August 10, 2023

Kent State University Libraries
1125 Risman Dr.
Kent, OH 44242-0001

Dear Members of the Search Committee,

I am excited to submit my application for the open Social Sciences and Assessment Librarian position at Kent State University. I believe that my robust background in social science librarianship, my strength in building faculty/librarian collaborations to deliver information literacy instruction, and my experience with assessment in my teaching and scholarship make me a strong candidate for this position.

I have been an academic librarian for over ten years and have been a Subject Librarian for the Social Sciences at Ohio University for the last seven years. In my capacity as a liaison, I regularly collaborate with faculty in developing assignments, finding innovative ways to integrate information literacy into the curriculum, connecting the library’s unique archival collections into courses, and developing creative learning experiences using technology-enhanced learning environments (including blended and online learning). For example, I am proud of a multi-year collaboration I had with a political science professor in providing library instruction in her Law & Colonialism course. This collaboration ended up including the archives and had five library sessions during the semester. With these additional sessions, we created a variety of active learning exercises based in the Framework while empowering students to interrogate the information they found when handling archival materials related to their topics.

Over the last year, I have worked with a journalism faculty member who teaches an upper-level course on race, class, and gender in the media to harness the power of library collections to meet his needs. He was frustrated with the cost and limitations of traditional textbooks for his course, so I identified a variety of open and alternative course materials that were free for his students. Additionally, I worked with special collection librarians to develop unique assignments utilizing the library’s collections related to journalism and media. Our assessments showed that these activities enabled students to think critically about the intersection of race, class, and gender in journalism. Our collaboration has been so successful in highlighting and recovering marginalized voices that this fall we will be presenting a workshop within a series offered by the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

My shared identity as a librarian and scholar has pushed me to see my teaching as an opportunity to expand my scholarly footprint while building upon my interest in assessment. My interest in assessment led me to collaborate with a psychology professor in writing and submitting an article on teaching information literacy in online courses. In our original research, we collected and analyzed data on student performance and self-reported confidence levels regarding information
literacy in online psychology courses. Our research concludes that students are better able to accurately assess their information literacy skills after library instruction. I have also published an article with a manuscripts librarian for an experiment we designed and assessed as an experiment to teach elements of the Framework to first-year psychology students using inquest of lunacy records from a local mental hospital from 1874. Not only did these archival documents help us teach parts of the Framework but our assessments showed that students were able to humanize the lived experiences of patients institutionalized in a mental asylum.

My additional graduate degree in instructional technology has been a catalyst for me to increase active learning while teaching me the value and the needed skills to assess what I am teaching. Knowing how effective I am in the library classroom is vital to my success as a librarian. I have presented, and recently proposed a book chapter, on how I create digital worksheets using Google Drive to reduce my lecturing, focus on increasing practical hands-on learning, and positioning me to assess student learning in real-time. This has totally transformed my pedagogy in the library classroom because I have students applying the Framework (as individuals or as groups) to discover information sources that directly relate to their assignment.

I’m also well versed in using data housed in our suite of Springshare products. Last summer, I examined the questions I got from the previous year. I soon realized that I repeatedly got questions on researching case law in Nexis Uni for a specific course. I created a LibWizard Tutorial that the professor now integrates into his course. I have also used LibAnswers to evaluate the data on my consultations with students. This data showed that students most likely requested to meet with me in-person on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. After seeing the data, I’ve adapted my on-campus days to make myself more responsive to student needs.

I see the Social Science and Assessment Librarian position at Kent State University as a good fit for my strengths in social science librarianship and as a platform to expand upon my experience in assessment to take librarianship beyond its traditional boundaries and deepening its involvement within the larger academic community. Should I be selected for this position, I look forward to engaging with social science faculty and working with library colleagues to develop meaningful assessments demonstrating the value that Kent State University Libraries have in meeting the needs of diverse library stakeholders and student success.

Thank you for your consideration.

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Paul C. Campbell