Examining the Case of an Academic Library's Student-Focused, Patron-Satisfaction Approach to Organizational Transformation for Student Retention

Michelle L. Currier and Cori Wilhelm

Abstract

This article serves as a case study of an academic library's student-focused management decisions, including the concept of relationship-marketing and reputation-management in relation to their perceived impact on student retention. After realizing the library had developed a negative reputation, the director of SUNY Canton's Southworth Library integrated a multi-pronged strategic plan to improve the perceived reputation of the library while cultivating student loyalty. The library had to make the firm decision on what it determined to be "about," and whether what the library was "about" was its collections - the traditional library-centric identity - or about student success. Southworth Library Learning Commons had to make a collective determination to reject tradition and choose the latter. That meant altering course in terms of collection activities, redefining priorities and making non-traditional choices. The article illustrates strategies and actions that can be similarly replicated as part of a student-focused strategic plan. More broadly, other academic libraries and higher education institutions should consider the relationship-marketing approach in decision making and sustainability planning.

Introduction and Background

There is an increasing trend in higher education aimed at tying the academic library and its services to the tangible academic successes and retention rates of college students. Efforts

such as Association of College and Research Library's (ACRL) Assessment in Action program have led the way in recent years with grant-funded education, professional development and cohort-based training to guide participating institutions through the process of a team-based assessment project demonstrating the measurable impact of the academic library on student success.[1]   The recent shift in attention to the academic library's impact is only new, however, in the sense that its focus has veered toward measurable outcomes and indicators of student success, instead of the more traditional need for academic libraries (and libraries of all types) to continue justifying their existence post-advent of the web. Directors, librarians and library staff are well-aware of the persistent need to identify and document the contributions made by their departments, at minimum through careful collection of data on space, resource and service usage.

Statement of the Problem

Southworth Library has been no stranger to the concept of demonstrating its value. The State University of New York College of Technology at Canton (SUNY Canton) is a 4-year college of technology and applied education within the expansive State University of New York system. The college awards Bachelor's degrees, Associate's degrees, and one-year certificates in various applied fields, the largest of which include Criminal Justice, Business, Engineering Technology, Nursing, and other health professions. The 2016 enrollment is approximately 3,200 students, 26% of which identify as a race or ethnicity other than Caucasian. 27% of students are nontraditional college age, 66% are economically disadvantaged, and 46% are first-generation college students. SUNY Canton's mission focuses on providing accessible, affordable education, and the college prioritizes student support services and retention efforts.

Because SUNY Canton offers primarily applied programs intended to lead its undergraduates into meaningful employment post-graduation, very few of its degree programs

prior to 2010 required extensive research requirements in the core curricular areas. Add to this the institution's foray into online learning beginning in approximately 2005, and the demand for use of the library facilities and its collections was understandably low.

As of 2010, the institution's library had undergone aesthetic improvements, with new carpeting, furnishings, paint, periodical shelving and updated technology. The Information Services Help Desk had been physically located in the building by this time, and a few tutoring labs in addition to the institution's Writing Center had made the library their home as well. Only a short time prior to this, college administration had given serious consideration to closing the library's doors entirely, as its spaces and resources went practically untouched, and the department had no director for a period of several years. Students did not use the space or resources, the library had a negative reputation campus wide, and the "value" of the library, perceived or real, to say nothing of the library's services, was nil.

With physical improvements and additional services, business began to pick up. However, the negative reputation factor remained. And with increased student patronage, a host of other problems arose. Library staff remained responsible for opening and closing the building and managing the physical space, but continued to note library services were perceived as second-class, noting severely declining use of the collection, limited information literacy instruction or research assistance, and a general lack of awareness concerning the roles, capabilities or the substantive resourcefulness of the college librarians. Indeed, the triennial SUNY-wide Student Opinion Survey (SOS) administered in 2009 ranked SUNY Canton's Southworth Library as among the most unpopular, most disliked institutions with respect to its library resources, services and facilities, not only within the sector of seven SUNY technical colleges, but among all of the twenty-seven SUNY state-operated campuses. With both

institutional and student perceptions so low, it was clear that large-scale, impactful change management was needed.

Literature Review

The concept of the library's role in the complex dynamic that is the student success and retention paradigm has begun to take its place among the scholarly literature, with much attention being given to identifying, describing and/or quantifying the contributions of the academic library. Since the resources, services and offerings of academic libraries are so multidimensional and varied, and their contributions to the academic missions of higher education so long established, a number of themes emerge among the contemporary literature on libraries and student retention that attempt to organize library contributions along particular conceptual lines.

Among the conceptual divisions in the literature is the discussion of information literacy as the primary tool by which libraries contribute to student success and retention.[2] In some cases, the argument in the literature is more generalized, advocating for an overall understanding of the place that information literacy holds, or should hold, in the attainment of desirable educational outcomes.[3] Other work discusses the critical nature of information literacy as perhaps the most important skill necessary to effect college graduation, that libraries and librarians are too often neglected in the overall student support picture.[4] It is no surprise that the traditional concept associated with the library, information literacy and the associated critical thinking skills, plays a central role in what scholars point to as the library's role in retention.

There are other themes as well, most of which are still what might be considered traditional among the sphere of library services. Many of the works in the field point to the collection and the library's associated resources as the critical component of student success and retention.[5] In many cases, studies utilized library usage data and compared it with common

measures such as GPA and retention from students' first to second year in school.[6] Others used similar data, but included personnel and wages, and looked at Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) retention data as outcome variable.[7] Still others concentrated most on library expenditures and personnel.[8]

An entirely separate focus in the literature included the insistence that getting students into the library early and often, or that use of the library by first-year students, is significant in the determination of the library's impact on student retention and success.[9] Some aspects of importance in these works revolved around the idea of the library as community or place, and the students' use of the physical space as being a significant factor in persistence or success.[10] While many of these areas of library service consideration are both relevant and important with respect to this case study, the literature still lacked any meaningful coverage of student-library relationships in the context of student satisfaction as components of student success and retention.

Theoretical Background

Southworth Library at SUNY Canton developed a comprehensive plan for library services and reputation change management with a heavily student-focused, marketing-based approach that is conceptually similar to the Relationship Quality-Based Student Loyalty Model (RQSL).[11] The RQSL model relies on relationship marketing, a practice that places primacy heavily on the constructs of perceived quality, satisfaction, and trust in the relationship-building process.[12] The RQSL model proposes employment of relationship-marketing strategies as precursor to the development of *student loyalty*, a concept Hennig-Thurau, et al. use interchangeably with *student retention.*[13] In their report on student success, Kuh, Kinzie and Buckley operationalize and define student retention as, among other factors, constituted as satisfaction.[14] They further indicate that satisfaction is often overlooked as a critical variable in

student success, and that satisfaction has a greater effect on students' grades than obtaining grades has on student satisfaction.[15]

The concept of relationship marketing is not new, having taken hold in the business and marketing realms following development of the concept by Leonard Berry in the 1980s.[16] Nor is the applicability of relationship marketing exclusive to business, as is evident in the vast treatment of its usefulness in the literature with respect to higher education. The strategies associated with relationship marketing in the higher-education environment are variable, with purposes most closely tied to university image,[17] student recruitment[18] and overall student satisfaction.[19]

The application of the principles of relationship marketing with respect to academic libraries is rather limited in the literature, however. That is not to say that libraries have ignored the critical nature of *marketing* in their efforts to justify budgets and sustain their services; marketing is prevalent across and essential to libraries of all types. But the activities associated with the drive to market library services are often geared toward promoting education about, raising awareness of, and increasing exposure to resources, services, spaces, collections and programs primarily for the sake of driving up new-patron usage of those discrete resources.[20] These marketing projects and activities constitute undertakings and associated results which are both concrete and measurable.

Significantly, traditional library marketing efforts as described above are different in nature and in execution than those associated with relationship marketing. Even literature that supports or reports on use of relationship *management* with respect to marketing in academic libraries reflects again this need to drive resource utilization or produce increased library patronage.[21] No studies uncovered in the literature describe the application of a strategic relationship-marketing approach in academic libraries. Nor has the literature produced any

studies focused exclusively on marketing the library-patron *relationship* simply for the sake of producing a higher-quality connection and alliance between the two, despite some recognition and support suggesting that relationship-marketing strategies should be high-priority items of consideration in academic libraries.[22]

Relationship-marketing strategies push past the boundaries of traditional marketing efforts aimed at increasing the customer base or service usage. Relationship marketing is, instead, about *retention* of existing users through development of quality relationships which manifest as user satisfaction and loyalty. In the case of Southworth Library Learning Commons' efforts, the intentional development and deployment of relationship-marketing strategies within the context of the library's overall strategic organizational transformation plan, while on one hand aimed at producing satisfaction, loyalty and quality relationships specific to the *library*, was also aimed at producing student loyalty and satisfaction with the library as *proxy* for the institution. Utilizing components of the RQSL model, which posits that strategies aimed at marketing relationships manifest as student satisfaction and loyalty, and that student satisfaction and loyalty are functional antecedents of student retention, Southworth Library intentionally incorporated relationship-marketing practices and strategies designed to build the critical relationship constructs of quality, satisfaction and trust into the leadership-driven change management plan. The library's leadership decisions and the resulting departmental practices borne out of this framework follow.

Methodology

The change management plan undertaken by the library included two major components and three major categories of strategy. The two components of the plan included the administrative and Leadership Decisions employed to shape library staff perceptions, morale and behavior(s); and the Departmental Activities, work engaged in or work product generated,

to effect change. The strategies employed under these components can be categorized as Immersion, Action and Communication, as outlined below.
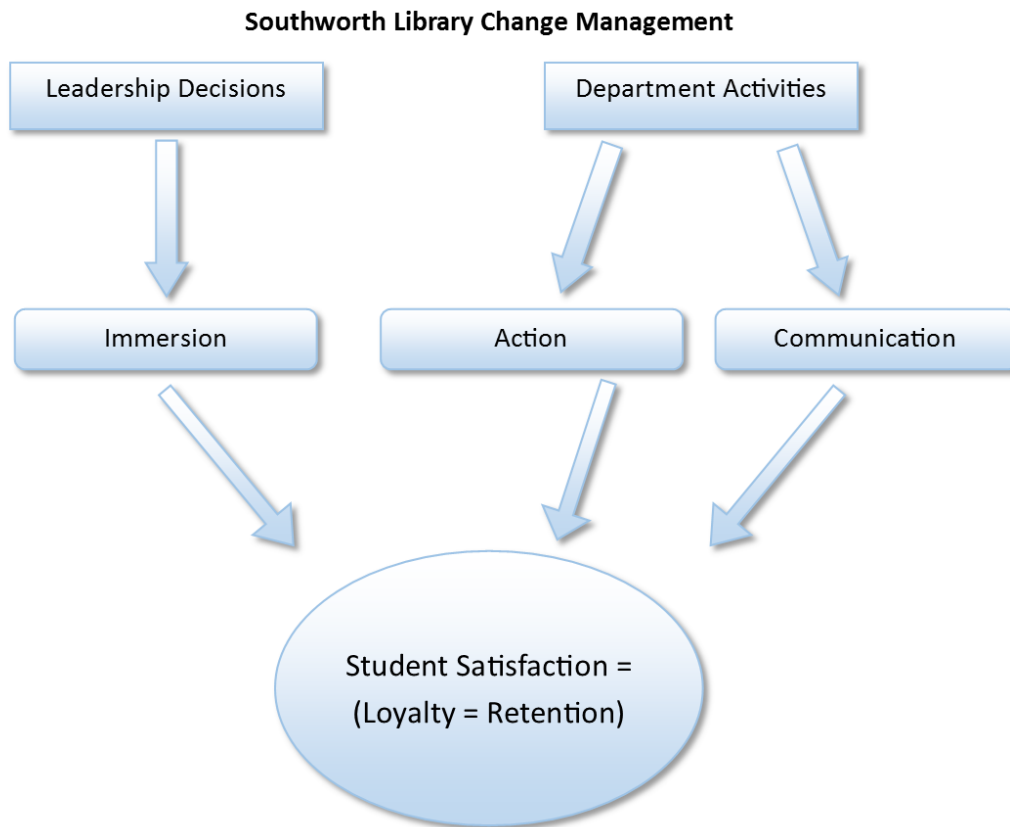
Southworth Library Change Management

Leadership Decisions

Department Activities

Immersion

Action

Communication

Student Satisfaction =
(Loyalty = Retention)

Figure 1 Southworth Library Change Management

Case Study

By 2011, following the years of dismal perception of the library, and capitalizing on the improvements in space and aesthetic committed to by the Division Dean - whose responsibilities included all of Student Affairs, as well as the academic support services areas on campus - the institution succeeded in positioning a director as head of the building and its library services. Although other functional areas, tutoring and information services, maintained their own coordinators and managers whose reporting structures were separate from library services, the library director was ultimately responsible for building and space-related decisions, in cooperation with the Division Dean. Partnerships and collaborations, however, with other

building service areas were key to the success and survival of the change management efforts for which the new director began to plan.

Leadership Decisions - Immersion

The primary focus of the director's leadership decisions and change management plan at the time she began her duties was reputation overhaul and maintenance. Having been fully apprised of the overall campus perceptions of the library and library services, faculty and administrative attitudes toward librarians, and a prevailing sentiment that marginalized library services as a variable contributing to the building's new level of patronage, the director's plan included changing perception and sentiment, heightening awareness, and highlighting library contributions to student success. First it was necessary to identify exactly what was causing such negative perceptions, particularly since patronage of the building had turned around, even though usage of traditional library services had not.

Some of the "problems" were clear and obvious and required no special initiative or strategy, other than casual conversation or analysis of usage data, to uncover:

- The library was referred to as the "fifth dorm" (before the college actually *had* a fifth dorm) by students *and* faculty/staff, meaning it was viewed primarily as a hangout for students with nothing academic to do. The new furniture and updated space had drawn students in, but not necessarily for the reasons intended.
- Faculty did not use the space or its collection or services. Reason: See above.
- Books did not circulate. Reason: See above, points one *and* two. But also, other reasons to be uncovered later.
- Transactions at reference service points were minimal, and those had at the circulation desk proved to be poor. Reason: Staffing levels had hit extraordinary lows (at one point leaving the department with the director as the single librarian on staff), requiring over-reliance on student employees at critical patronage points. Additionally, a history and

continuation of significantly negative relationships and feelings on the part of students toward library staff persisted.

Those became the primary hills to climb at the outset, with the major focus areas being space and environment, collections, services and relationships. This last one was the most concerning and the most elusive -- why did students dislike the library so much? And would improving this last factor positively impact the other three? The director's hypothesis was yes, it would indeed.

The assumption regarding the negative relationships, expressed in library staff meetings, with the dean, and through informal conversation, was, of course, the prevailing attitudes holding over from years past.   Immersion became the informal and unwritten theme of the director's first prong of the three-prong approach to change management: immersion with faculty, and immersion with students, intended to uncover some of the intervening variables preventing positive relationships, significant connections, or recognition of the library's contributions. To identify the underlying causes of the contentious relationships and negative attitudes, significant effort had to be made to place the librarians in positions of immersion throughout the institution, but most specifically with students. The director identified several areas wherein she encouraged the librarians through departmental conversation, programmatic and activity development, mentoring, evaluation and governance processes, to immerse themselves with students and faculty.

Immersion through Mission, Service and Duties

Initially, the strategies with the librarians took the form of discussion and brainstorming sessions within the context of staff meetings, meant largely to articulate the director's vision for the library, but also to help the librarians craft their own identities, both individually and collectively, within that vision and as a part of the overall institution's mission and goals. As of

2012, an entirely new staff of librarians had come on board due to the passing and retirements of previous staff; and all of the librarians at this time were fairly young, fairly new professionals whose identities, skillsets and interests within librarianship were fluid. It should be noted that a staff made up entirely of emerging library professionals, defined here as those with three or fewer years in librarianship, was undoubtedly a significant contributor to the nontraditional successes eventually realized by this library unit.

Breaking new ground, conversations with the department revolved around certain themes: people (students, faculty, staff and administrators) do not know or understand what librarians do; people do not realize that librarians have special, complex responsibilities and make unique contributions to the institution's academic goals that are sometimes invisible; people do not realize that every person who provides a service to them in the library is not necessarily a librarian; people do not realize that librarians are faculty; people do not think librarians do much of any "real" work other than checking books out all day; people do not know who the librarians even are; people still think of the library as equivalent to books. All topics were articulated within the sphere of negative perceptions and how to combat them, in an effort to get the library faculty to take ownership of their own contributions to these common misconceptions and misperceptions of librarians, libraries and library services that were not then and are not now unique to Southworth Library, and to allow the librarians to both fashion and perhaps fervently cultivate creative and novel pathways for improvement. These conversations tilled the ground for new activities and new responses from the department to begin, all branded under the catch-all header of "Relationships." In order to achieve new, improved, meaningful relationships with students and faculty, the department had to place itself physically, virtually and mentally in new spaces, situations and scenarios, with new roles, responsibilities and activities. The librarians and library department would have to embrace a new way of doing business, and a new way of looking at itself. And to do that effectively, they would have to

collectively draft and implement a new mission, one which allowed them to perceive of their work as necessarily requiring that they immerse themselves completely within the native environments belonging to the populations whose opinions and perceptions were most critical to library success.

A new mission[23] in place, the director was afforded the opportunity to implement some changes for librarians and create some duties that might not have otherwise made it through a departmental governance process, for various reasons. All new efforts and duties were approached in the context of the critical need for immersion and engagement with faculty and students. For faculty immersion, the director proposed and implemented a new library liaison program aimed at familiarizing the librarians with the internal workings, needs, attitudes and feelings of the other academic units on campus. The liaison program required each librarian to familiarize himself with the assigned area's programs, curricular needs, areas of research and plans for program growth or change. Librarians were encouraged to present at or attend department meetings in their liaison areas, and were required to maintain regular communication with faculty in their respective departments throughout each academic year. These activities were required outside of each librarian's regular duties.

Additionally, proposing immersion with the campus-at-large, and thereby immersion with significant portions of the faculty patron base, the director enthusiastically encouraged every librarian to participate on multiple campus committees and groups, from university governance, to search committees, student activity advisement, volunteer programs, academic assessment groups, teaching and learning working groups and more. The librarian's activities in service are evaluated each year by the director. Unlike other academic units on campus where the typical commitment outside of one's department averages one to two committees or outside responsibilities, the librarians each began to serve on three to five (or more) campus groups or

outside activities, carefully chosen to maximize their exposure to a variety of departments, programs and initiatives on campus.

Opportunities for student immersion were more plentiful, with a host of possibilities both within and outside of the library building. As a proponent of emerging technology, and an advocate for practicing what one wishes to see in others, the director implemented a new iPad initiative aimed at introducing SUNY Canton students to a novel new technology (iPads) and associating that novelty with the library. Students began to check out iPads from the library circulation desk beginning early in the 2011-12 academic year, when iPads were still new and in their first iteration, and before the practice was common in libraries. In tandem with this initiative and to reinforce the association of emerging technology with the library and librarians, iPads were purchased and provided to every librarian and professional staff member to enhance mobility, connectivity and on-the-spot patron service. Librarians were required to utilize iPads at the reference desk as a tool for student engagement.

To propel forward the emerging student engagement initiatives, the director increased the number of available reference hours each day, and doubled the number of reference points in the building making research desks available on each floor. At a time when libraries were - and are still - consolidating service points to provide one-stop availability, Southworth Library was expanding service points and staff availability to meet students where they were in the building; an idea that had never before been considered. This effort was intended to maximize librarian visibility and promote the perception of approachability and access with students, and to keep students in the building and in proximity to the specific spaces they desired. Shortly after this initiative began, an evening librarian was hired to expand librarian access even further. Additionally, every librarian, regardless of specialty, was assigned public service/reference hours at a service point each day. This served two practical purposes: one being that all hands on deck were required to man two service points during active desk hours; and the other to

ensure all librarians, including the director, had one-to-one student contact and visibility on a daily basis.

For the same reason as above, the director encouraged (and the librarians embraced) the opportunity for every librarian to teach students. Librarians continued to teach in library instruction sessions, and in a co-teaching capacity as embedded librarians in online courses, as well as independent adjunct faculty in the First Year Experience Program, in the Information Technology Department, in the English Department and in Criminal Justice courses.

The classroom and the public service points were not the only places available to maximize student contact. Having noted positive student responses to programs, displays and events, and having managed the execution of each of those displays, programs and events in very disjointed and haphazard ways at the start, the director enlisted all librarians to become involved with displays, events and programs in order to both prioritize and systematize them as a significant aspect of library work. Additionally, the director created performance duties for a professional staff member specifically to manage library outreach, social media, signage and programming efforts, which has subsequently become a major portion of the duties of librarians and the departmental events group.

Immersion through Assessment

The new mission, coupled with the librarians' new service and responsibility changes, offered a variety of data to sort through in departmental meetings and brainstorming sessions. It soon became clear that the overwhelming deluge of such data returned to the department for consideration required a more systematic and intentional process for collecting and organizing into meaningful categories, particularly if such information were ever to be transformed into action. Following a librarian departure, the director took the opportunity to revise the existing position description into an Instruction and Assessment role, with primary responsibility for

collecting, managing and analyzing departmental assessment activities and data. Additionally, the department began to capitalize on existing informal assessment strategies, and then to formalize other activities such that assessment became a regular and intentional component of the new library work that had begun.

Through librarian immersion opportunities and departmental assessment activities, formal and informal student communication and feedback became the primary data by which decisions were driven. Since feedback is often most candid when it is anonymous and unsolicited, particular prominence was afforded to the existing digital Suggestion Box incorporated within the library's website to promote visibility and enhance usage. Patrons could click on the icon and provide as much – or as little – contact information as they wished, along with a suggestion, complaint, thank you note, or indication of "things to buy." Completing the form automatically generates an email to all library staff, who can then respond directly to the patron. While the majority of comments received in this manner are complaints, it serves as a valuable source of explicit student feedback.

Additional feedback opportunities soon became the focal point of library events. Events often bring diverse groups of patrons to the building, including those who do not necessarily use the physical library resources often. Events provide the opportunity to interact directly with students, and are received positively by most who attend. Without a doubt, providing refreshments increases the number of attendees, and the Southworth Library Learning Commons staff have experimented with various types and sizes of events in recent years, with varying degrees of success. Events that have proven popular among students include Apple Week in September, which highlights the Library Learning Commons' lendable Apple products and classroom iPad collection in conjunction with providing free apples as a healthy snack, and the Scholarly Activities Celebration, which showcases student and faculty research and

academic achievements. Some type of assessment is generally administered during each event, and can be as informal as speaking with student participants or as structured as a comprehensive survey. Following each event, the director and staff debrief to provide feedback that is used in evaluating and planning future events.

The largest and most well attended annual event at Southworth Library Learning Commons, Love Your Library Day, is held during the week of Valentine's Day, and often on Valentine's Day if that is feasible. The purpose of hosting a large and visible event is twofold: it serves as both an observable gesture of appreciation from the library to the students, and provides the opportunity for librarians to capture feedback from a large sample population of the student body and campus faculty and staff.

Assessment during Love Your Library Day has evolved, but always includes gathering feedback from the students about which resources and services they utilize and appreciate, and what they feel could be improved upon. Different assessment platforms – including paper due date-style slips, online surveys on laptops, and mobile surveys on iPads – have been utilized throughout recent years. When the Love Your Library Day assessment was first presented on iPads, many students were unacquainted or only rudimentarily familiar with tablet technology. By utilizing the library's lendable iPad collection as a platform for a survey, librarians were able to capture student feedback while showcasing an innovative resource available to students.

Additional methods of student satisfaction and usage data began in earnest in subsequent years. An interlibrary loan customer satisfaction survey was added to ILLiad, and made available to users for every ILL transaction. The director convened a Library Learning Commons Student Advisory Board in 2014, a semi-structured focus-group-type initiative which brought students from various programs and constituencies across campus together to advise the director and other building department representatives about service issues, concerns or

satisfaction-related feedback. Meeting several times per semester, the director compiled detailed notes and made them publicly available to student members, department staff, and the Division Dean, who often passed the student data up through the administrative channels.[24] In a similar effort, in 2016 the assistant director and assessment librarian initiated a research study focusing on student opinion about textbooks. The research involved a survey and multiple focus group sessions during which students were encouraged to speak candidly about textbooks, OERs, and library services. Both the survey and focus groups have yielded valuable data that librarians have translated into departmental action.

Departmental Activities - Actions

Most, if not all, of the "new" activities and duties described herein are undoubtedly not extreme or significant in the context of what many or most other academic libraries already do or have done for years. And while one of the distinctions in the case of Southworth Library lies in its lean staffing levels - 5 total librarians, 1.5 professionals, and one secretary - compared to the robust number of new activities and duties managed by the librarians, the other even more significant distinction lies in the ever-increasing patronage of the building and its services each year handled by such lean staff *in addition* to the new and expanded scope of their duties.[25]

Patron Traffic 2008-2016

Academic Year	Number of Patron Visits
2008-09	72,311
2009-10	101,896
2010-11	148,982
2011-12	151,735
2012-13	190,917
2013-14	202,478
2014-15	217,996
2015-16	207,769
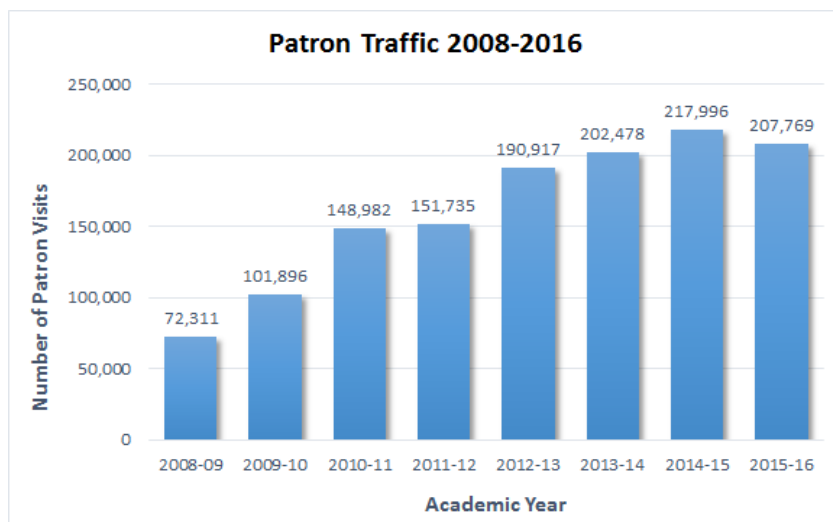
But all of those new and expanded duties did not comprise the extent of the expanded librarian work. It was not enough, nor did it make sense, to simply collect and analyze data on usage or to rely on it as a marker of success. Traditionally, usage of data in libraries is intended to make collection decisions, to divert budgets in certain directions, to curtail spending on certain resources or move collection decisions in new directions. Sometimes such data is used to meet contractual obligations; for example, libraries may be bound by resource-sharing contracts that require specified turnaround times for fulfillment. But more often than not, data collection and usage is intended to justify staffing levels and materials budget requests and generally satisfy administrators that libraries are fulfilling their function and their role on their campuses or in their communities.

In rarer cases, perhaps in no cases outside of this particular instance, data collection through various intentional workflows, duties, and assessment activities has been intended and utilized as a relationship-marketing tool. One of the resulting products of the feedback loop has been to take data from usage and satisfaction assessments and informal immersion-type feedback activities and translate it into concrete, responsive actions demonstrating reciprocity, among other things, between library and patrons.

Space Management

The first set of actions taken as a result of both informal and formal feedback assessment related to space management, since the building is small, but as previously noted the building patronage had increased dramatically resulting in other unresolved, and sometimes seemingly unresolvable issues. Space usage, and particularly noise, happened to be one of those most significant unresolved issues. Feedback on noise came in through every single one of the mechanisms employed, from suggestion box complaints to formal assessments to individual complaints, library committee faculty governance meetings, up to and including the new chat and SMS text-a-librarian reference service. Comments included: It's so noisy in here; this isn't a library anymore! That person is on his cell phone talking away, and he's so loud; why do you allow him to be on his cell phone? I can hear that group right through the walls of the group study room; they're so loud! That guy is blasting music in the study room! There is no quiet place for me to study by myself!

The number and type of noise comments seemed overwhelming, however many demonstrable improvements and changes have been made since the early days of chaotic uncontrolled noise. In direct response to noise concerns, the library staff has engaged in countless activities, including strategic space arrangement, using furniture to divide certain open areas, removing group configurations of seating in common spaces, purchasing individual study seating with high backs and sides that enclose the seated individual creating a private walled space, developing silent zones and quiet areas in the building, placing individual carrel configurations in open spaces, dedicating an evening building manager to promoting an "academic environment" in the building, placing clever, novel, high-impact signage in targeted locations and other "gentle rules" signage throughout the building, completing a large-scale sound panel project in high-traffic, high-noise areas throughout the first and second floors of the

building, thanks to the acceptance of a formal proposal for special projects funding from the Dean, and instituting a Library RA Program.

The Library RA Program developed out of a partnership with a previous library chair, the Dean, and the Director of Residence Life prior to the arrival of the library director, but was implemented under her supervision during her first year. This program employs well-trained Resident Assistants to be present in the library during high-traffic, high-noise evening hours (those hours whereby the building had earned its moniker "The Fifth Dorm") to utilize their specialized training to mediate noise and other student issues in positive directions, prioritizing the library's commitment to students remaining in the space successfully in consideration of their academic success, while minimizing the need for University Police intervention for unruly and disruptive conduct concerns, which had been the library's previous modus operandi. This one program has expanded from several nights a week to seven nights a week, from a few hours per evening to four hours per evening, and has been more successful at promoting positive relationships between students and the library than can be quantified. When student conduct issues arise (often noise or disruption) the first line of response is via a Library RA, who will mediate the behavior and reinforce the commitment to everyone's success in the academic space. As evidenced by the detailed activity logs kept by the Library RAs, and through subsequent feedback from students, unlike confrontation with professional staff, students report feeling less chastised or disciplined through peer intervention, and the outcome is nearly always a re-commitment to success in the space. While calls to University Police happened nearly weekly in 2010, calls to University Police did not exist in any capacity for student conduct concerns in 2015-16.

But noise and student conduct concerns did not exhaust the issues with space management tackled by the library staff. Noise existed as a result of significant overcrowding.

The demand for access to the building, its rooms, tables, technology and furniture were as great, if not greater, than the noise issues; and the library staff came to realize the physical space in a library can be even more important than its resources and services. In their study of academic libraries and student success, Zhone and Alexander found both students with GPAs of 3.5 or higher and college seniors – two groups associated with successful retention – most frequently indicated library facilities as a contributing factor to their academic success.[26] When provided appropriate space and resources, students will come to the library more frequently, use the resources, and stay longer. Perhaps more importantly, this same research noted that what librarians perceive as important to students and contributory to their academic success departed significantly from what students self-reported as important library offerings; librarians overwhelmingly supported the collections and resources as the primary contributors to student success, while students indicated library facilities, seating and quiet areas among their most significant perceptions of critical library offerings.[27]

Southworth Library Learning Commons was completed in 1968 as part of an entirely new campus – the college previously shared a campus with another local private university. While the building has gone through updates and renovations since 1968, it remains largely unchanged architecturally. To accommodate the dramatic increase in patron traffic, designated spaces in the building needed to be evaluated, reevaluated and possibly repurposed. By analyzing declining circulation statistics in conjunction with increasing patron traffic, it became clear that space in the building would be better served as student work space (both individual and group) than as print collection shelving. To accomplish this, library staff completed multiple major deaccession projects over several years. Clearing out rarely used reference materials on the first floor yielded additional space for increasingly popular tutoring services. Removal and relocation of a large compact-shelving unit housing back-issue print serials created a large space for individual study carrels and quiet seating on the popular second floor. A collection-

wide weeding project resulted in the removal of approximately 20% of the print collection. The remaining collection was rearranged, creating a large additional space for multiple group study seating arrangements.

Student response to formalized assessments, and unsolicited feedback through the online suggestion box and emails, all indicated that students desire more group space. Because it is not possible to add additional rooms due to architectural constraints, the library staff investigated alternatives to meet the student demand for group space. A study booth pilot project will commence in fall 2016, and will introduce two alternatives – a tall U-shaped wall and a restaurant-style booth with a privacy screen. If students express satisfaction with the spaces, the library is committed to funding similar projects. Satisfaction will be gathered via observation, focus groups, and surveys, and presented to key players in the administration.

Services

While space and noise were predominating concerns, many other issues rose to the top of the gathered and organized feedback received. Certain themes were common among commuter students: I'm a commuter and I can't eat on campus; I'm a commuter and I also have a job and family and you're not open when I need you! Why can't I just get a coffee in the building in the evening? Some of this feedback came in through typical informal channels, but similar sentiments were expressed by a significant number of assessment participants as well.

Demonstrating attention to students and acting on their feedback has largely been the goal of the annual Love Your Library assessment. Quickly attained and visible changes are prioritized, to show the students how their feedback directly impacts decision making in the Library Learning Commons. An example of one such change was purchasing a microwave for

the café in the building as a result of multiple commuter complaints about eating options on campus. In survey responses, multiple students expressed the desire for a microwave, as they noted they are frequently in the building studying and do not want to leave for meals, nor do they have the ability to purchase meals or a campus meal plan on their budget. After noting the request from multiple students during the same assessment, the library successfully solicited a microwave donation from Campus Dining Services, which was promptly purchased, installed, in use and advertised to students as a response to their need within a two-week period. This inexpensive addition represented a tangible change in the building driven directly from student feedback, and has consistently been very well received and well-utilized. It allows students to remain in the building for longer periods and during nontraditional hours when other campus eateries are not open.

Another common theme among both commuters and the residential student population concerned the library building hours. For commuters especially, the extremely restricted weekend hours were problematic, as the library was open only from noon to five p.m. on Saturdays and two to ten p.m. on Sundays. Since 2010-11 academic year, the library has increased its overall weekly building hours of operation by forty additional hours. Students also commented how important certain library resources were, printing for instance, to be able to access in advance of 8 a.m. classes. In response, the building began opening at 7:30 a.m. during the regular academic week. The building opens at 8 a.m. on Saturdays and closes at midnight, opens at 8 a.m. again on Sunday and closes at 2 a.m., with 7:30 a.m. to 2:00 a.m. building hours during the regular academic week, for a total of 124.5 hours of availability per week during the academic term. Compared with 84.5 weekly hours of availability in 2010-11, the expansion of service and availability is significant indeed. However, the library also maintains 24-hour availability each term during finals week, beginning on the Saturday preceding finals and concluding at 4:00 p.m. on the last day of the semester. Such additional

staffed hours have been funded in various ways throughout the years, but significant among those sources of funding was contribution from the Student Government Association in support of the library.

Collections

The depth and breadth of changes noted above certainly do not constitute all of what was overhauled, revised or implemented during the period of change. Certainly, these changes represent both a shift in the way the librarians thought about themselves, about the library and its services, and about the role the department played or should play in the context of student success and the institutional mission. And it also most definitely represented a commitment of significant dollars with respect to the acquisition of equipment, furnishings, and materials, as well as dollars committed to staffing, both in terms of increased permanent professional and faculty staffing, as well as temporary and part-time professional and student staffing. And all of those dollars committed resulted from careful data collection, justification of usage, demonstrable positive results and successes, wholehearted buy-in on the part of campus administrators and increasing levels of student support and satisfaction with the library and its offerings.

But it also resulted from decisions about where to place effort, based on knowledge of the institution, understanding of the student population demographics and needs, the curricular and program needs, and a prediction of future student and faculty behaviors and needs. This is where the library had to make the firm decision on what it determined to be "about," and whether or not what the library was "about" was going to be its collections - the traditional library-centric identity - or about student success. Southworth Library Learning Commons had to make a collective determination to reject tradition and choose the latter. And what that meant

was altering course in terms of collection activities, redefining priorities and making non-traditional choices.

Much is currently being written about the rising cost of textbooks and the burden it places on students. Many academic libraries would argue it is not their mission or purview to provide, and students should not expect the library to have textbooks. A simple Google search for academic library textbook collection policies confirms this: There are too many courses offered to be able to collect course texts. They are cost-prohibitive. Publishing practices make purchasing textbooks untenable, with perpetual releases of new editions. It is the student's obligation and responsibility to purchase course materials. *It is not our mission.* Nevertheless, the area on which the Southworth Library and its librarians focus a disproportionate amount of time, energy, resources and discussion is its robust textbook reserve program, since it is the most heavily used, high-demand service that the library provides. And it is, indeed, the library's mission.

Southworth Library Learning Commons' mission, and more broadly, SUNY Canton's mission focuses on providing access. Through internal assessments, students indicate textbook expenses as a major concern. Statements made during student focus groups include: "I could not afford to buy many of the textbooks for my program," and, "The cost of textbooks is outrageous." Canton is an access institution, yet the exorbitant cost of textbooks significantly prohibits student access to materials critical for academic success. To this end, the library purchases textbooks and highly prioritizes this service. Textbooks and reserve materials, which consists of other academic resources and supplies as well, are the single most heavily circulated collection the library provides every single year.

To help ease the financial burden textbooks place on students, SLLC provides both a textbook collection on reserve and other tangible resources, including anatomical models,

laptops, tablets, and other technology, all available at the Circulation Desk for in-library use. In response to student demand, the library strives to provide as many textbooks as possible – particularly for high-enrollment classes such as 100-level courses. As shown in Table 2.0, the reserve textbook collection is heavily utilized by students and all assessment results, past and present, indicate demand for expanding the program.

The textbook program also serves as a recruitment tool for prospective students, and is mentioned during the campus tours given by the Office of Admissions. Tour guides often cite their own use of the program and how much it has helped them financially and academically. Qualitative research about Southworth Library Learning Commons' textbook reserve program suggests students feel the program is directly contributive to their success. Representative samples of student interviewee responses include:

- *"The fact that the library supplies textbooks to their students lifts a financial burden from the students."*
- *"The textbooks at the library help with my financial situation and my academic success."*
- *"If students are broke, which we are, these books are crucial for success."*
- *"I am so grateful for the textbook reserves. Without this resource I would not be able to pass my classes."*

Table 2.0 – Most Heavily Circulated Reserve Textbooks			
Course Number and Name	**Textbook**	**Approximate Cost**	**Total checkouts**
MATH 111 – Survey of Math	*Survey of Math* – Angel and Runde (Pearson)	$165.00	3,385

MATH 106 – Intermediate Algebra	*Intermediate Algebra for College Students* – Angel, Abbot, and Runde (Pearson)	$215.00	1,203
ACCT 101 – Introduction to Accounting	*Financial & Managerial Accounting -* Warren and Reeve (Cengage Learning)	$290.00	1,124
CHEM 101 – Introduction to Chemistry	*Introductory Chemistry: A Foundation –* Zumdahl and DeCoste (Brooks Cole)	$215.00	806
MATH 161 - Calculus	*Calculus: The Classic Edition –* Swakowski (Cengage Learning)	$146.00	583
BSAD 201 - Business Law	*Business Law –* Cheeseman (Pearson)	$230.00	541

Figures are current as of June 2016

The laptop reserve program, which is part of the overall reserve collection, serves to provide access for students who cannot afford or do not have their own laptop. While the learning commons provides 55 desktop computer workstations throughout the building, the laptops remain one of the most heavily used services, and the reserve collection provides 60 devices for circulation during all open building hours. Despite the robust size of the collection, there are occasions when all laptops are in circulation.

Other reserve items available for checkout are highly contributive to student satisfaction, as reflected in both surveys and focus groups. Among the most popular reserve items (shown in Table 3.0) are Apple and Android phone cords and charging blocks, headphones, and HDMI cords to connect to wall-mounted large-screen PCs in study rooms. Providing these items for checkout encourages the students to utilize the technology in the library and to stay in the building longer.

Table 3.0 - Most Heavily Circulated Reserve Equipment	
Reserve Item	**Number of total checkouts**
Student laptops	80,122
Headphones	3,637

iPads	2,269
Apple iPhone charging cord	1,386
Android charging cord	503

Figures are current as of June 2016

Departmental Activities - Communication

The final leg of the library change management plan was its communication piece. It is simply not enough to immerse oneself in the patron base, identify issues and concerns, and work hard to demonstrate that you are paying attention by rising to the challenge to meet critical needs. Those things are wonderful, critical components of a service culture that has abandoned its insistence on traditional collections being its focal point and identify. Just as libraries must constantly demonstrate and communicate their purpose and justify their existence to administrators, so too must they also communicate to their main stakeholders, the patrons, *that they have paid attention, and they have acted, and they get it, and they're doing what they can*. This is the core of a reciprocal relationship. Because so much of what Southworth Library Learning Commons does is driven by student need, it was particularly important to communicate to the students that decision makers had paid attention to and understood their feedback, and had done something with it.

SLLC developed a multi-pronged approach to student communication, attempting to reach as many students as possible through different communication streams. In an effort to reach a large number of students while working toward the college's mission of increased sustainability, librarians moved a large percentage of communication efforts online. One of the easiest ways to reach students is through their official college email, and the outreach librarian strategically uses the campus student listserv to communicate with students. Email is primarily

used for announcements. Librarians also use email as a first-level announcement about other communication efforts, such as a recruitment email for an upcoming Student Focus Group.

One approach to student communication that has proven effective is the monthly digital newsletter, started in 2012. Utilizing Springshare's LibGuides, the newsletter provides library staff the opportunity to deliver a considerable amount of information to a large audience, including students, faculty, and other campus community members. The librarians use the newsletter as a platform to both broadcast and collect information. Including one-question surveys and polls allows SLLC to obtain snapshots of reader input. When making announcements about changes or additions to services, librarians use deliberate language to communicate to students that SLLC is paying attention to their input. Examples of this language include, "Due to student demand, the café will now be open at night," or, "You asked, we listened. SLLC will now offer extended hours during Finals Week!" The director has also used the newsletter as a relationship-building tool to establish trust through direct communication.

An addition to the newsletter that was met with surprisingly positive response is the "Patron of the Month" – a student or campus member who stands out to library staff as a model user of services. Each month the library staff select one person to profile in the newsletter with a photo and background information. The very brief article includes why the person was selected (often their frequent use of library services or contribution to collaborative efforts) and quotes from the featured individual about SLLC and SUNY Canton. Selecting the individual and creating the profile takes minimal effort from the library staff, but yields extremely positive results. Past Patrons of the Month have expressed their delight at being selected, and campus leadership have made a practice of reaching out to selected students to communicate and share a lunch. This builds a stronger relationship between students and the campus, and reinforces the library as proxy for the larger institution. Additionally, it helps bolster student

satisfaction while communicating positive messages about the library and its patrons to a large audience.

Through conversations with student leaders and focus groups such as the Student Advisory Board, SLLC staff learned that students pay more attention to social media than email, particularly their college email. Upon learning this, the library director worked with the college's Public Relations department to create a separate Facebook and Twitter account for the Library Learning Commons in 2011. The outreach librarian posts frequently about upcoming events and new services and resources in the learning commons. To reach more students, the staff created a "Facebook Likes" campaign to generate more followers. By offering a raffle to all the students who "like" the page on Facebook, the campaign was able to increase the number of followers by 21%. A useful function on Facebook is the option to schedule posts ahead of time. Utilizing this, the outreach librarian is able to generate many posts at the beginning of the semester which will automatically post throughout the term at specific times and dates. The library's Facebook page also auto-populates to its Twitter account, for those patron Twitter followers as well.

Figure 2. Source: <u>Southworth Library Learning Commons News and Events, February 2013:</u>
http://www.canton.edu/library/documents/February2013.pdf

Another arm of communication is the Library Learning Commons Student Advisory Board itself, a venue where students can air their concerns with service, resources and support, but also ask questions. Students receive answers to concerns common to various portions of the student body. Because the advisory board is made up of students representing residential populations, commuter populations, non-traditional students, various academic schools, veterans populations, accommodative and disability services student representatives and more,

the concerns of these represented populations get articulated back to the affected or interested groups.

In addition to the efforts already described, the Library Learning Commons developed digital signage in 2014 as an additional method of communicating to library users. A large flat screen television mounted on the first floor of the building serves as a scrolling billboard, advertising updates and information about both library efforts and other campus events, such as those held by Career Services and Advising. The Patron of the Month from the monthly newsletter is also featured, and students often provide extremely positive feedback about seeing their photo and profile in such a prominent place. The digital sign is easily updated, and is prominently displayed in the library lobby for easy viewing by even those patrons who simply utilize the building for a quick cup of coffee.

Looking forward, SLLC plans to incorporate student leaders into its communication efforts. Because student leaders are more attuned to the zeitgeist of campus, their contribution to social media and other communication efforts will help the Library Learning Commons' message more effectively reach its constituents.

Discussion

Some of the most significant results of the library change management plan have proven more intangible than tangible. The reduction in noise complaints, the improvement in faculty/staff-to-student transaction quality, and the general level of engagement with the library and its staff have been fantastic, but those are qualities, sentiments and dispositions for the most part, rather than quantifiable data points or tangible or concrete indicators of relationship success. Nevertheless, the atmosphere in the building is pleasant, students are engaged in academic pursuits, long gone is the moniker "the Fifth Dorm" (although Canton now has a legitimate fifth dorm), and there is an overall sense on the part of those who enter the building

that significant partnerships in student success are happening every moment. It is also notable that a confirmed relationship between library and tutoring services, with the merger of the departments in 2012 and formal rebranding and renaming of the building to Southworth Library Learning Commons, has solidified the concept of the building services working in cooperation to meet student needs and drive student success. In 2013, Southworth Library Learning Commons was awarded the Joseph F. Schubert Library Excellence Award by the New York Regents Advisory Council on Libraries in recognition of its significant relationship and partnership building and transformation. In addition, there has been one even more significant indicator of relationship-building success which deserves attention.

Indicators of Success

Student Opinion Survey

As part of a cooperative research effort led by the SUNY System Administration Office of Institutional Research and Analysis, all SUNY colleges administer a system-wide survey assessing students' impressions of their college experience and the quality of student life. The survey is conducted every three years, and the 2015 survey was the eleventh in the series.[28]

In the 2009 Student Opinion Survey, SUNY Canton's Library Services and Library Resources each ranked 27th out of 27 SUNY state-operated colleges. In 2012, the Student Opinion Survey was administered again. This time, Library Resources and Services were combined into one category. SUNY Canton was ranked fourth out of 27 SUNY Colleges, and first among the seven SUNY Colleges of Technology, a smaller sector within the 27 colleges in the survey. This was a striking improvement from the 2009 rankings where Canton earned dead last both sector-wide and system-wide.

However, in the 2015 Student Opinion Survey, Library Resources and Library Services were again split into two separate categories; and SUNY Canton ranked first among the seven

SUNY Colleges of Technology, and first among all 27 SUNY Colleges in both categories.[29]

Whatever the totality of discrete variables that made up this marked increase in student

satisfaction happened to be, at least some components of the overall change management plan

and its outcomes were undeniable contributors. Of course, Southworth Library made certain to

convey this to its student population, with gratitude and humble respect for being able to do its

job, within its stated mission, and earn high satisfaction among its patron base. The assistant

director posted a large-format poster in the library lobby, placed the same poster graphic in the

newsletter, and the director added it to the Latest News section of the library's website

homepage.

Figure 3. Source: Cori Wilhelm, 2016, Used with Permission

Retention Rates

Again, the factors which contribute to student retention and student satisfaction are

variable, and library services and resources are just one among many influences in the student

success and retention picture. Feedback from students, as evidenced in the textbook focus

groups, indicates that students *believe* the library to be a critical piece of student success, including their ability to stay enrolled, to meet financial obligations, and to complete academic requirements successfully. This is particularly relevant to Southworth Library's goals with respect to its reserves collections.

It should not go unmentioned, however, that at the same time such marked changes in student satisfaction were occurring with respect to Canton's library services, significantly similar changes in retention rates showed corresponding increases. As of 2010, at the outset of the library's change management plan, SUNY Canton's institutional retention rates were at 53%, but by 2015, the number had risen to 63%.[30] It should be noted that this is not an implication that the library's organizational transformation endeavors aimed at improving student relationships and satisfaction are directly responsible for such significantly improved rates of retention. But if student satisfaction is indeed a predictor of retention and success, then Southworth Library counts its own strategic effort as one among the many institutional variables that have had a tangible and positive impact on student retention.

Limitations

A number of factors may be considered limitations to this case study if other directors, departments, units or institutions intend to replicate or pilot similar initiatives for student success and retention. The first limitation is in the potential narrowness of other libraries' missions and the inflexibility of their governance structures. Neither happened to be concerns in this case, but those kinds of issues are difficult to overcome with entrenched staff committed to tradition who have a firm hold on library governance decisions. A flexible and fluid mission statement and commitment to non-traditional library services, spaces and strategies is essential to the efficacy of a change management plan of this scale. That is not to say the general structure of immersion, action, and communication would be untenable. But institutionalizing major changes

or systematizing new librarian work product, work flow and non-traditional library services as priorities might be unrealistic if those conditions persist.

Another limitation to this study's replicability and generalizability lies in the institution type, the institutional mission, and the institutional climate. Such dramatic changes in collection priorities, such large-scale weeding projects, and diversion of funding to relationships, facilities and retention initiatives might not be of value, or even of necessity, to other library or institution types. Had forces at SUNY Canton been extraordinarily committed to the health, breadth and depth of the research collections, or the institution offered different degree programs, with different foci, and did not subscribe to an overall access mission, or the student population and demographics were different, then this initiative would likely not have found ground on which to take root. Institutional climate and mission were most definitely key components to the initiative's success, as was wholehearted funding and support from administrators. Again, the general structure of the change management plan, immersion, action, and communication, still might apply and bear exceptional fruit.

Conclusion

Relationship-marketing as a precursor to student satisfaction is an idea that deserves consideration, not only for small, access-oriented higher education institutions, but for libraries and higher education institutions of all types. Embracing the non-traditional role of partner in student success and retention, however, and shedding the traditional research and collection identity in pursuit of alternative roles for libraries and librarians may be another matter. Additional research, additional applications of this strategy and plan, and significant quantification of results on a larger scale may be warranted as a result of the extraordinary, although perhaps atypical, results achieved at Southworth Library through immersion, action and communication.

Michelle L. Currier (currierm@canton.edu) is a Lecturer in the Criminal Justice Department at State University of New York College of Technology at Canton. At the time of the writing of this article, she was serving as Director of Library Services, SUNY Canton.

Cori Wilhelm (wilhelmc@canton.edu) is the Interim Director of Library Services at State University of New York College of Technology at Canton. At the time of the writing of this article, she was serving as Assistant Directory of Library Services, SUNY Canton.

1 American Library Association, "Assessment in Action: Academic Libraries and Student Success" (2016): Retrieved from http://www.ala.org/acrl/AiA

2 Heidi Blackburn, "Shhh! No Talking About Retention in the Library!," *Education Libraries* 33, no.1 (2010): 24-30.

3 George D. Kuh and Robert M. Gonyea, "The Role of the Academic Library in Promoting Student Engagement in Learning," *College & Research Libraries* 76 no.3 (2015): 359-385. doi:10.5860/crl.76.3.359.

4 Blackburn, "Shhh! No Talking About Retention in the Library!", 24-30.

5 Krista M. Soria, Jan Fransen, Shane Nackerud, "Stacks, Serials, Search Engines, and Students' Success: First-year Undergraduate Students' Library Use, Academic Achievement, and Retention," *The Journal of Academic Librarianship,* 40 no.1 (2014): 84-91. doi:10.1016/j.acalib.2013.12.002. Mark Emmons and Frances C. Wilkinson, "The Academic Library Impact on Student Persistence," *College & Research Libraries* 72 no.2 (2010): 128-149. doi:10.5860/crl-74r1. Sidney Eng and Derek Stadler, "Linking Library to Student Retention: A Statistical Analysis," *Evidence Based Library and Information Practice EBLIP* 10 no.3 (2015): 50-54. doi:10.18438/b84p4d. Elizabeth Mezick, "Return on Investment: Libraries and Student Retention," *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* 33 no.5 (2007): 561-566. doi:10.1016/j.acalib.2007.05.002. Lisa Massengale, Pattie Piotrowski, and Devin Savage, "Identifying and Articulating Library Connections to Student Success," *College & Research Libraries* 77, no.2 (2016): 227-235. doi:10.5860/crl.77.2.227. Ying Zhong and Johanna Alexander, "Academic Success: How Library Services Make a Difference," *ACRL 13th National Conference.* (2007). Retrieved from http://www.ala.org/acrl/sites/ala.org.acrl/files/content/conferences/confsandpreconfs/national/baltimore/papers/141.pdf

6 Soria, Fransen & Nackerud, "Stacks, Serials, Search Engines, and Students' Success", 84-91.

7 Emmons & Wilkinson, "The Academic Library Impact on Student Persistence," 128-149.

8 Kellian Clink, "The Academic Library's Role in Student Retention". *PNLA Quarterly* 80 no.1 (2015) and Eng & Stadler, 50-54.

9 Krista M. Soria, Jan Fransen, Shane Nackerud, "Library Use and Undergraduate Student Outcomes: New Evidence for Students' Retention and Academic Success," *Portal: Libraries and the Academy Portal* 13 no.2 (2013): 147-164. doi:10.1353/pla.2013.0010; and Blackburn , "Shhh! No Talking About Retention in the Library!", 24-30.

10 Blackburn, "Shhh! No Talking About Retention in the Library!", 24-30.

11 Thorsten Hennig-Thurau, Markus F. Langer, and Ursula Hansen, "Modeling and Managing Student Loyalty: An Approach Based on the Concept of Relationship Quality," *Journal of Service Research* 3 no.4 (2001): 331-344. doi:10.1177/109467050134006.

12 Fabio Vinicius Bergamo, Antonio Carlos Guiliani, Silvia De Carmago, Felipe Zambaldi, and Mateus Canniatti Ponchio, "Student Loyalty Based on Relationship Quality : An Analysis on Higher Education Institutions," *Brazilian Business Review*, 9 no.2 (2012): 26-46. doi:10.15728/bbrconf.2012.

13 Hennig-Thurau, et al, "Modeling and Managing Student Loyalty," 331-344.

14 George D. Kuh, Jillian Kinzie, Jennifer A. Buckley, Brian K. Bridges, and John C. Hayek. "What Matters to Student Success: A Review of the Literature." In *Commissioned Report for the National Symposium on Postsecondary Student Success: Spearheading a Dialog on Student Success* (2006).

15 Ibid.

16 Thorsten Hennig-Thurau, Kevin P. Gwinner, and Dwayne D. Gremler. "Understanding Relationship Marketing Outcomes: An Integration of Relational Benefits and Relationship Quality." *Journal of Service Research* 4, no. 3 (2002): 230-47. doi:10.1177/1094670502004003006.

17 Basheer A. M. Al-Alak, "The Impact of Marketing Actions on Relationship Quality in the Higher Education Sector in Jordan." *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education* 16, no. 2 (2006): 1-23. doi:10.1300/j050v16n02_01.

18 Justin Beneke, "Student Recruitment and Relationship Marketing--Convergence or Contortion?" *South African Journal of Higher Education* 25, no. 3 (2011): 412-24. Bowden, J. Lay-Hwa. "Engaging the Student as a Customer: A Relationship Marketing Approach." *Marketing Education Review* 21, no. 3 (2011): 211-28. doi:10.2753/mer1052-8008210302.

19 Philip J. Trocchia, R. Zachary Finney, and Treena Gillespie Finney. "Effectiveness of Relationship Marketing Tactics in a University Setting." *Journal of College Teaching & Learning (TLC)* 10, no. 1 (2012): 29. doi:10.19030/tlc.v10i1.7528.

20 Raj Kumar Bhardwaj, and P. K. Jain. "Marketing of Library Resources and Services: A Structured Literature Review." *DESIDOC Journal Of Library & Information Technology* 36, no. 3 (May 2016): 119-125.

[21] Glenn Masuchika. "The Reference Desk, Points-of-sale, and the Building of Loyalty: Applications of Customer Relationship Management Techniques to Library Marketing." *The Reference Librarian* 54, no. 4 (2013): 320-31. Piyawan Siriprasoetsin., Kulthida Tuamsuk, and Cholabhat Vongprasert. "Factors Affecting Customer Relationship Management Practices in Thai Academic Libraries." *The International Information & Library Review* 43, no. 4 (2011): 221-29.

[22] Besant, L. X., and D. Sharp. "Upsize This: Libraries Need Relationship Marketing." *Information Outlook*, 2000, 17-22.

[23] The mission of SUNY Canton's Southworth Library Learning Commons is to provide the greatest level of access to a comprehensive collection of resources and materials, a highly qualified professional staff, and services that encourage and support teaching, learning and successful college experiences.

[24] Student Advisory Board notes were compiled and made publicly available to students: http://researchguides.canton.edu/studentadvisory

[25] Patron traffic shown in Table 1.0 indicates more than double the building patronage since 2009-10. Librarian staffing during that time has ranged from between 1 and 5 librarians at various points.

[26] Zhong and Alexander, "Academic Success".

[27] Ibid.

[28] SUNY SOS from SUNY Assessment page: http://system.suny.edu/academic-affairs/acaproplan/assessment/

[29] All Student Opinion Survey data from SUNY Canton Office of Institutional Effectiveness. 2015.

[30] Retention data from SUNY Canton Office of Institutional Effectiveness. 2016. Breakdowns by school and degree type here: http://www.canton.edu/effectiveness/retention.html