

## IACRL 2012 Conference Report

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### Session 1: Outreach, Student Focus

#### “Putting the Shhhh! in Student Activities”

The first of the breakout sessions that I attended happened to be the most impactful for me. I am the Serials Assistant at Buswell Memorial Library of Wheaton College and as such I don't have a lot of interaction with our students in the public spaces. There are several student workers in my office that I have the privilege to work beside and get to know, but all the same I often feel isolated from the rest of campus. As a very outgoing, people-oriented individual this can be somewhat frustrating. I would love to be able to expand my role into outreach and communication and the presentation by Sarah Sagmoen and Beth Hoag about the collaboration between the library at U of I Springfield and their Student Life department was very interesting to me.

The presenters discussed many huge benefits for libraries that can come from collaborating with Student Life. The library can utilize the event budget of SL which is usually much larger than what a library normally allocates for student events. Brookens Library had a “haunted library” event that was very successful and was mostly due to the help of Student Life. The experience and budget that SL brought to the event was probably the biggest reason the event was able to take place and on such a grand scale. In fact, the haunted library was so successful that they immediately started planning other events with Student Life, such as a scavenger hunt, movie nights, and game days. This is a great way to reach out to the student body and bring people to the library who might otherwise try and avoid it.

Beyond the financial benefits of collaborating with Student Life, there are several unquantifiable advantages. Working with other departments on campus helps to build relationships outside of the library with other staff and faculty members to facilitate networking. There are opportunities to work with new student demographics and break down stereotypes about librarians. Student Life brings more marketing experience and social media knowledge to the library and the library can train campus tour guides to better understand and “sell” the services and resources that are offered to students. And even going beyond the library related benefits of collaborating with Student Life, reaching out to other departments is simply good for the campus. It increases staff communication and can create a better working environment where the employees feel deeper connections to their employer.

Taken as a whole there are several very significant advantages for libraries that collaborate with Student Life departments and these advantages can be seen immediately and are far reaching. It would be of great benefit to academic libraries nationwide to consider these relationships and work to foster and develop them further.