A Very Embedded Librarian: Using Captive Audiences (and a Bus) to Build Collaborative Relationships

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About Me and My Institution

- Liaison librarian to the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (AGNR)
  - Joined UMD in July 2013, following graduation from UNC SILS
  - Responsible for nine academic departments and institutes, as well as Agricultural Extension
    - Agricultural Extension sites are located throughout the state of Maryland
- 2012 Statistics
  - Undergraduate Student Enrollment: 1,194
  - Graduate Student Enrollment: 393
  - 358 Full Time Faculty
    - 115 Instructional, 243 Research / Extension
Challenges and Opportunities

- Challenge – conducting outreach and building relationships with this huge number of faculty
- Opportunity – invited to attend new faculty orientation event by Dean of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources
Instead of a conference room...

- The College of AGNR organizes an annual statewide bus tour of affiliated research sites for all new faculty and staff.
- Sites are located throughout the state, including Clarksville, Baltimore, Annapolis, and the Eastern Shore.
Our trip
So why should you be attending new faculty / staff orientations?
Your faculty may not all work on campus.
They might not even work in the same city.
You may have to venture far from the library in order to...
...score precious face-to-face time.
Orientation events present the opportunity to get to know some junior faculty.
Close quarters during extended events can lead to collaboration opportunities, such as:
Learning about funding sources.
Seeing their lab equipment.
Seeing their grad students’ offices.
When you meet faculty where they work...
...the rewards can be sweet!
Summary

- New faculty orientations present the opportunity to build relationships with junior faculty before they get buried under service obligations, grant deadlines, teaching, and research.
  - Junior faculty often are more amenable to trying out new research and teaching models, including methods that feature a librarian prominently.
- Work with College administrators to get time in orientation schedules, or to visit research teams in their laboratory spaces.
  - Even five to ten minutes can make all the difference.
- Longer exposure often is better, but empathize with your captive audience.
Reflections

- Spending time with faculty outside of the classroom presents the opportunity to build real relationships.
- Successful relationships with faculty members can be contagious. These relationships will create advocates within a department who can vouch for you.