

# GETTING LURED INTO THE LIBRARY

**A**cademic libraries are now at a critical point, when they have the potential to further establish their worth as centres of community engagement and cultivators of cultural expression and debate. In the face of exponential change brought about by digital disruption, they face ever-increasing pressure to remain relevant, and agility and innovation are seen as the key means to attain that goal.

Griffith University libraries are responding to this challenge with innovations that successfully engage the university community while simultaneously reinvigorating library spaces. They embrace the ideal of being a nexus for the cultivation of cultural expression as well as being major centres of scholarship. This ideal reinvents the libraries' possibilities for connection and social cohesion, re-establishing them as conduits in the epicentre of the university community.

Griffith University is unique in that it has five campuses and six library hubs. The campuses, with their own disciplinary focus and contextual identity, boast libraries that reflect this cultural differentiation. Each acts as a conduit for their university community and each recently partnered with their corresponding scholarly community to initiate two significant engagement opportunities – Lightning Talks and Music in the Library.

The Lightning Talks series was launched in Griffith's library on the Logan campus, which has a deep commitment to equity and widening participation for students from diverse backgrounds. Akin to soapbox events, Lightning Talks involve university researchers giving voice to topical issues and inviting discussion on their research – all within the library space. The talks are short and delivered in 'real speak'; the idea is to strip away the stigma of the academic ivory tower, to share researcher passion and to make research more accessible to a wider audience.

The Music in the Library series, which ran throughout 2016, contributed to the building of cultural capital through 11 performances in library spaces featuring 52 student performers from the Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University (QCGU). Performing ensembles included wind and string quintets, harp duos and classical guitar quartets. This showcasing of the musical talent of the universities has created an innovative engagement partnership between Library and Learning Services and QCGU. The benefits include the strengthening of relationships between the



(Left to right) Dr Adele Pavlidis, Dr Abdi Hersi and Professor Lesley Chenoweth (at lectern) at Lightning Talks



Two members of the Conservatorium's Aquilo wind quintet delight the library audience at Griffith University's Mount Gravatt campus.



Classical guitar students from Queensland Conservatorium – Griffith University (QCGU) provide background music at Griffith University's South Bank campus.

library staff, academics and students, and an increase in student performance opportunities and the libraries' social media exposure – by more than 10 000 Twitter views!

Both the Lightning Talks and Music in the Library events have enabled the libraries to act as a conduit between staff, students, schools and the university more broadly. As cultural intermediaries, library and information professionals can continue to capitalise on this central position and through engaging initiatives like these, enhance the usability and visibility of our library spaces while developing cultural capital. 🌟

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