

# Better Together: empowering library staff through mentoring and collaboration

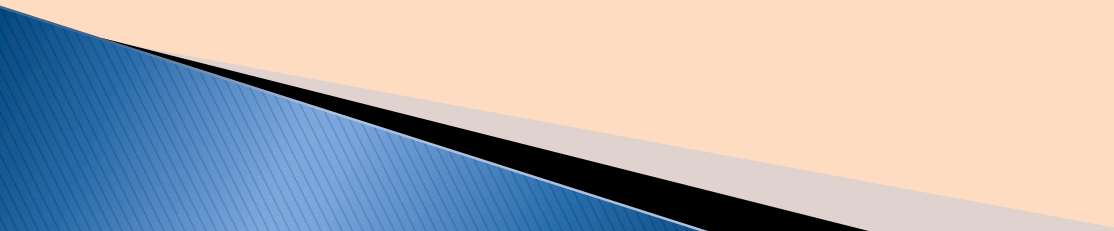


Sarah Forbes & Sue Reynolds  
University of Toronto  
Scarborough Library

# Why are we all here today?

**Communication silos** between library technicians and librarians who provide user services at different service points can result in inefficient and inconsistent messaging to users.

Join us as we discuss strategies to **empower each other** and **work better together** to make an impact on our users.





Getting to  
know...



# Library



# Sarah Forbes



- ▶ Librarian III, Permanent Status
- ▶ Liaison Librarian for Physical & Environmental Sciences, Scholarly Communication Librarian
- ▶ At UTSC Library since August 2009



# Sue Reynolds



- ▶ Reference Technician
- ▶ Interest in sciences, information commons
- ▶ At UTSC Library since July 2009

# ... and how we got here



Sarah Forbes  
Librarian



Sue Reynolds  
Reference Technician



# Audience poll:

- ▶ Type of library/place of employment:
  - Academic Library
  - Public Library
  - School Library
  - Other
- ▶ Position:
  - Librarian
  - Technician
  - Other

# Share your thoughts / experiences

Participate in the discussion now (or later):

- Tweet using #OLASC14 #612
- Google Doc: <http://goo.gl/xQNM52>



# The Issue



# The issue

- ▶ Implemented a Liaison Librarian model 2011
  - Librarians – more instruction, no desk shifts
  - Technicians – solo desk shifts, 2 new positions
- ▶ Communication silos
  - Librarians on call, not always available
  - Technicians providing conflicting information to students

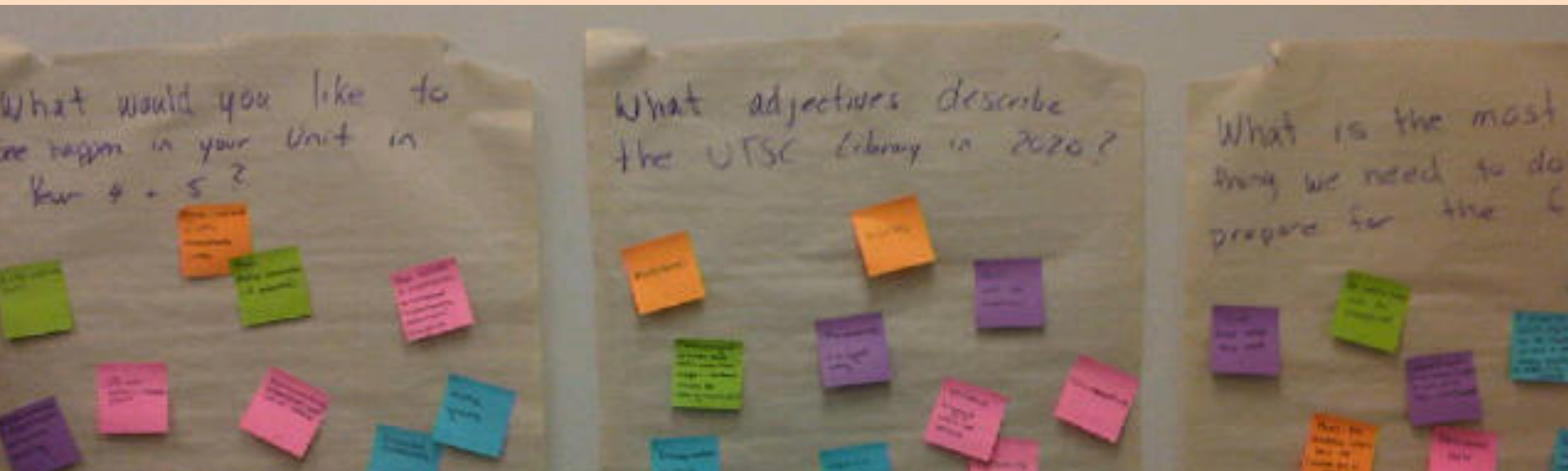


# Searching for a Solution



# Searching for a solution

- ▶ Technician input into the strategic planning process
- ▶ desire to participate in liaison alignment
- ▶ Technician – Librarian pairings

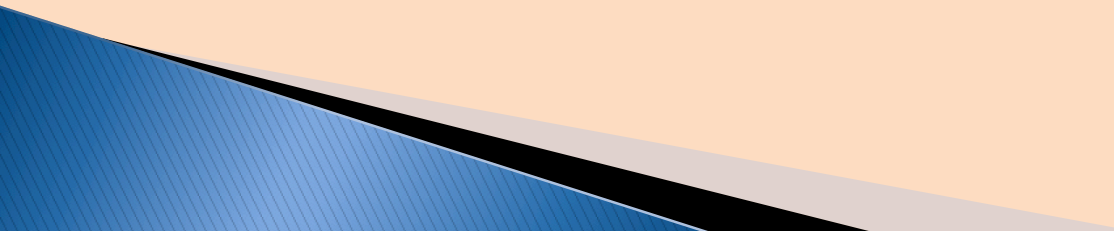




# Sarah & Sue: year 1 summer

- ▶ Meetings every other week
- ▶ Resources review: chemistry, biology, environmental science
- ▶ Chemistry workshop at U of T

# Year 1 Fall – Winter

- ▶ Support for instruction
  - ▶ Stronger reference support at desk
  - ▶ Regular meetings continued
  - ▶ Completed new assignments to test for potential difficulties
- 

# Impacts

- ▶ More invested in the process (Sue)
- ▶ More informed (Sarah and Sue)
- ▶ More consistent messaging (students)
- ▶ More familiar with library staff (students)
- ▶ More feedback on student questions (faculty)
- ▶ Real time updates to course guides, Blackboard (faculty, students)



# Year 2

- ▶ Continued resources review, instruction support, meetings, debriefs, etc.
- ▶ New:
  - Reviewed LibGuides
  - Project work
  - Professional development form

# Professional development form

- ▶ Gap:
  - No mechanism for technicians to reflect and set goals
- ▶ Purpose:
  - Record professional activities and accomplishments
  - Reflect and set goals
  - Highlight strengths and unique skills
  - Identify professional development needs
  - Contribute to library planning
- ▶ Not intended as a performance evaluation

Please contact us if you would like to receive a copy of the professional development form.

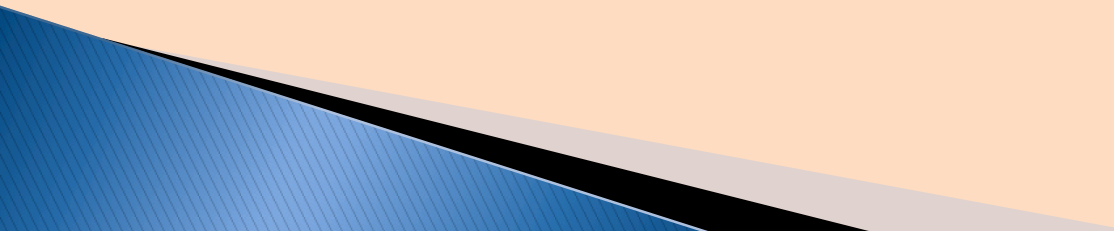
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Sue Reynolds [sreynolds@utsc.utoronto.ca](mailto:sreynolds@utsc.utoronto.ca)



# Mentoring and Collaboration

Exercise:

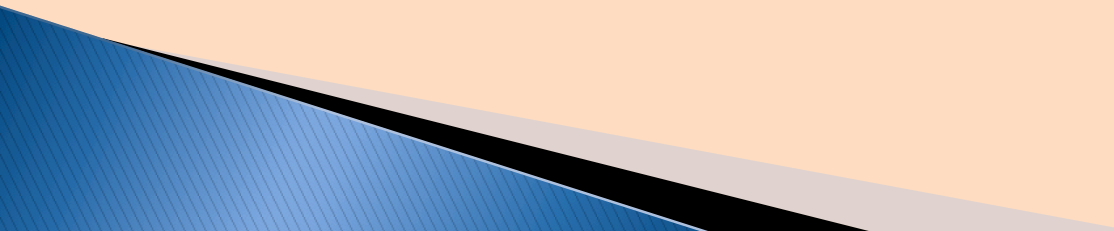
- ▶ Who are your collaborators /mentors /mentees?
  - ▶ What positive partnerships have you had?
  - ▶ Which did you enjoy most?
  - ▶ What impacts did you see?
- 

# Your Gap Analysis

Think about your own workplace:

- ▶ Where are the silos?
- ▶ What information is missing?
- ▶ Opportunities for partnership?

# Lessons Learned

- ▶ Think big, start small
  - ▶ Find what works for you
  - ▶ Do something!
- 



# Thank you

Questions?

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Sue Reynolds [sreynolds@utsc.utoronto.ca](mailto:sreynolds@utsc.utoronto.ca)

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