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Librarians Collaborating with Academic Advisors to Foster Student Success

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Abstract
Library workers are exploring ways to provide support to their communities. In this practice-based pilot project, an academic library partnered with academic advisors on a college campus to increase the support services and supportive mechanisms for students. Academic advisors and librarians increased their skills and areas of content expertise, and passed this learning on to the students. By offering a course for reinstated students and academically at-promise students, with a focus on persistence and success through failure and trial and error, a partnership between the academic library makerspace and the Advising and Academic Success Center was created. Though more research is needed to determine which strategies are key elements for success, all library workers can benefit their communities through partnerships with support professionals, including counselors, social workers, nonprofit agencies, and academic advisors, in order to increase their role in providing support for their community members.

Introduction
This practice-focused article describes a pilot partnership between academic advisors and library faculty at Boise State University. The authors offered a pilot course designed to integrate hands on engagement and experiential learning into a course for students who had left the university and had been reinstated, or are academically at-promise. The demand for the course had grown so much that offering an experimental section was warranted. Working in the makerspace of the academic library, stu-

dents learned how persistence is a key to success. They learned this through trial and error using a variety of emerging technologies, and especially 3D printing. The instructors and students experienced revelations regarding the connection and metaphor between student success and making. Once students obtain some mastery in an emerging skill, like 3D printing, they can apply that into their academic skill base.

Though this project explores the role of a unique partnership on a college campus, this work can also be applied to other library situations including inside school libraries, and public libraries, where individuals may partner with school counselors, social workers, and non-profit agencies in ways that are needed and meaningful. As libraries are places where individuals come to receive support, improving access to critical support structures as well as making connections with advisors or other student service professionals can increase the impact library workers make in their communities.

Background
The Makerspace on campus is a radically inclusive environment and everyone on the Boise State campus is welcome to come to the lab and join the community. The space centers around the principles of design thinking in which the learner explores new solutions and new designs in problem solving through failures of previous attempts. Such an environment runs in opposition to threads of cultures within higher education in which correct answers are valued above an information-seeking process.

Individuals on college campuses who advise at-promise students can establish relationships with library faculty in order to create networks of support, help students to join communities, and assist advisors with improving student success. The term at-promise refers to students who previously were labeled at-risk. At-risk assumes a deficit model and places the responsibility back on the institution to help support the students (Fulmer, M.J. & Wildfong, D., 2012).   The term at-risk is a deficit term and assumes that the students are the ones that need to make the change. At-promise describes a success model in which the institution increases access to and retention in college (Fulmer, M.J. & Wildfong, D., 2012). Through a pilot partnership at Boise State University, library faculty and academic advisors co-taught courses and shared educational resources through cross-training to enable and empower efforts to support student success.

Academic advisors and library faculty worked to employ design thinking and maker competencies with students in a course called Academic 102: Academic Recovery and Success. Some students felt ownership over their own futures and coursework projects, making decisions relating to their own success such as changing majors, transferring colleges, or taking a break from higher education.

What follows is a description of an innovative pilot program between library faculty and staff with academic advisors at Boise State University. The purpose was to increase student support and improve student outcomes for at-promise students. In particular, there are many students who find a home in the library who lack support in other areas of their life, and finding additional resources to best support them can be difficult, if library workers are not aware of these resources. Through the partnership, support professionals and librarians discovered many benefits in collaboration, for the staff, as well as the individuals they support.

This collaboration led to positive impacts on students, and anecdotally has led to improved support and relationships with students. More research is needed to identify which strategies result in increased student success.

About Boise State University
Boise State University is located in an isolated region of southwest Idaho, mostly serving Idaho residents, but also residents from nearby states make up the majority of the student population. Idaho's K-12 students are 48th in the nation for Go On rate for going on to college - rural schools are differently prepared than those in Boise (Richert, 2018). In addition, Idaho's K-12 spending per student is the second lowest (Brown, 2015) in the country, and there are very few options for students who don't want to attend their public high school.

Idaho's public schools statewide lack book budgets as a line item, and many schools get about $500 or less per year for the library budget. The public schools in Idaho have no professional library requirements. As a result, students lack information literacy skills and resources to locate services to help them with their information needs.

Against Boise's backdrop of entrepreneurial creativity and recreational diversity, Boise State has an emerging urgency around retention and student success. Graduation rates are low and partnerships across functional areas are critical to enhance student services and programs. This issue of student persistence and degree attainment is not specific to Boise. Students overall are gaining more access to higher education, and their ability to complete the degree has not changed, "Although access to higher education has increased substantially over the past forty years, student success in college, as measured by persistence and degree attainment, has not improved at all," (Brock, 2010). Brock describes that higher education could focus on additional programs that could potentially benefit these students that encounter barriers, which include: high schools better preparing students for college, enhancing student advising and support services, and making financial aid more effective. For the 2011 graduation cohort, 19% of students graduated in four years, 36.9% graduated in five years and 41.3% graduated in six. BOISE is among the fastest growing cities in the United States, and this growth is leading to economic impacts among the growing population, including businesses not being able to hire enough people, or folks with the right skills (Sharf, 2018).

Boise State has a history of rising to the challenge to shift output to meet emerging needs. The campus opened in 1932 as Boise Junior College, conferring associates degrees until attaining a four year, baccalaureate conferring status in 1965. The campus served Idaho as both a destination for commuter and returning students as well as a residential campus. In 2017, Boise State earned a Doctoral Research Carnegie Classification after awarding its first doctoral degrees in 1997 (FOCUS ON, n.d.). Boise State continues to serve a broad range of student interests, including a predominantly white campus with 40% of undergraduates enrolled in 12 credits or fewer, a median age of 25-34 years, (Enrollment Data, n.d.). First year and senior students at Boise State work more often and at longer hours than students at peer institutions. These students are three times as likely to be caring for a dependent. Boise State students have a longer commute from outlying communities than their peers. The institutional landscape continues to shift to meet the demands of the state as well as the upcoming influx of out of state students through creative partnerships (Office of Institutional Research, 2016).

Considering these multiple and competing demands for their attention as students, enrolled students face a unique dearth of support for mental health. Whereas the International Association of Counseling Services (IACS) recommends a student to professional ratio of 1 to 1,000, or at most 1 to 1,500 students, the operating ratio at Boise State University is equivalent to 1 to 3,571 students. The Boise State Counseling Services far exceeds the service ratio as it is open to all students, including graduate students, faculty, and staff in addition to serving as a resource for the Boise community at large. Another source of support on campus is the generalized advising support office, the Advising and Academic Support Center (AASC), which houses services for undeclared students, students in academic distress, and coaching/tutoring. AASC supports approximately 500 undeclared students and approximately 1400 students in academic distress. It is from this office that Boise State library staff and academic advisors sought partnership to further the curriculum goals of ACAD 102, an academic success course designed to meet the unique needs of student retention and success at Boise State.

Student Retention and Student Success
Student success and student retention are often used interchangeably; however, each concept is used differently at the institutional level and it is important to note that each is important when measuring a program's success. When collaborating with different individuals or departments it is important that all individuals from the different departments are utilizing the same definition. Co-creating an operational definition of student success across disciplines and functional areas will ease the process of creating and understanding development strategies. For example, retention is the number of students returning from one enrollment period to another (Hadley, Bloom, & Robbins, 2012) but the process of returning is marker of success for only the institution. What is missing from this definition is student perspectives on how students and collaborating programs define success for themselves.

When coming together on this collaboration it was important for the library, students, makerspace, and the Advising and Academic Support Center to define what student success looked like for the partnership. Student success for this purpose was defined as: an increase in engagement, a focus on the development of skills and competencies (increased time management, engagement in class, level of confidence and behavioral shifts) and meeting the learning objectives of the course and to primarily focus on a change in belief that failure is an opportunity to learn and grow (Harper & Quaye, 2009).

Partnerships: Library and Advising
The library workers and advisors set about to establish a firmer partnership by working to develop in several areas with the goal of building content to meet the needs of our students. Through conversations, readings, and analysis, both groups developed content expertise in each other's fields. This led to cross training of individuals in both areas of campus.

In addition to offering a course that was co-taught, we also trained each other's departments. MakerLab employees learned about the ways to best support struggling students. Advisors learned about the community and skills in the MakerLab that can help support the same students.

As a result, we held a workshop with all of the Probation, Dismissal, and Reinstatement (PDR) advisors, about maker technologies, and maker competencies. The persistence that is learned in the mak-

erspace is applicable to the students who are on probation and are being reinstated. This overlap in identifying areas of mutual support led to great interest in furthering the collaboration.

Academic 102: Academic Recovery and Success
In fall 2015 the Provost's Office tasked the Advising and Academic Support Center with the development of assessing and implementing a new process for working with students who were experiencing academic difficulty. The first phase was to create a 3 credit Academic 102: Academic Recovery and Success course (ACAD 102). This course is specifically designed to meet students where they are and address students' academic habits, behaviors, and attitudes towards success. Class size is small, 15 to 20 students. It incorporates both classroom instruction as well as individualized consultations in which the instructor and the student meet a minimum of three times during the course of the semester and develop a plan of action specific to that student.

The Advising and Academic Support Center has increased the number of offerings each semester to meet the student demand for the course with four courses a semester now being offered. In fall 2017 a pilot course of ACAD 102 was offered focused on success through failure. A partnership between the Library Makerspace and the Advising and Academic Success Center was created.

The decision to pilot the ACAD 102 course with the Makerspace and the library came after a conversation about how the Makerspace supports students and focusing on the mission of "success through failure". ACAD 102 course architects designed the pilot course to integrate the hands on engagement experience of the Makerspace with the academic success content from the course. Students worked on their academic skills and knowledge by learning how to use the different technology in the Makerspace. The course was co-taught by a library and makerspace faculty member as well as the Academic Development and Recovery Coordinator. Students in academic difficulty often struggle with failure and how to handle it effectively.

Some of the students facing barriers in higher education also struggle with describing their own needs, and how to meet them. By integrating the process of describing learning and failing through the makerspace instruction, instructors modeled how to describe experiences and what we learn from them. As a result, some students learned more about how to overcome the challenges they face. Additionally, students built confidence by recognizing that while the technology was difficult they were able to conquer it and create some very cool things. Initial assessments of the pilot suggest that students were more engaged in the content of the course. While no formal assessment was completed for the pilot course, anecdotal evidence showed an increase in engagement including number of students completing the course, decrease in absences, and completion of assignments. The initial anecdotal results suggest that further work needs to be completed to examine the relationship to success.

Design Thinking Workshops with Students
Library workers can use design thinking to help students to design their own life with the idea that the possibilities are endless, students can start where they are, and that we can reframe our goals by deciding that now is always the right time to "design a life you love" (Burnett, 2016). The authors and collaborators acquired a number of design thinking skills through a combination of online coursework, in-person workshops, readings on design thinking, and practitioner based workshops. As a result, in-

structors Smith and Vecchione incorporated the design thinking workshop into their course to facilitate a design thinking workshop for students to design services, programs, and prototypes that would assist a student when they are struggling.

Students in the course were asked to reflect on a time they struggled academically. They interviewed each other, using an interview worksheet prompt. They received training on some techniques for interviewing. The students reviewed their struggles and spent time exploring the problems they encountered, remarking where there were similarities or differences in their shared experiences.

Following the design thinking methodology of building empathy, finding a good problem to work on, then brainstorming ideas, the students then created a series of potential ideas that could help solve some of the issues that were raised. By focusing on barriers to learning and brainstorming barriers to academic success together with other students, they learned that they were not alone and that there are often times solutions that we can create to solve these at barriers an institutional or organizational level. While a library worker may not be able to help solve the problems, they can facilitate knowledge creation in their communities, and therefore help students succeed. Some students may find that this is a prototype, service, or program that they would like to advocate for during their time in higher education.

Students shared their potential solutions with others, then revised the ideas based on the feedback they received, ultimately developing ideas for services, programs, and products. While the specific programs that students generated were interesting, what was more empowering was the pathway created to facilitate students taking ownership over their own learning.

What Library Workers Can Do
Library workers ought to have student success at the core of their work mission. Library workers in school and college libraries can connect with advisors to find out more about student trends regarding common issues students are facing in their communities. Library workers can build bridges to the work of counselors and these networks can be further established in public library by connect to social workers or other programs in student communities. These networks can also be established in public libraries by connecting with social workers or other programs in their communities.

Design thinking is a useful way to teach others to design services, programs, and prototypes for other individuals in similar situations. The practice of empathy for communities can help library workers design better services, and also can help members of that community design services for their own community. Library workers and academic advisors can integrate design thinking into classroom curriculum to help individuals design programs, services, and prototypes for individuals in their own situations - whatever those situations may be.

How are book collections keeping up with the current issues pertaining to library communities? Library workers can also establish book collections to assist some of these issues. This can include, but would not be limited to, books for children whose parents are incarcerated, learners living with mental illness, or individuals whose families face citizenship issues. Learning more about the issues pertaining to library communities can help collections and programming meet the needs of the most vulnera-

ble.

When library workers brainstorm additional ways to support at-promise students, everyone benefits. Some libraries have employed social workers to assist individual users of the library, including at San Francisco Public Library (Fraga, 2016). Any library worker can identify a need and try to meet it by creating high-impact library services.

Library Partnerships
Library workers have traditionally partnered with other entities to foster success within the communities they serve. In The Atlas of New Librarianship, Lankes (2011) explains that the mission of librarians is to facilitate content creation in their communities. In some cases, this may be about identifying community members' needs and working to meet them. If existing library services cannot support the community, library workers can identify individuals who can help, and bring them into the library to support the users. Embedded librarians are a necessary part of the academic library future, and librarians ought to seek out meaningful partnerships, "Librarians are in a unique position to become involved in core activities and initiatives throughout the university," (Dewey, 2004). Libraries are viewed as credible partners. Hovius (2006) points out that partnerships with libraries are useful to others as libraries are seen as credible, and effective partners that have a lot to offer. In addition, Hovius states that "Libraries must focus their efforts on adding value to their local community. In return, the benefits to the Library will take care of themselves."

On college campuses, libraries are seen as a part of the essential services for students (Soria, Fransen, & Nackerud, 2013). Authors Pan, Valliant and Reed (2009) write about partnerships with academic advisors and librarians on a college campus, stating that they share similar missions and visions for the communities they serve, "Librarians and academic advisors are natural allies since they share similar objectives in promoting student skills and achievement." Though most academic libraries traditionally partner regarding instruction services, there are plenty of opportunities for increasing student support. Many librarians focus their partnerships on academic department and faculty collaborations (Love & Edwards, 2009). Library workers can increase their outreach and collaboration to non-academic units to "come together to meet a specific need," (Dahl, 2007). As budgets decrease for libraries on college campuses, creating effective partnerships will be key to establishing successful student support services, (Henderson, 2016). On other campuses, librarians have served as embedded librarians in student support services, (Bishop, 2018). Overall, all libraries can benefit by partnering with support professionals to assist the communities they serve.

Conclusion
Exploring collaborations with individuals who serve in an advising or support role is a worthy pursuit for library workers. The added value of developing connections, relationships, and rapport can lead to improved student success outcomes. Strengthening these relationships can, at minimum, result in increased student awareness of the existing support structures, some of which they may not know exist, or may be reluctant to use, without a coach to assist and facilitate in their journey. When library workers increase their awareness of social structures that serve to support students and library users, they can refer library users to use these services. While this practitioner story from our pilot project does not offer data to support one strategy over another, studies ought to be developed to learn which par-

ticular strategies, through these relationships, may be most useful for students or other library community members. As a result, more research is needed to determine success factors.

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