

Creating Analyst Positions in an Academic Library: The UC-San Diego Example

- Is sound and complete data and feedback from users available to your library's administrators when making decisions? If so, who provides that information to them?
- Who conducts assessments and usability in your organization, and is it done in a coordinated and meaningful way?
- Does your library have projects or technologies that it would like to implement, but no staffing to make it happen?
- Do librarians and information technology staff in your organization sometimes have difficulty understanding one another and working effectively together?

In recent years, the University of California, San Diego Libraries established two analyst positions to address our responses to these questions. A Decision Support Analyst (DSA) and User Services Technology Analyst (USTA) now work within the Administration Office and report directly to the Associate University Librarian for User Services. This handout outlines responsibilities for each role, sample projects accomplished, applicable skills, and other considerations for institutions which might consider following UCSD's lead to establish decision or technology support analyst positions.

BENEFITS TO ORGANIZATION

- Offers analysis & assessment to provide administration with solid insight to support evidence-based and data-driven decision-making.
- Provides flexible & readily available staffing resource.
- Saves time for administrators.
- Allows investigation/implementation of projects not appropriate for any other position.
- Offers opportunity for analysts to serve as a bridge between administration and other library staff, and between the library and its users.
- Provides assigned person to monitor technology applications or assessment libraries-wide.
- Allows investigation/implementation of technological features, practices, policies, or applications.

BENEFITS TO ANALYSTS

- Realize greater impact on library as a whole.
- Gain broader perspective on library services/goals, and learn more about other areas of library.
- Collaborate with a wider range of library or campus staff, and engage in wider variety of projects.
- Enhance and expand one's professional skills.
- Interact directly with library users.

SAMPLE PROJECTS

- Investigated how user services could be effectively delivered through mobile devices & developed the Libraries' mobile web site.
- Performed wayfinding studies, improving building signage as a result.
- Created inventory of library classrooms & librarian needs for the venues.
- Investigated and implementing online self-booking study room system.
- Analyzed headcounts to investigate space reconfiguration possibilities.
- Calculated seating capacities and fill rates for various library spaces.
- Managed Libraries' transition to updated public computing model.
- Analyzed gatecounts, staff & other costs, workflows, and other data to inform budget reduction strategies related to service desks, library hours & staffing, service consolidation, and more.
- Performed detailed gap analysis of local OPAC.
- Assessed needs for a centralized calendaring system.
- Developed comparison between enterprise-level consortia borrowing software.
- Conducts website usability and other assessments, including obtaining and analyzing feedback directly from users.
- Performed usability testing of new digital library interface.
- Investigated & made recommendations about the future of the Libraries' aging locally developed resource discovery tool.
- Manages the Libraries' RefWorks account and Alumni access.

CONSIDERATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyst to be reassigned from within organization or hired externally? • Placement within organizational structure and reporting lines. • Breadth of scope of the roles and types of projects to be assigned. • Level of direction or independence afforded the analyst. • Logistics such as physical location, administrative assistance, & technical support. • Professional development needed for the analyst.
USEFUL SKILLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical or professional skills specific to the tasks the analyst will be assigned. • Ability to coordinate, motivate, and manage individuals that do not directly report to you. • Leadership and project management. Ability to work independently & collaboratively. • Time and workload management and multi-tasking. Self-management and motivation. • Organizational skills, attention to detail, and the ability to prioritize and follow through. • Ability to analyze facts & statistics, synthesize them for understanding by others, and make recommendations. • Ability to anticipate what information or analysis might be needed. • Ability to anticipate and suggest to Administration when a problem or issue might benefit from attention by the analyst. • Strong focus on the library user and interest in recommending improvements based on identified staff and user needs. • Commitment to library's mission, values, goals, and strategic directions. • Trust and respect from library administration, credibility, integrity, objectivity, and discretion. • Teamwork, openness and approachability, and interpersonal & communication skills.
SELECTED USTA RESPONSIBILITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate & translate effectively between information technology staff and librarians. • Work with ITD Desktop Support to monitor incidents and implement Libraries-wide public computing projects. • Conduct various types of technology analyses including feasibility & usability reviews. • Conduct internal and external research, document analytical findings, and make recommendations. • Provide data, analysis, & materials for presentations/reports of Senior Administrative Team. • Serve as user services technology liaison/consultant to various library committees & groups. • Work to identify and implement changes to the Libraries' online catalog interface.
SELECTED DSA RESPONSIBILITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead or manage multiple public services-related projects and timelines. • Research & summarize assigned topics/issues, collaborating with others as needed. • Generate data/reports and monitor statistics. • Conduct comparisons among various libraries or make comparisons to benchmarks. • Conduct various types of analyses, including usability and usage studies, statistical, data, and budgetary analyses, and feasibility studies. • Conduct internal and external research, document analytical findings, establish facts, draw valid conclusions, and make recommendations. • Provide data, analysis, and materials for presentations and reports to be given by members of the Senior Libraries' Administrative Team. • Create/present other supportive information to facilitate the most appropriate decision-making by Libraries leadership. • Proactively monitor the performance of the library's established public services. • Lead and complete other projects as assigned.

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