UBC Library

“A meaningful experience:” Building advocacy and engagement through a library student advisory committee

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Session Roadmap

- Structural changes
- How student input has shaped library services
- Evaluating the experience
- Student perspectives

About our Context

- Small communications team of four, which supports UBC Library's 15 branches and units.

- The Library Student Advisory Committee (LSAC) is one of our key channels for gathering qualitative student feedback and building stronger relationships between students and the library.

The LSAC: How It Works

Committee meetings are:

- Facilitated discussions about specific topics
- Held virtually on Zoom as 60-minute sessions, four times each year between November and April

Members are:

- Current UBC undergraduate and graduate students from any discipline

Setting Expectations

Committee members are expected to:

- Care about improving student life at UBC
- Actively participate in LSAC discussions
- Engage with peers in a thoughtful, respectful manner
- Attend at least two of the four scheduled meetings

Co-chairs commit to:

- Foster an environment where all are comfortable speaking
- Plan meetings with care, to make the most of everyone's time
- Send follow-up comms to debrief members after each meeting
- Share LSAC's insights with UBC Library's Executive Team

Recruitment Changes

- New members are invited to join the LSAC every year in early fall.

- In 2022, we invited are first returning member, and the next year, we started incorporating returning members into our regular committee recruitment plan.

Accessibility and Meeting Design

- Changes we've made so far to provide better accessibility:
  - Shorter meeting times
  - Putting discussion questions in the chat as they're asked, and encouraging members to answer in chat, if preferred
  - Introducing an entry survey where members can flag accommodation needs or barriers before the first meeting

Results

- Increased applications and more returning members each year
- Richer discussions that produce more actionable insights
- Growing internal interest—librarians and library staff now regularly approach us with topics
- Cross-pollination with other library initiatives

Shaping Library Services and Programs

The committee's input has directly influenced several decisions, including:

- Updating eligibility requirements for the UBC Undergraduate Prize in Library Research
- Informing the contents of the NeuroTool Kits
- Improving instructional signage for docking stations
- Providing UX feedback for our website redesign

Evaluating the Experience

How do we evaluate the success of the LSAC each year and plan for the next year?

- Entry and exit surveys
- Leaving lines of communication open

Student Perspectives

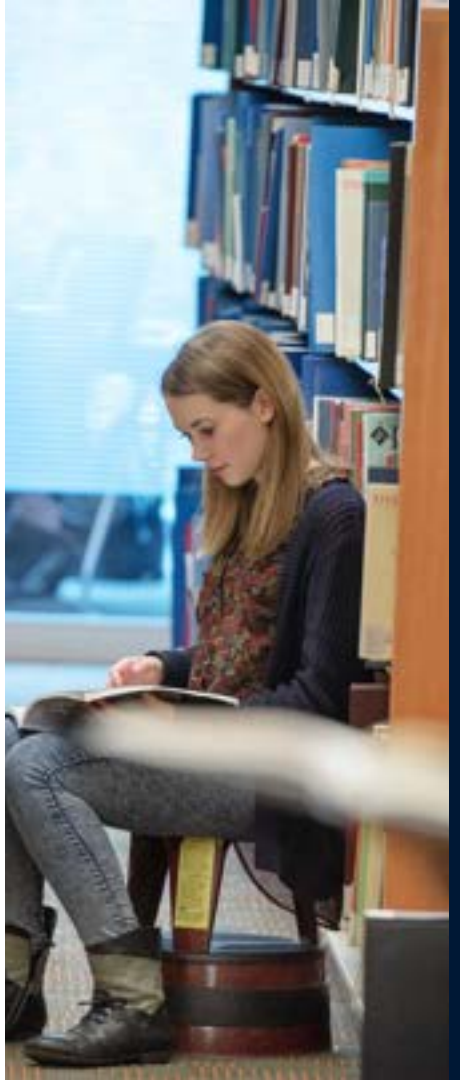
“It was nice to put a ‘face’ to the library. Attending the LSAC made the library feel more accessible.”

> “I appreciated how supportive the environment was throughout the year. Everyone’s voice felt heard, and I always felt comfortable sharing.”

“It was a truly meaningful experience to serve on the committee.”

Practical Takeaways

- Shorter, more frequent meetings improve attendance
- Build accessibility practices into the default meeting format
- Invite returning members to create continuity and peer recruitment



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