

Q&A: Stephanie Villamor responses:

Any tips on marketing our space? Our patron/student traffic is decreasing quite a bit and our goal is to create a more inviting space for our patrons.

-Any marketing initiative will have several steps and depend a lot on what you have to offer your students/patrons. At CSN when we got new furniture for a campus library, for example, we created a print poster that we set up on an easel to thank students for participating in our previous furniture study survey that helped with our furniture making decisions. This showed students as soon as they came in the door that there was new, inviting furniture and useful spaces with power outlets. What does your space have to offer that will meet your students' needs? (For example: power outlets for charging devices, empty desks for students who bring their own laptops, soft chairs for reading long term, large tables for spreading out anatomy models, different heights of tables in case some students prefer to sit or stand, wheelchair accessible spaces, collaboration spaces, good lighting, quiet study spaces, etc). That will help determine the message you send out, and then you can begin to share it through the channels you have, such as through a blog post on your website, a social media post, an email blast, etc. Also, are there events you could host that might bring students into the space? Could you collaborate with a campus group like Student Life or a diversity committee to co-host an event in the library and let more students know about the space? Invite therapy dogs in? There are so many possibilities!

Are the diagrams and other graphics used in this presentation, such as the SMART Goals, in the book?

-Not all the diagrams from the presentation are in the book but everything we discussed is mentioned in the book. For more information about the SMART goal diagram, you can check out Kimberly's poster on SMART Goals and creating and assessing outreach initiatives here: <https://tinyurl.com/libsmartgoals>

Do you have any specific advice/creative ideas on marketing your library's chat services?

-As mentioned in the presentation, we marketed our evening chat services through an announcement that went to every class in our Canvas learning management system (by partnering with our Office of eLearning). Some chats have a "pop up" feature where a chat box appears a few seconds after a student visits your home page. Since the pandemic, CSN Libraries has been advertising its chat service on our hours posters for each campus library so when students look to see when we're open they also see when our chat is available. And we have a short URL that is easy to add to social media, emails, LibGuides, signs, etc: <https://library.csn.edu/ask>

Do you believe Outreach Librarian positions are an added benefit to marketing strategies?

-I believe having an Outreach Librarian is a huge help because you have a staff member dedicated to these marketing efforts instead of having to try and recruit volunteers. CSN Libraries has been lucky that we always have had librarians and staff interested in marketing who volunteer to serve on our marketing teams, but not all institutions may have that luxury (or they may have interested staff but no time for the staff to dedicate to marketing initiatives if it is outside their traditional job duties).

When you make posts or videos, do you have a form that students have to fill out in order to be featured within the media?

-Yes! At CSN Libraries we use our college's image release form found on the CSN website. At larger events we have a note at the top of our attendance sheet at the door that says by signing in to participate in the event you are agreeing to be photographed (and the photos could be used for publicity). Attendees must fill out the sheet with their signature and include their email address and student ID number.

How did you two get together to write this book?

-The idea for this book started back in 2017 when I presented at the American Library Association Annual Conference about “Marketing from the heart” to students, faculty, and administration. Jessica Gribble, an editor at Libraries Unlimited (imprint of ABC-CLIO) was also attending that year and saw the title of the presentation. She found it intriguing and asked if I would be interested in writing a book about academic library marketing. I loved the idea since I already loved writing fiction and was eager to take on the challenge of writing nonfiction on a topic that I was passionate about as well. But I only had experience with my own community college, and Jessica recommended a co-author with university library experience too. I met Kimberly through the ACRL Library Marketing and Outreach Interest Group and when I sent out a call asking for interested coauthors she came on board—and I’m so glad for it! We make a great team! Since we live in two different states, all our communication has been virtual, and we crafted each chapter using Google Docs and Google Drive so we could easily share and edit each other’s work. It was such a collaborative process and I loved it!

Are you in charge of your campus bookstore? Or just the library?

-No, our library department is completely separate from the campus bookstore.