Assessing and Analyzing the Information Needs of Research Complex Tenants

Marci Brandenburg[1,2], MS, MSI, Bioinformationist, Marisa L. Conte[1], MLIS, Clinical and Translational Science Liaison*, Judith E. Smith[1], MLS, Liaison Services Librarian
Whitney Townsend[1], MLIS, Liaison Services Librarian

[1]Taubman Health Sciences Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan , [2]Department of Computational Medicine and Bioinformatics, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan
*Funding provided by NIH Grant UL1RR024986 - Michigan Institute for Clinical and Health Research

Abstract
In 2009, the University of Michigan (UM) expanded its research infrastructure with the acquisition of a large research campus. To spur interdisciplinary and translational research, as well as public/private partnerships , the North Campus Research Complex (NCRC) co-locates UM researchers with groups in different disciplines and industries. To determine the information needs of this diverse population, THL librarians interviewed representatives from various units and research groups housed at NCRC.

Methods
Interview design
Librarians contacted various research and administrative units at NCRC. An attempt was made to contact a representative sample from units housed at NCRC as of July 2011. Librarians used semi-structured interviews to collect information from nine participants. Questions were designed to be open ended to encourage and elicit detailed responses. The questions were intended to broadly explore participants' information-use behavior and needs in their new campus location.





Data coding and analysis
Two librarians participated in coding responses to establish inter-rater reliability. The coding was initially done separately by librarians, who subsequently compared their individual coding, discussed and agreed upon overall themes, and identified comments supporting each theme. For each coded theme, librarians identified 3-4 unique comments by different respondents that exemplified the subject at large.

Results
Five information use and behavioral themes emerged from the interview coding:

- Lack of awareness of THL services and resources
- Preference for interacting with a person
- Barriers to sharing information
- General challenges related to the complex University environment
- Interest in and need for THL-provided workshops or training sessions

These themes were supported by comments from individual respondents. Comments ranged from respondents' perceptions of the library ('underutilized' and 'for students and faculty') to the challenges of navigating the University environment to know what services and resources are available. In addition to the core themes, respondents frequently mentioned use of Google as a resource. Respondents also noted that they utilized a wide variety of resources, not merely scholarly journals and books.

Conclusion
Although the results can't be generalized across the entirety of NCRC, the core resulting themes offered ways for librarians to build a foundation of library and information services and strengthen the relationship between a major university initiative and the library system. Immediate solutions such as offering instructional workshops and increasing outreach to raise awareness and use of services are happening while longer-term needs are explored with a wider population.



Next steps
- Continue to proactively connect NCRC individuals and groups with NCRC and central campus colleagues and services.
- Obtain institutional review board consent to move project beyond pilot phase.
- Identify strategy to reach larger cross-section of the NCRC population (i.e., focus groups in addition to individual interviews).
- Refine interview questions and consider focusing on information use topics in depth (i.e., focus on information sharing).
- Conduct additional interviews, and code and analyze information.
- Consider including a NCRC faculty or staff member on the research team.