Review of Transforming Libraries to Serve

Graduate Students

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Abstract: Review of Renfro, C., & Stiles, C. (Eds.) (2018). *Transforming libraries to serve*

graduate students. Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries.

The book *Transforming Libraries to Serve Graduates Students* is a collection of thoughtful

essays designed to shed light on graduate students and how libraries can better serve them.

Interestingly, this book functions well as a type of handbook in which the reader can choose sections

that offer the most practicality. It is unnecessary to get bogged down reading chapters about graduate

student populations that are not relevant because there is at least one graduate student population,

and possibly more, that will resonate with the reader. While there is applicable information in all the

chapters, the strength of the book lies in the later chapters, which share specific projects or initiatives

that inspire service to graduate students. There is so much information about graduates here between

these pages covering different populations, different programs, and different partnerships. This book is

best suited for those wishing to learn more about graduate students, or wish to expand their services

beyond what they currently offer and are seeking inspiration.

The book is dedicated to explaining the unique challenges that graduate students bring to the

library, their unique research needs, as well as their academic needs, social needs, and pedagogical

needs, by providing insight into unique solutions, outside the box thinking, and programs designed to

reach these graduate students. *Transforming Libraries to Serve Graduate Students* collects essays

describing how graduate students have different needs than the traditional undergraduate, to essays

detailing specific needs of specific graduate programs that require different services and thinking in

their institution's libraries.

The authors of these chapters' passion for graduate students and serving them is evidenced

while reading these pages, and that passion for serving graduate students is infectious. The editors

even implore the reader to sit down with the book to take notes, discuss concepts with colleagues, and

start programs (p. xix).

The writers of these essays are librarians from across different academic libraries that serve graduate students, in some cases, these may be specifically graduate libraries, in other cases, the graduate students are using the same library as undergraduate students. Since the traditional undergraduate has taken precedence in library services, the editors call the graduate student community the "forgotten group" (p. xviii).

The goal of this book , in the words of the editors, Crystal Renfro and Cheryl Stiles, is this, to be "a compilation of the very best expertise, experience, and knowledge from graduate librarians around the world, covering a wide diversity of topics, best practices, and programs geared specifically to serve the 'forgotten' group: the university graduate student community (xviii)." Written by librarians, mostly in America, but also a few from Canada, and Spain.these topics include technical workshops, use of space in the library through surveys, and use or expansion of services in a graduate library A few of the earlier chapters do a good job of reviewing literature that deals with graduate students' research and library needs.

This book achieves its goal by first describing this very diverse group that makes up graduate students, with literature about the differences between graduate students and undergraduate students, but also discusses how each graduate program has its own similarities and differences across graduate student populations. For some who serve graduate students, some of these essays will make perfect sense, and for those not familiar in working with graduate students, it will be informative.

The book is logically laid out, starting with what makes graduates students different from their undergraduate counterparts. The first section is dedicated to describing different cohorts, the complex needs of those cohorts, and the approaches to serving those respective groups of graduate students.

The opening chapter begins by explaining how, as a whole, graduate students are completely different from undergraduate students. It notes that graduate students diverge from each other

(graduate students being dissimilar to other graduate students) in "their program type (e.g., master's

or doctoral), location in the academic life cycle, life/work situation, and academic department (p. 4)."

This sets up discussion in which the subsequent chapters of Section 1 discuss some of these unique

graduate groups. Section 2 discusses changing physical spaces to suit, or that do not suit, graduate

students. The writers also consider graduate focused spaces such as graduate student lounges or

graduate carrels, and expanded services for graduates like interlibrary loan or makerspaces.

Section 3 is intent on data services for graduate students, but also suggests beneficial

workshops for certain graduate populations. A few workshops discussed in Section 2 relate to specific

software or services the library offers. Some of these data services taught graduate students to use

software like Nvivo or SPSS, while some of the workshops were designed to guide students through the

writing process, use cartography software, or even a workshop dedicated to building an online

presence or professional identity. Lastly, Section 4 discusses partnerships ranging from

interdepartmental, student groups, and even other libraries. These last three sections provide the most

inspiration, depending on where and what type of services are needed or lacking for graduate

students. Of course, not all of the chapters will speak to every graduate community, or every program

in the University, but there are a lot of practical implications that can be utilized.

There are parts of the book that will resonate more with some librarians than with others, but

there are so many insightful examples written here that anyone who reads it is bound to get a few

nuggets of wisdom they can bring to their library to serve graduate students. So, use this book as a

guidebook for serving the "'forgotten' group" that is the graduate student, as a source of information

to expand your knowledge of library services, and to inspire your next transformational idea in the

library to benefit the research of graduate students.