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Elevating research

Kansas State University Libraries

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ELEVATING RESEARCH



Workshop series gives graduate students a solid foundation for a successful academic experience

BY SARAH MCGREER HOYT

Graduate students arriving on campus face a conundrum: They are expected to know how to conduct graduate-level research. However, not all of those new graduate students have mastered the unique vocabulary and resources that graduate-level research requires.

In spring 2014, Taylor Wadian, then-president of the K-State Graduate Student Council, decided

to address the issue head-on. As the son of a librarian, he understood the importance of libraries and knew what an asset they could be for graduate students across all disciplines.

Wadian approached Adriana Gonzalez, head of academic services, to ask if the librarians would be willing to offer workshops to equip grad students with the tools they'd need for scholarly success.

The resulting series, “The Library & Your Research,” just embarked on its sixth year.

Initially offered only during the fall semester, the workshops became so successful they are now offered both in the fall and the spring. The mainstays in the series cover skillsets like how to complete a literature review. Offerings have evolved, though, to include more thorny and complex topics such as copyright and data management.

In all, the workshops have had more than 800 attendees since the series began.

“I wish all grad students would take these workshops as early as possible in their academic careers,” Gonzalez said. “The classes help create the solid foundation they’ll need in their future as scholars.”

Laura Bonella, academic services librarian, has taught the literature review workshop since the series’ inception.

“It teaches students how to engage with scholarly resources that are specific to their discipline by using advanced search techniques,” Bonella said. “They are encouraged to think about how their research and writing will fit into the context of, and contribute to, the scholarly dialogue in their field.”

Doris Wright Carroll, associate professor in special education, counseling and student affairs,

promotes the series to her graduate students to elevate their research abilities and confidence.

“They are fantastic because they provide research information in a timely way that is rejuvenating for all who participate,” Carroll said. “These workshops are reaffirming and say to my students, ‘You can do this research and be successful.’”

The workshop series has become a part of the culture of grad life at K-State, as reflected by the solid partner effort from the Graduate School.

“They give us first dibs at getting the workshop series on the calendar every semester so as many of their students can attend it as possible, and they promote it widely,” Gonzalez said. “It’s been a very rewarding initiative.”

“And beyond the specific topics covered in any given workshop, we’re accomplishing a larger goal,” she added. “Librarians work with these academic issues day in and day out. The most important thing the workshop series really does is to connect students with librarians.”



Alissa Turner, master’s student in academic advising, said, **“I’ve never done a literature review and wanted to learn. The workshop was excellent! Definitely worth my time and effort.”**



Changmin (Casey) Liao, master’s student in architectural engineering and construction science, took the workshop in preparation for a project: **“I really appreciated this workshop. Fifty percent of my research paper will be a literature review, so it’s very helpful to me.”**

“THE SERIES TEACHES GRAD STUDENTS HOW TO NAVIGATE THE SCHOLARLY WORLD IN WAYS THAT THEY DON’T NECESSARILY GET IN THE CLASSROOM.”

— LAURA BONELLA, ACADEMIC SERVICES LIBRARIAN

