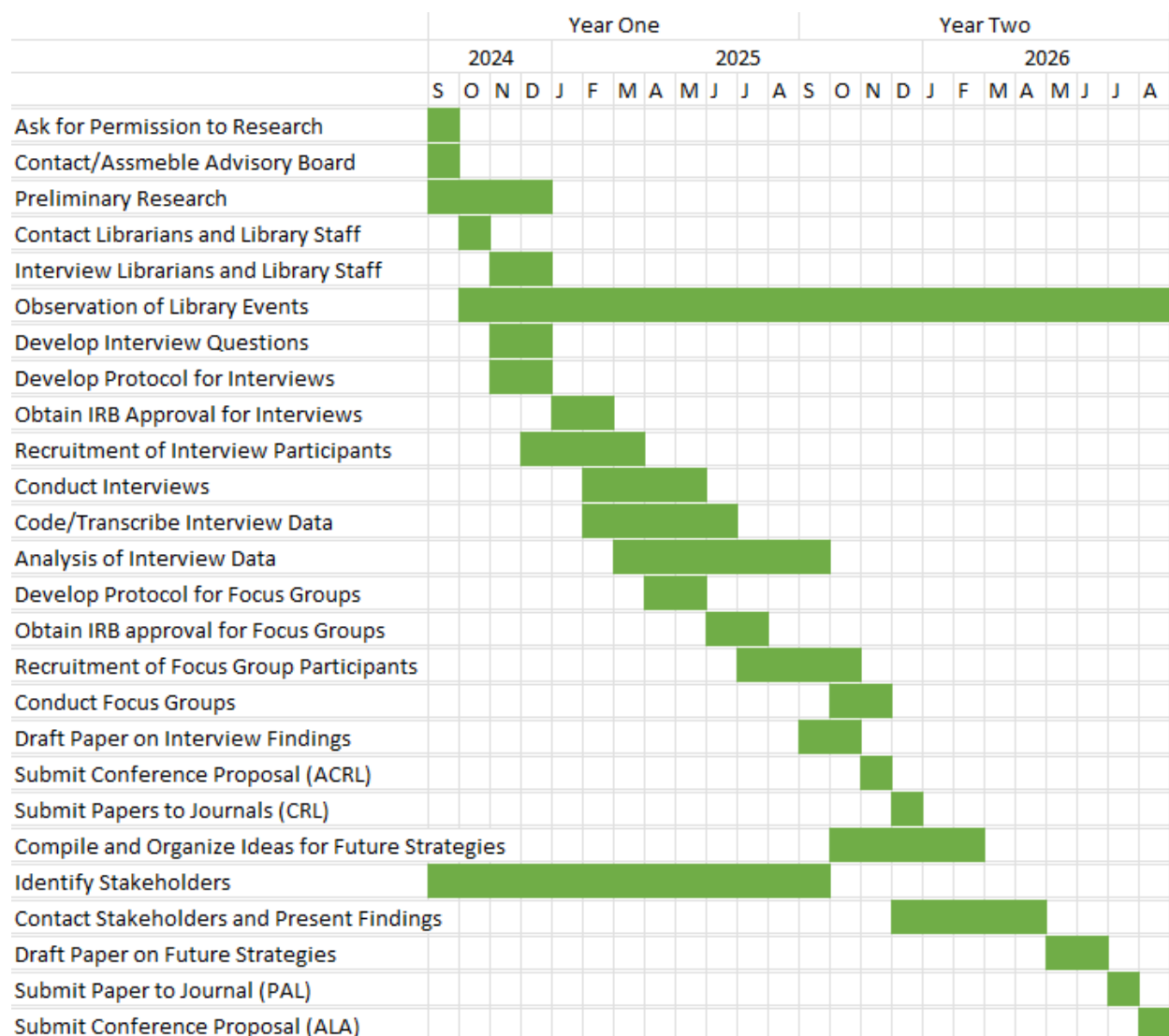
To address matters of confidentiality, no participants will ever be referred to by name outside of their interview/focus group recording or survey data, rather, after they have reached out to the PI, they will be assigned a number and all data associated with that person will be stored with respect to that. While there is always a risk of breach of confidentiality, there are no anticipated risks expected when a participant joins the study. There may be some small compensation for participating in the survey, listed in the budget below.

To avoid any issues regarding matters of consent, this study will not take on any participants who meet the following categories: non-English speaking participants, cognitively impaired adults, adults unable to consent, or subjects who are not adults. Consent will be documented via audio recording for those participants who participate synchronously, and via an e-signature for those who participate asynchronously.

G. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

In the chart below, each green square represents a month of time passed in the study. The time to complete each task is estimated based on the PI's prior work and is subject to change as the study progresses.

If the project were needed to be scaled back, I would likely need to either remove the focus group element or cut down on the number of students interviewed individually (less funding to award for participation), manually transcribe the recordings, and attend only one conference instead of two (less budget for travel). Beyond that, everything else would likely operate as normal. With the reduction of the conferences from 2 to 1, it would be essential to ensure that at least 2 papers are able to be published, and that the meetings with the stakeholders go forward.



H. DISSEMINATION PLAN

The concluding findings of the research project will be posted on the PI's website to promote the research. In addition, the research will be proposed to the ACRL and ALA conferences. These conferences are professional conferences, meaning that the research presented will be dispersed to a wide variety of practitioners and professionals in the field. Having such a large crowd from these professional conferences will allow for the research to have a further impact and spread awareness about the importance of student opinions in academic libraries and redefining student success.

When it comes to the publication of research papers from this project, it would again be important to target widely read publications to ensure the disbursement of the information to the most people possible. With this in mind, the two journals to target would be *College & Research Libraries* from ACRL and *Practical Academic Librarianship: The International Journal of the SLA Academic Division*. These two journals are run by two prestigious library organizations that

have a focus on academic libraries: the Association of College and Research Libraries and the Special Library Association.

I. PROJECT BUDGET

1. Personnel

Advisory Board stipends – A budget of \$1,000 for each year has been allocated to provide compensation for their monitoring of the project to ensure the goals are being met. The advisory board will consist of library administration staff.

Librarian stipends – A budget of \$4,000 for each year has been allocated to provide compensation to a Librarian assistant from each library space included in the study and the Student Success Librarian. Including the librarians in the study will be crucial to ensuring that the study is benefiting the library spaces. This also covers the cost of doing an interview with the librarians.

Year	Explanation	Amount
Year 1	\$200 stipend for 5 Advisory Board Members	\$1,000
Year 1	\$500 stipend for 8 Librarians (One from each library space and the Student Success Librarian)	\$4,000
Year 2	\$200 stipend for 5 Advisory Board Members	\$1,000
Year 2	\$500 stipend for 8 Librarians (One from each library space and the Student Success Librarian)	\$4,000
Total Personnel Costs		\$10,000

2. Supplies

Incentives for interview participants will help to encourage students to take the time out of their day to participate in the interviews. This is also an ethical consideration, as compensation for time is important.

Year	Explanation	Amount
Year 1	Incentives for interview participants (20 participants @ \$30 amazon gift cards)	\$600
Year 1	Audio Recorder (Sony – PX series)	\$60
Year 2	Incentives for focus group participants (20 randomly chosen participants @ \$20 amazon gift cards)	\$400
Total Supplies Costs		\$1,060

3. Services

Caption Sync will help alleviate some responsibility from the PI, enabling them to focus solely on the data transcribed, rather than worrying about typing out every single word said during the interviews.

Year	Explanation	Amount
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Year 1	Transcription Service: Caption Sync (28 1-hr interviews @ approx. \$1.40/minute)	\$2,352
Year 2	Transcription Service: Caption Sync (7 1-hr focus groups @ approx. \$1.40/minute)	\$588
Total Services Costs		\$2,940

4. Travel

Travel coverage is essential to ensuring that the PI is able to attend the conferences, which are important to the dissemination of the research.

Year	Explanation	Amount
Year 2	ACRL Conference (Travel, Hotel, and Admission)	\$3,000
Year 2	ALA Conference (Travel, Hotel, and Admission)	\$3,000
Total Travel Costs		\$6,000

Totals

Category	Amount
1. Personnel	\$10,000
2. Supplies	\$1,060
3. Services	\$2,940
4. Travel	\$6,000
Total Costs	\$20,000

APPENDIX

A. Marketing

1. Sample Interview Advertisement

Do YOU use campus library spaces?

Scan the QR code to see if you're eligible to take part in a library research study to help improve library services



Get a \$30 amazon gift card for participating!

Participation in the research study involves a 1-hour one-on-one interview that will take place either in person or virtually depending on your availability. Your name and personal information will remain private in any research papers published as a result of this study. Participation is limited to Undergraduate University of Rochester Students.

2. Sample Focus Group Advertisement

Do YOU use campus library spaces?

Scan the QR code to see if you're eligible to take part in a library research study to help improve library services



Get entered to win a \$20 amazon gift card for participating!

Participation in the research study involves a 1-hour focus group that will take place either in person or virtually depending on the group's availability. Your name and personal information will remain private in any research papers published as a result of this study. Participation is limited to Undergraduate University of Rochester Students.

B. Screening Forms

1. Sample Student Interview Screening Form

1. What is your name?
2. What is your UR email address?
3. What undergraduate class year are you? (If you are not an undergraduate student then you are not eligible to participate in this study) [select one]
 - a. Freshman
 - b. Sophomore
 - c. Junior
 - d. Senior
 - e. Take 5/E 5
4. Of the following library spaces, which ones have you used in the past year? [Select all that apply]
 - a. Art and Music Library
 - b. iZone
 - c. Lam Square
 - d. POA Library
 - e. Robbins Library
 - f. Special Collections

g. Studio X

5. Do you identify as any of the following groups? [Select all that apply]

- a. Adults unable to consent
- b. Individuals who are not yet adults (infants, children, teenagers)
- c. Pregnant women
- d. Prisoners
- e. Non-English speaking individual
- f. None of the above.

Thank you for filling out the form! Someone will be in contact with you within the next week to finalize the details about your interview.

2. Sample Student Focus Group Screening Form

[This form will be identical to the form above, with a 6th additional question]

6. Did you participate in a one-on-one interview for this study?

- a. Yes
- b. No

C. Questions

Note: All questions are subject to change on a case-by-case basis.

1. Sample Student Interview Questions

[Review of the information they filled out in the screening survey to ensure that the information is correct, as well as a verbal confirmation of consent, and reminder that they can withdraw consent at any time or decline to answer any question.]

- Of the seven library spaces listed, which one would you say you use the most and why?
- What is the main reason you use the library? (Studying, attending events, etc.)
- Do you remember the first time you came into the library? Explain what that was like and why you visited.
- Have you attended any library events? If so, which ones, and what was your favorite?
- How do you typically hear about library events? (social media, in-library advertisement, word-of-mouth, etc.)
- Are there any events you think the library should hold? (More fun events, more educational events, etc.)
- Do you consider the library to be a welcoming place? Elaborate on why or why not. (What can the library do better to become more welcoming/what does the library do well for you to consider it welcoming?)

- How do you define your success as a student? (Grades, participation in extracurriculars, mental health/wellbeing, etc.)
- With that definition in mind, do you think that the library has helped you to achieve that success as a student? (If yes, how? If no, why not/what can the library do better to help you succeed in the future?)

2. Sample Space Librarian Interview Questions

- What is your role in the library? How long have you had that role?
- What do you do for the library on a day-to-day basis?
- What kinds of events do you hold in your library space?
- When you are planning events, what is the process that goes into creating those events? (Are you considering what students want to see when creating events?)
- Do you think that your library space and the events you hold help to garner student engagement and first-time interactions?
- How much of your time do you spend interacting with students in your library space?
- Do you ever do student feedback surveys at the end of the year to get an idea of what students might like to see you do in your library space?
- What do you know about the student success initiatives in the library?
- Are you involved in the student success initiatives at all?
- How do you define student success?
- Do you think that your library space assists the library's student success initiatives?

3. Sample Student Success Librarian Interview Questions

- How long have you been working with student success initiatives? (In general, in your career, and at this library specifically)
- What is your definition of student success? (How did you come up with this definition?)
- Does the university have its own definition of student success, and does this differ from your own perceptions of the term?
- How do you determine that is best for the students?
- Have you ever done a comprehensive survey across the library at the end of the year to determine what students would like to see more of from the library?
- What student success initiatives are you a part of managing and how do they benefit the library community on campus as a whole?
- How are you working to improve upon the CEILAM and Karp Library Fellows initiatives?
- What are your plans for future improvement of the student success initiatives in the library?

4. Sample Focus Group Questions

[Review of the information they filled out in the screening survey to ensure that the information is correct, as well as a verbal confirmation of consent, and reminder that they can withdraw consent at any time or decline to answer any question.]

Note: The focus groups will be centered around a specific library space (one for each of the 7) and will be focused on a review of a) the information gathered from the interviews and b) asking students to reflect on those findings to see if they think anything else should be added to future plans.

- [After basic review of findings] Any initial thoughts?
- With these findings in mind, do you think that [library space] is doing a good job at engaging students and initiating first-time student interactions?
- Do you think that [library space] is doing a good job at taking and listening to students' opinions when it comes to events and student success initiatives?
- What do you think [library space] could do better?
- What would you like to see from [library space] in the future? How can [library space] help you succeed? (More fun events for study breaks, more educational events about library resources, etc.)
- How can [librarian from space] work to better accommodate your student needs?
- *Note: More questions will be formulated based on interview results.*

5. Sample Post-Event Survey Questions

1. What is your name?
2. What is your UR email address?
3. What class year are you?
4. What event did you attend?
5. Where did the event take place? [select one]
 - Art and Music Library
 - iZone
 - Lam Square
 - POA Library
 - Robbins Library
 - Special Collections
 - Studio X
6. How did you hear about the event? [select one]
 - Social Media
 - Flyer
 - Word-of-mouth
 - Other: _____
7. Was this your first library event in this library space?
 - Yes

- No
- 8. How would you rate your enjoyment of this event?
 - Really enjoyable
 - Enjoyable
 - Neutral
 - Disliked
 - Really Disliked
- 9. Please provide 1-2 sentences about your favorite/least favorite part of the event.
- 10. Feel free to leave any other feedback you think is important for us to know!

D. Communications

1. Sample Email to Advisory Board Members

Hello [Name of person],

My name is Ayiana Crabtree and I am reaching out to you to ask if you would like to join the advisory board for a 2-year qualitative research project I'm doing. I'm a [Masters/PhD] student at the University of Buffalo in Information [and Library] Science and a 2022 alumnus of the University of Rochester. The River Campus Libraries hold a special place in my heart as they are the libraries that encouraged me to pursue a career in librarianship. This research study aims to target ways to better encourage student engagement and first-time interactions with the library to promote student success initiatives, while also considering the redefinition student success to include student mental health and wellbeing. The study will span seven of the library spaces across campus and include a series of interviews, focus groups, and qualitative surveys that involve undergraduate students and campus library staff.

I am reaching out to ask you to join the advisory board for this project because of your expertise and knowledge of the campus library, because I believe you will be able to provide a fantastic inside perspective from the angle of [department they work in]. Please see the attached document for more detailed information about the study and its components. If you have any questions, please let me know. I am also happy to meet with you to discuss this matter in person.

I look forward to your response,

Ayiana Crabtree

[Attach Narrative and other related Appendix items]

2. Sample Request to Research on Premises Email to Dean of the Library

[Note: I know the Dean already, so I am not introducing myself at the start of the email]

Hello Dean Garewal,

I write to you today to ask for permission to conduct a 2-year qualitative research study at the University of Rochester River Campus Libraries. This research study aims to target ways to

better encourage student engagement and first-time interactions with the library to promote student success initiatives, while also considering the redefinition student success to include student mental health and wellbeing. The study will span seven library spaces across campus and include a series of interviews, focus groups, and qualitative surveys that involve undergraduate students and campus library staff.

I believe that there is an importance to incorporating student opinions into research that directly impacts them, so I will be obtaining approval from the University at Buffalo's IRB board to conduct a series of interviews, focus groups, and qualitative surveys. In addition to the student element of the study, I would be reaching out to 8 library staff members in total that represent 7 library spaces (Art and Music Library, iZone, Lam Square, POA Library, Robbins Library, Special Collections, and Studio X) as well as the student Success Librarian. If you (and the library staff) agree to the study, the Librarians will be compensated for their assistance. Please see the attached document for more detailed information about the study and its components. If you have any questions, please let me know. I am also happy to meet with you to discuss this matter in person.

I look forward to your response,

Ayiana Crabtree

[Attach Narrative and other related Appendix items]

3. Sample Outreach Email to Librarians

[Note: I know some of the librarians I will be reaching out to, so the beginning of the emails would likely vary a little depending on the person]

Hello [librarian],

My name is Ayiana Crabtree, and I am a [Masters or PhD] student at the University at Buffalo in Information [and Library] Science. I'm an alumnus of the University of Rochester and when I had the opportunity to craft my own research project, I knew that I wanted it to be focused on the River Campus Libraries, as it was these library spaces that encouraged me to pursue a career in librarianship. I'm conducting a 2-year qualitative research study that aims to target ways to better encourage student engagement and first-time interactions with the library to promote student success initiatives, while also considering the redefinition student success to include student mental health and wellbeing. The study will span seven library spaces across campus and include a series of interviews, focus groups, and qualitative surveys that involve undergraduate students and campus library staff. I will be receiving IRB approval from the University at Buffalo to conduct a series of student interviews, focus groups, and qualitative surveys, and I was hoping to ask for your help. As Librarians are the heart of the libraries, I couldn't not include some in this research study. I'm reaching out to you and seven other librarians who represent various library spaces around campus in hopes that you will help me achieve my goals in this study.

Now, what exactly am I asking of you? In essence, very minimal participation in return for some monetary compensation. I would like to conduct a one-on-one interview with you to gather a sense for what you and your library space stand for, I would like you to participate in a focus group with yourself and 5-8 students after I have summarized my findings to gather concluding thoughts on the study and also to share future strategies for engaging students and the student success initiatives, and I would like to observe as you create/plan and host events in your library space so I can determine if there are any correlations between the creation/hosting process and student engagement/feedback. Please see the attached document for more detailed information about the study and its components. If you have any questions, please let me know. I am also happy to meet with you to discuss this matter in person.

I look forward to your response,

Ayiana Crabtree

[Attach Narrative and other related Appendix items]

4. Sample Outreach email to Stakeholders

Hello [person's name],

My name is Ayiana Crabtree and I am a [Masters/PhD] student at the University of Buffalo in Information [and Library] Science and a 2022 alumnus of the University of Rochester. The River Campus Libraries hold a special place in my heart as they are the libraries that encouraged me to pursue a career in librarianship. This 2-year qualitative research study aims to target ways to better encourage student engagement and first-time interactions with the library to promote student success initiatives, while also considering the redefinition student success to include student mental health and wellbeing. The study will span seven library spaces across campus and include a series of interviews, focus groups, and qualitative surveys that involve undergraduate students and campus library staff.

As you hold a prominent role in the library and its function, I was wondering if you would attend a meeting with myself, library staff, and other stakeholders where I will share my findings from the research project. I believe holding a meeting like this is important to ensure that those important to the library are aware of the research being done to better the library space, so they can keep it in mind during future decision making processes. Please see the attached document for more detailed information about the study and its components. If you have any questions, please let me know. I am also happy to meet with you to discuss this matter in person.

I look forward to your response,

Ayiana Crabtree

[Attach Narrative and other related Appendix items]

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