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How Creating Social Spaces in the Workplace Fosters Positive Outcomes

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How Creating Social Spaces in the Workplace Fosters Positive Outcomes

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Objective

To demonstrate how the Nova Southeastern University (NSU)'s Staff Development Committee (SDC) used low stakes workshops and webinars to foster positive outcomes in the form of stronger community bonds and skill building opportunities.

Setting

The Tampa Bay Regional Campus (TBRC) Library is one of 5 NSU libraries on 3 separate campuses. The TBRC Library is the newest branch campus library (established in 2019) and is the farthest from the main campus location.

What is the Staff Development Committee (SDC)?

The SDC's purpose is to provide enrichment opportunities for library staff across all NSU libraries. 15 committee members across NSU libraries meet monthly to select workshops. Every month, they promote multiple workshops exploring a variety of topics. SDC also sends surveys to gauge community interests in new topics and to review past workshops.

Crafternoons (a portmanteau of the words "craft" and "afternoon") are one popular type of SDC workshop, where staff members are taught a skill, often a craft. Each workshop starts with a demonstration by the instructor, who provides direction during the event. Attendees are encouraged to collaborate and may pop in and out the workshop as their job duties allow. The focus in these workshops is on establishing mindfulness and asserting the importance of work-life balance.

In the past, Crafternoons were only offered in-person. During the pandemic, the SDC transitioned all events online via Zoom. This shift removed a barrier to participation for branch library staff. The following projects were made possible as a direct result of that shift.

Project 1: Book Displays



March 2021

The TBRC Library replaced holiday decorations at the Circulation Desk with book displays. Although the displays were colorful, they were also plain.



April 2021

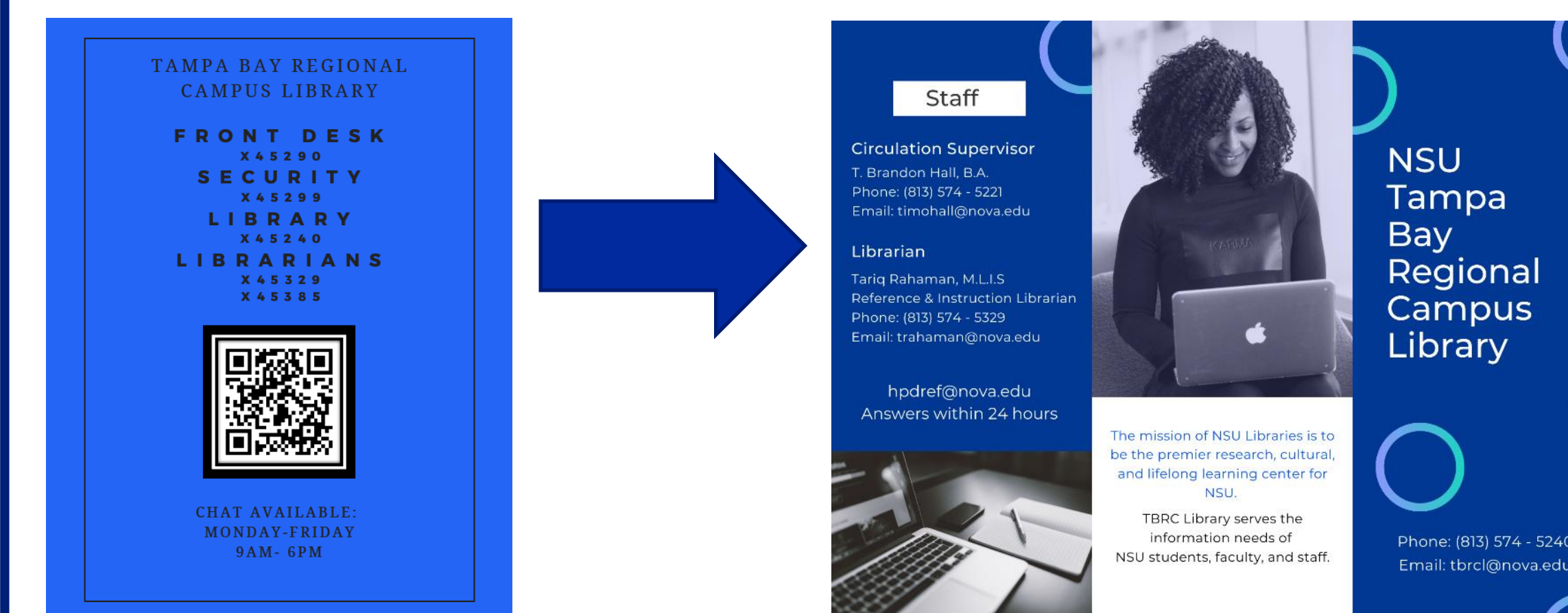
TBRC Library staff attended an SDC Crafternoon on making paper flowers as a low-cost way to decorate for library events. The end result was a more elaborate book display created from office supplies already on hand, i.e. Post-It notes, cardstock, glue, scissors, etc.



May 2021

The display was able to get more elaborate (2D flowers became 3D) as the staff got more experienced and created a workflow. This new level of intricacy required no additional supplies beyond the original office supplies mentioned above.

Project 2: Flyers & Brochures



The "Learn Canva" event was an SDC workshop that taught beginners how to navigate Canva, while highlighting the different tools and templates available. The instructor provided finished examples and created sample flyers. University policies and standards for creating marketing materials were also reviewed.

TBRC library staff used the training gained in this workshop to improve the quality of all marketing materials. Canva was also used to make more intricate items like tri-fold brochures.

Project 3: Vision Boards



The "Vision Board" Crafternoon brought staff together for a mindfulness activity. As an in-person event, it was also used as an opportunity to upcycle weeded items. Small frames were provided to complete the project.

In 2021, the Crafternoon was moved online and taught attendees three online platforms:

- Zoom to participate in the event,
- Flipster to provide images and inspiration, and
- Canva to create the vision board.

In this workshop, TBRC library staff strengthened or gained skills on all three platforms. They were also able to network and connect with library staff from other campuses.

Results

Book Displays

The SDC provided us with new skills to embellish our book displays and increase student engagement at the circulation desk. The use of office supplies made this project sustainable.

Flyers & Brochures

The SDC provided us with Canva training on various templates, as well as University marketing policies and standards. This training provided direction for the creation of the TBRC Library marketing materials.

Vision Boards

The SDC taught us how to utilize Canva & Flipster as part of a mindfulness exercise. This workshop allowed attendees to think creatively and apply skills towards a project of work-life balance.

Conclusions

Attending Crafternoons and other SDC events allowed staff at the TBRC Library to meet via Zoom and collaborate with staff from the other NSU Libraries. These SDC workshops established a social network for the staff as they applied their new skills to projects around the library.

Next Steps

Workshops that promote community building and engagement are crucial to keep library staff connected. The shift to using online platforms like Zoom allows our libraries to connect despite geographic distance and constantly evolving service hours. As we start to create our new 'normal', we are working with the SDC to continue offering skill building workshops via Zoom and other online platforms.