

The Art of Peace: Empowering Academic Librarians and Improving Faculty-Librarian Relationships

Facilitating effective collaboration and partnerships with Teaching Faculty should be a priority for Academic Librarians and Teaching Faculty. The topic of effective relationships and partnerships, between these two groups, has received a great deal of scholarly attention within the field of Library and Information Science. However, in practice symbiotic relationships and partnerships are often difficult to establish and maintain. This is in part due to the lack of understanding of the role and status of Academic Librarians by Teaching Faculty. The existing polarity between these parties has led to discourse and dismissive actions that may be perceived by some Academic Librarians as microaggressive.

Academic Librarians receive little formal training to effectively deal with such interactions with Teaching Faculty and are forced to learn on the job. Additionally, although some scholarship exists on racial and gender based microaggressions in academic libraries, little quantitative data exists on status based microaggressions. Much of the information on status based microaggressions experienced by Academic Librarians exists in the form of anecdotal data archived in Zines and Tumblers.

By analyzing the results of an online survey distributed to Academic Librarians throughout North America, this paper will address the quantitative gap in the literature on microaggressions, allowing for an evidence based conversation about status based microaggressions. The survey addressed the following three points:

- How do librarians walk the fine line (or where to draw the line) between collegiality and assertiveness when communicating and collaborating with Teaching Faculty?
- Do librarians perceive that they have the ability to speak from a place of power?
- Do librarians feel comfortable and confident enough to report microaggressions to library administration, and if they do, is adequate support received?

The goal of this paper is to suggest methods, grounded in our quantitative data, by which Academic Librarians can work towards empowering themselves in an effort to enhance social justice. Additionally, the paper will recommend practical and realistic techniques by which Academic Librarians can positively improve perceptions of their roles and contributions within academia. It is hoped that this discussion will help facilitate and promote effective collaboration and partnerships between Academic Librarians and Teaching Faculty.