

Objective

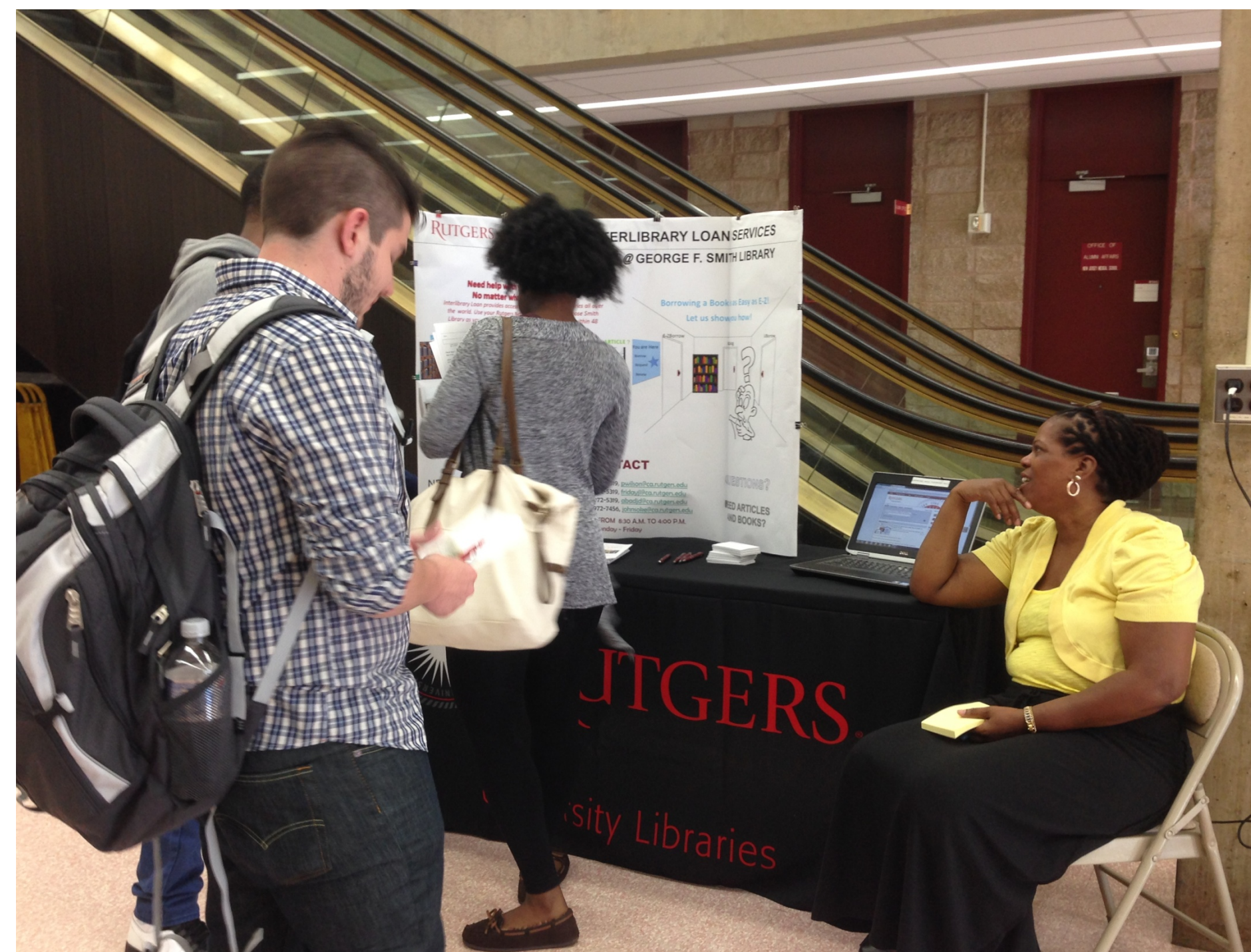
Within the library, Access Services staff stand at the convergence of users and services and are armed with core functional skills. Despite this, they have traditionally played a passive role in patron-centered outreach. Our objective: to see if Access Services could move into an active role in the bigger picture of promoting library services to enhance academic learning and research.

Methods

The “Teach and Tell” project began with identifying each Access Services Department’s (Circulation, ILL, and Media/Computer) unique services and expertise. We aimed to leverage their positions and skills to develop and implement programs to the targeted populations – the students, clinicians, educators, researchers and staff on the Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences campus in Newark, NJ.

Potential projects were then identified for each target population. It was determined that new students needed stress-relief programs during exam periods; research faculty and students lacked awareness of ILL services; and new residents, and first year students needed help with technology and connectivity set up.

The three departments each then developed their own specialized activities based on their individual expertise to meet these demands: *Pop Your Stress Out!* (Circulation), *Need an Article or Book?* (ILL) and *Technology Briefing: Go Mobile* (Media/Computer).



A User Experience (UX) Story

When library staff at the ILL Info table asked a student walking by if he had time to learn about our services, the student smiled: “No, thank you”. Our staff didn’t give up: “Hey, you’re for sure going to need a book or an article, we’ll help you get what you want, but do you know where to submit the request?” The student paused, puzzled for a second: “An article? Oh, Oh, sorry, I saw the word ‘LOAN’ on your poster so I thought you were doing financial loans!”

Results

The three departments’ activities were warmly received by students and faculty. Many students commented that the stress release effort helped relieve exam pressure and encouraged that the activity be repeated annually. Approximately 200 students, faculty, and researchers attended the ILL Info Session and many requested additional materials for dissemination. The technology briefing was vital to nearly the entire population of new students, who crowded the Media Center during the first few weeks of the semester. The outreach activities of the Access Services staff contributed significantly to raise awareness of library services and to promote a positive image.

Conclusions

This project demonstrated that Access Services can go far beyond its traditional, passive desk functions. The success of the project built confidence and motivation among the staff to take on more active roles in patron-centered activities in the future, with multiple project ideas now currently in the pipeline. The “Teach and Tell” project elevated Access Services to get involved in the bigger picture of enhancing academic teaching, learning, and research.



Thanks to this student, ILL staff modified their poster with:

Need a book?
Need an article?

