



# When the Library isn't Required

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# Learning Goals

- Gather ideas for how to reach first-year students outside of a mandated institutional orientation program
- Familiarize participants with trends and resources that can help create a welcoming environment for first-year and new students, especially those from marginalized backgrounds and/or international students

# Quick Poll

Is the library a required part of the orientation programming at your institution?

# Historical Context

- Arrived at Gettysburg College in Summer 2021
- Joined the library's orientation committee
- Orientation led by our Residence Life & First-Year Programs
- Library no longer required but part of robust "Extended Orientation" (EO) program
- Students earned credit towards housing by going to various programs that offered extended orientation credit
- Of the 4 types of extended orientation credit (wellness, DEI, violence prevention, academic success), the library was the only one that offered academic success

# Extended Orientation @ the library, 2021

- Fall 2021, we organized 45 tours over a three-week time span
- The tours were Monday-Friday, the first three weeks of the semester, three times a day
- Total participation: 170 students (161 first-years), ~25% of first-year class
- Total participation from library staff: lots of work, lots of hours, lots of planning, lots of talking

# ~~Extended Orientation @ the library, 2022~~

- Summer 2022, informed that EO (in its current iteration) was no longer being offered
- The library would not be part of the new version of Extended Orientation
- Planning was already underway when we were informed of the news
- Feelings: frustration, bewilderment, and a bit of relief

# Muss101 Library Tours, 2022

- Fall 2022, we offered 16 tours over 8 days
- Two tours offered Monday-Thursday, first two week of classes
- Total participation: 169 students (146 first-years), ~22% of first-year class
- Total participation from library staff: not as much work, not as many hours, still the same amount of talking

# Planning & Strategy, Part 1

- Decreased the amount of tour offerings: data showed little to no attendance in the third week of classes and Fridays
- Coordinated with Residence Education to speak with all student-staff about library program during their August training period (had posters and other materials to hand out)
- Student to student engagement key
- Survey data showed that predominant amount of students heard about the tours from ResEd



# Planning & Strategy, Part 2

- Reimagining of library pre-orientation program. Library had a long standing history of hosting students from the Office of Multicultural Engagement and the International Student Office for Pre-Orientation programming.
- Realigned the purpose of the program from a tour to more of a discussion and activity about library services. Gave the students a chance to relax in the library space and have a low-stakes conversation about the library.
- Advertised tours heavily during program!



# Planning & Strategy, Part 3

- Tote bags
- Social Media
- Tote Bags on Social Media

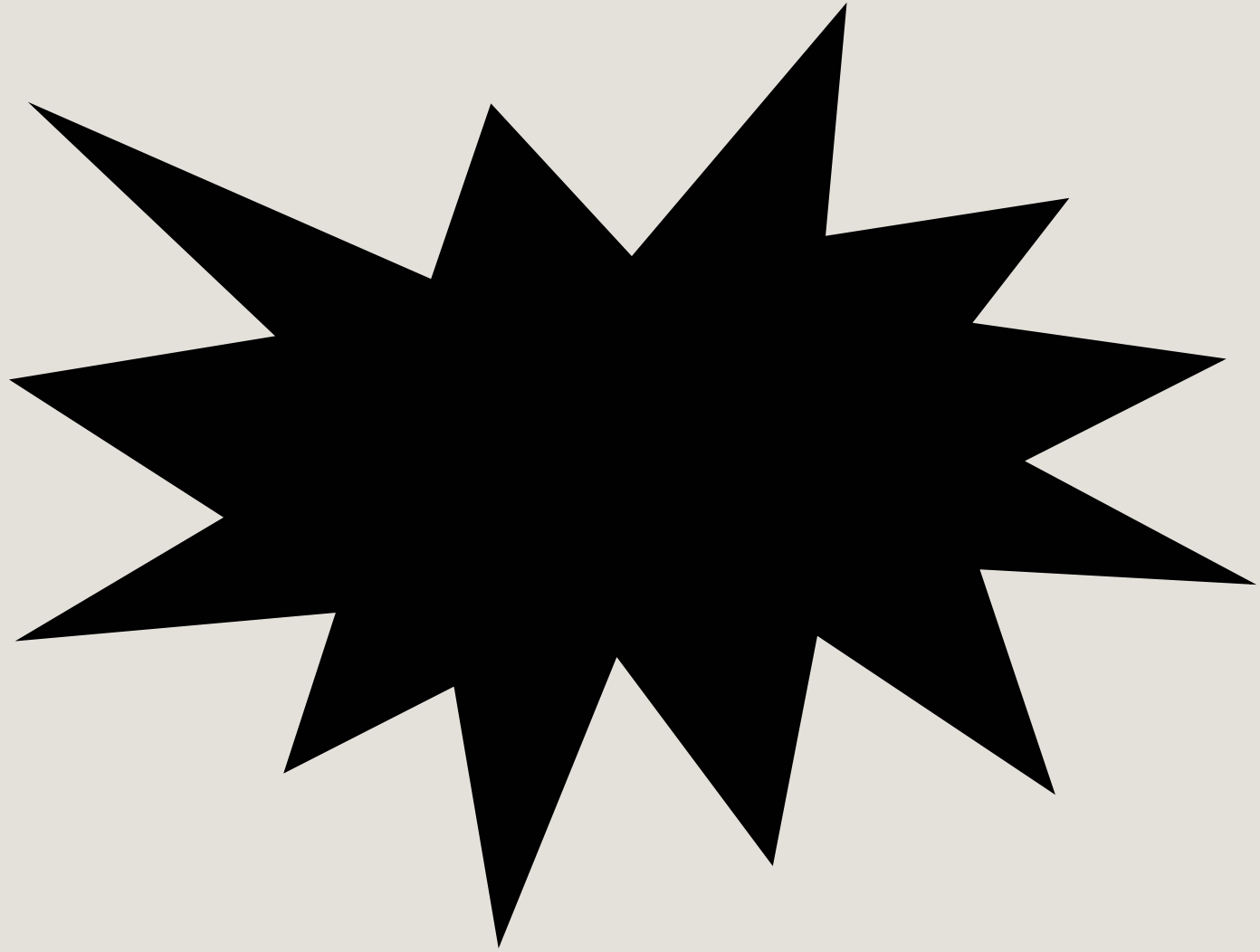




# Planning & Strategy, Part 4

- The theme of tours in 2022 was “Your Library, Your Space”
- As a means to continue to help students feel engaged with the library beyond the tours, we asked them to participate in a time capsule activity
- At the beginning of each tour, students were asked to write a letter to themselves detailing how they envisioned to use the library, or any general goals or hopes they had for the semester
- The letters were mailed back during finals week with some goodies and study tips





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# In Summary

- We reduced our tour offerings to decrease staff load and increase demand
- Residential Education outreach
- Reimagined pre-orientation to give students an opportunity to meet librarians and learn about our space
- Tote bags and social media
- Time capsule activity to create connection beyond tour
- Saw around the same amount of first-year students for tours

# Extended Orientation Missed Impact

- Research 101 Workshops: 30 minute focused on a specific topic (topic development, organization of research, Zotero, etc.)
- Fall 2021, Research 101 workshops: 177 students
- Fall 2022, Research 101 workshops: **35 students**

# Current situation, Fall 2023

- Musselman Library Tours, 12 tours over 5 days
- Monday-Friday, two tours a day, first week of classes
- Two evening tours added on Tuesday & Wednesday
- Total participation: 148 students (143 first-years), ~23% of first-year class
- Research *\*Workshops\**:  
**39 students**

# Next Steps

- Advocate for the library to formally become part of orientation programming again
- Continue to increase visibility of library tours and research workshops
- Identify departments on campus with captive audience that can help drive attendance (FYS, athletics, etc.)



**THANK**

***YOU***

**Questions & Feedback**

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