

## MARKETING TO FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS AT A FOUR-YEAR UNIVERSITY

### **Marketing rationale**

One of the challenges faced by librarians marketing to first-year students is the sheer overwhelming experience of being a first-year student, often away from home for the first time. Dixon (2017) notes that it is difficult for library instruction to stand out to these students when they are adjusting to so many new experiences and so much new information at the same time. And while she also points out that instruction is not meaningful unless linked to a specific research assignment, other libraries have found ways to build connections to students before such instruction, which can build trust for when those instructional sessions occur later in the term (Boulé, 2009).

The proposed event would be a game night held at Fondren Library, the main library on campus. Student Success and Reference Librarians would work together to create games that would help orient students to the library and introduce them to the librarians that would be assigned to their classes later that term or in the spring semester, when they would be doing one-shot instruction on information literacy related to their first-year research and writing course. Anyone that finishes the event would receive information on how to meet with a librarian for help with assignments, and when and where the Research and Writing Lab meets on campus. Students would also be encouraged to engage with the SMU Libraries social media accounts on Facebook and Twitter and/or to sign up for emails from SMU Libraries in order to learn more about events held at the various libraries on campus. An added incentive would be offering a parking pass for a full year for one lucky attendee.

The attached flyers would be placed in residence halls where freshmen live; SMU Libraries would work with Residence Life to promote the event, which would occur during move-in week. Similar iconography would be used to promote the Research and Writing Lab both in residence halls and throughout Fondren Library in order to help students make connections between the event held in August 2021 and the Research and Writing Lab held throughout the following school year. Both flyers also advertise the Ask Us function on the website, encouraging students to come to the library chat feature to ask questions about the events, as well as research questions.

### **Elevator speech**

We need to find ways to build trust with first-year students so that they come to us with questions about their research and assignments, both in the Research and Writing Lab and in private appointments. I've read about other libraries that hold game or puzzle events to get to know students outside of instruction or research consultations. A fun event that's not connected to any assignments, held before the term begins, can allow students to meet us without the pressure of needing to do research. We can structure the event to give students a general orientation of the building while meeting several librarians that will work with them later that year.

Link to recording on Vocaroo: <https://voca.ro/18c67P3S50fX>

Link to same recording, uploaded to Canvas:

[https://twu.instructure.com/files/169269126/download?download\\_frd=1](https://twu.instructure.com/files/169269126/download?download_frd=1)

## REFERENCES

Boulé, M. (2009). Drawing first-year students. *Library Journal*, 134(18), 24-25.

Dixon, J. A. (2017). First impressions. *Library Journal*, 142(8), 32-33.