



INNOVATIONS



Academic library public relations: Using internal publications to spread the news

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At one of its quarterly meetings last year, the Library's Public Relations Committee brainstormed on how it could better publicize its materials and services within the DePaul academic community. During that meeting, the notion of sending articles to other departments for inclusion in their publications and discontinuing the library's semi-annual newsletter was proposed. The committee agreed to pursue this new approach and I was appointed "P.R. Liaison" for the library. My first task was to compile and produce a list of DePaul's internal publications.

Since no complete list had been compiled by the library or any other university office, I began calling numerous departments to ask if they published a newsletter or some other type of publication. The first draft of the list was produced containing each publication's title, the contact person responsible for its contents, and the publication's frequency. The next step was to get in touch with each contact person and ask him or her if the library could send articles to be included in an issue of their publication.

Information for these articles comes from library staff members who either write the article themselves or suggest topics. These ideas are then coordinated by the P.R. Liaison whose duties include editing, proofing, and making sure the article's style is appropriate for a particular publication. Factors such as subject matter and timeliness help determine which publication(s) would use that article.

We have found this approach to public relations to be highly successful for two main reasons. First, since these publications originate from various DePaul University departments, we can more eas-

ily target an article for that particular audience. A corollary of this is that faculty, staff, and students are more likely to read their own publications than a library newsletter. Second, the frequency of publication also varies from publication to publication and that helps us decide which one(s) to submit the article to. Since we no longer publish our own newsletter, the cost to publicize the library's materials and services is quite small.

Since we implemented these procedures, we have noticed an increase in the number of patrons informing us that they have read articles pertaining to the library in various DePaul internal publications. Currently, our Internal Publications List has 35 titles and it continues to grow as we discover new publications being started at DePaul. This type of public relations program might seem unique to some, but we have found it to be practical, economical, and successful. ■ ■

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