Better Together:

empowering library staff through mentoring and collaboration

Sarah Forbes & Sue Reynolds
University of Toronto
Scarborough Library

Why are we all here today?

Communication silos between library technicians and librarians who provide user services at different service points can result in inefficient and inconsistent messaging to users.

Join us as we discuss strategies to empower each other and work better together to make an impact on our users.

Getting to know…

Sarah Forbes

- Librarian III, Permanent Status
- Liaison Librarian for Physical & Environmental Sciences, Scholarly Communication Librarian
- At UTSC Library since August 2009

Sue Reynolds

- Reference Technician
- Interest in sciences, information commons
- At UTSC Library since July 2009

… and how we got here

Sarah Forbes
Librarian

Sue Reynolds
Reference Technician

Audience poll:

- Type of library/place of employment:
  - Academic Library
  - Public Library
  - School Library
  - Other
- Position:
  - Librarian
  - Technician
  - Other

Share your thoughts/experiences

Participate in the discussion now (or later):

- Tweet using #OLASC14 #612
- Google Doc: http://goo.gl/xQNM52

The Issue

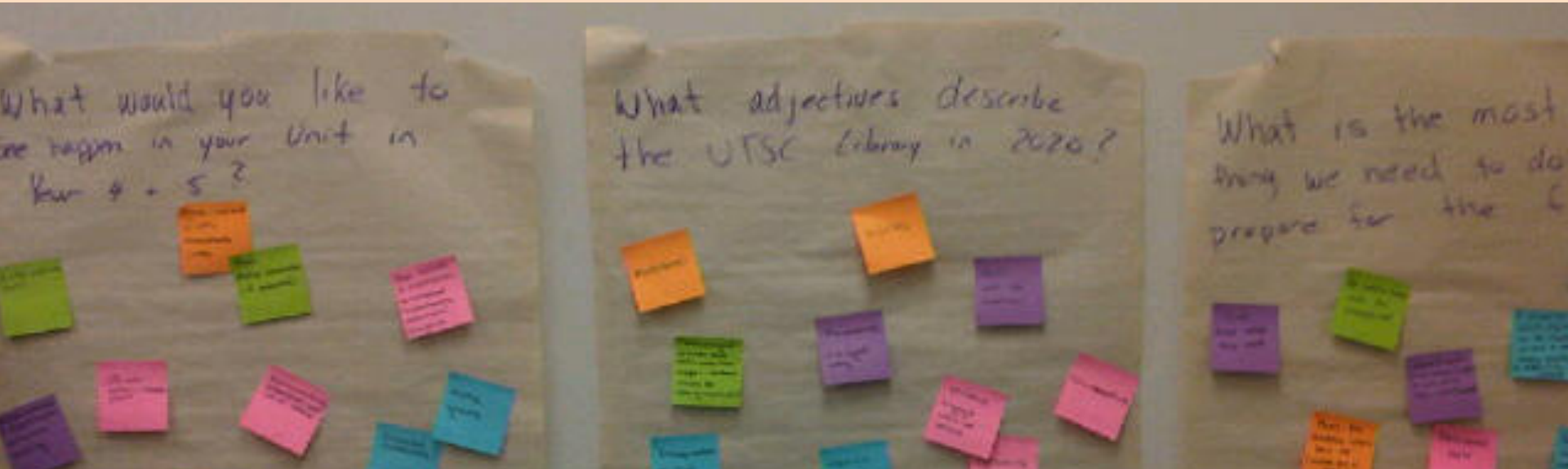
The issue

- Implemented a Liaison Librarian model 2011
  - Librarians – more instruction, no desk shifts
  - Technicians – solo desk shifts, 2 new positions
- Communication silos
  - Librarians on call, not always available
  - Technicians providing conflicting information to students

Searching for a Solution

Searching for a solution

- Technician input into the strategic planning process
- desire to participate in liaison alignment
- Technician – Librarian pairings



Sarah & Sue: year 1 summer

- Meetings every other week
- Resources review: chemistry, biology, environmental science
- Chemistry workshop at U of T

Year 1 Fall – Winter

- Support for instruction
- Stronger reference support at desk
- Regular meetings continued
- Completed new assignments to test for potential difficulties

Impacts

- More invested in the process (Sue)
- More informed (Sarah and Sue)
- More consistent messaging (students)
- More familiar with library staff (students)
- More feedback on student questions (faculty)
- Real time updates to course guides, Blackboard (faculty, students)

Year 2

- Continued resources review, instruction support, meetings, debriefs, etc.
- New:
  - Reviewed LibGuides
  - Project work
  - Professional development form

Professional development form

- Gap:
  - No mechanism for technicians to reflect and set goals
- Purpose:
  - Record professional activities and accomplishments
  - Reflect and set goals
  - Highlight strengths and unique skills
  - Identify professional development needs
  - Contribute to library planning
- Not intended as a performance evaluation

Please contact us if you would like to receive a copy of the professional development form.

Sarah Forbes sforbes@utsc.utoronto.ca
Sue Reynolds sreynolds@utsc.utoronto.ca

Mentoring and Collaboration

Exercise:

- Who are your collaborators/mentors/mentees?
- What positive partnerships have you had?
- Which did you enjoy most?
- What impacts did you see?

Your Gap Analysis

Think about your own workplace:

- Where are the silos?
- What information is missing?
- Opportunities for partnership?

Lessons Learned

- Think big, start small
- Find what works for you
- Do something!

Thank you

Questions?

Sarah Forbes sforbes@utsc.utoronto.ca
Sue Reynolds sreynolds@utsc.utoronto.ca

- Tweet using #OLASC14 #612
- Google Doc: http://goo.gl/xQNM52