Report on Libraries Outreach Activity: UW Libraries Tours for Transfer Students
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UW Libraries Tours for Transfer Students
September 26, 3:30-4:30pm | September 27, 11:00-12:00pm
The event was marketed to undergraduate transfer students as an interactive tour of four unique libraries (Foster Business, Engineering, and the Research Commons), led by fellow transfer students. The library tours on the UW Seattle campus were designed to give transfer students a feel for the variety of spaces and resources available, meet librarians, and learn about the similarities and differences between the UW Libraries and community college libraries.

Goals and Outcomes
1. Encourage new transfer students to use different libraries on campus by making them feel welcome in, and familiarizing them with, libraries outside of the “familiar” Odegaard and Suzzallo and Allen Libraries.
2. Help transfer students recognize the differences between community college and university libraries.
3. Reach new transfer students to inform them of different libraries, where they are and what they offer that is unique.

Partners
First Year Programs (FYP)

Resources
Funding: No cost.
Planning Committee: Linda Whang and Amanda Hornby
Event Staff: 2 Odegaard staff members, 3 FYP Transfer Student Ambassadors, 1 Odegaard Research & Learning Services Graduate Assistant, 1 Suzzallo and Allen Research & Learning Services Graduate Assistants (GAs)

Activity Overview
As part of new student orientations, new transfer students are given short tours of Odegaard Library and Suzzallo and Allen Libraries but not the various, specialized branch libraries. Prior assessment work with transfer students revealed that they wanted to learn more about branch libraries at UW and what they offered, but didn’t have time to investigate on their own. Transfer students also indicated they wanted to learn more about how university libraries differed from their community college libraries. The Library Tours for Transfer Students events, therefore, were designed to welcome new transfer students to the branch libraries early on in their UW careers. Assessment of the events included headcounts, observations, and staff reflection. The Library Tours event on September 26 had 28 transfer students in attendance, and the event on September 26 had 13 transfer students in attendance, for a total of 41 student attendees. Students toured the Foster Business Library, Engineering Library and the Research Commons in Allen Library.
The first Library Tours event was the largest, with 28 students. The tour was led by two Transfer Student Ambassadors, with one Libraries GA conducting observation assessment. At the start of the tour, students quickly paired up in groups of twos and threes, even if they didn’t know each other, and stayed in these small student groups throughout the tour. The Transfer Student Ambassadors talked about the campus and the Libraries on the walk across campus, and a librarian at each branch library welcomed the students and provided a short overview of relevant services and resources. The most common student questions were introductory in nature, primarily focused on printing, library jobs (said one student: “I wonder if I could work in a library that is related to my major”), library spaces and reserving study rooms. One student on the tour commented: “You said this library is quiet. Is it the most quiet on campus?” This echoed common student concerns about quiet study spaces and whether students were “allowed” to study in certain areas of the libraries toured. One student’s frustration about having to pay for printing -- “I didn’t have to pay [for printing] at my last school” -- highlights a difference between community college and university libraries. Students were comfortable asking each other questions about the libraries and students seemed more comfortable asking questions of the librarians one-on-one, rather than in front of the whole tour group.

The second Library Tours event had 13 students and one Transfer Student Ambassador tour leader, in addition to one Libraries GA conducting observation assessment. The Ambassador tour leader and Libraries GA worked together on the tour, as the group got lost trying to find the Foster Business Library within Paccar Hall, and the Ambassador and GA continued to work together to answer student questions throughout the tour. The
Ambassador kicked off the tour saying: “librarians are just here to help you, so don’t be afraid to ask them anything.” This group of transfer students did not ask many questions on the tours, nor did they engage with each other as much as the previous Library Tours group. The librarians at the branch libraries were prepared to answer student questions, as they had the experience of hearing many questions from transfer students at the event the previous day. Our observations indicate that the librarians’ introductions covered the key student questions -- library spaces and study rooms, printing, library jobs, etc. -- right away. Three of the 13 students on the tour were Engineering majors, and they were comfortable talking one-on-one with the Engineering Librarian at the Engineering Library tour.

Overall, students were most comfortable asking questions about the libraries in small group settings: they were most likely to ask questions of other transfer students in twos and threes, asking questions of the librarians one-on-one, and asking questions of the Transfer Student Ambassadors in smaller groups or one-on-one. In addition to the assessment methods discussed, we followed up with the Transfer Student Ambassadors leading the library tours via email to learn more about the tours from their perspectives. Said one of the Ambassador tour leaders: “Transfer students seemed really engaged and appreciated that only transfer students were there [on the tour].” The format of the tours being led by fellow transfer students was highly effective. The Ambassador tour leader further commented: “This was a great event and I wish I had something like that when I was a transfer student.”

Conclusions

Based on our assessment data, the goals for the Library Tours for Transfer Students events were met. The tours welcomed a large number of new transfer students to the branch libraries and they learned from transfer student leaders and librarians targeted information about Libraries spaces, services and resources. The event was high impact, with relatively low staff time and cost. The Library Tours were successful due to our partnership with First Year Program and the Transfer Student Ambassadors; transfer students liked having a fellow transfer student welcome them to the Libraries and help create a sense of transfer student community.

Recommendations & Resources Requested

We recommend holding two Library Tours for Transfer Students events for future fall quarter Dawg Daze programming, with the following recommendations in place:

- Continue to partner with First Year Programs to promote and market the tour events.
- Library tours should continue to led by FYP Transfer Student Ambassadors, with a minimum of two Ambassadors per tour. Also have a librarian attend the tour to help with wayfinding and to answer any questions the Ambassadors or transfer students may have.
- Using the observation data from the 2016 tours, create a list of common transfer student questions to share with the branch libraries and Transfer Student Ambassador tour leaders in advance.
- Create opportunities for small group discussions and questions, even in a large tour group setting, as students are most comfortable asking questions one-on-one or in a very small group.
- Include information on the tour description about the length and relative rigor of the walk across campus and ensure that we make accommodations for those with limited mobility.
- Reuse and print the FYP-designed library map, photos and description and give to all tour attendees.