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Guth, LuMarie, "SPURing into Action: Evolving the Research Consultation into a Career Readiness Engagement" (2018). *University Libraries Faculty & Staff Presentations*. 16.

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SPuRing into Action: Evolving the Research Consultation into a Career Readiness Engagement

LuMarie Guth, Business Librarian

Western Michigan University

MI-ALA Annual Conference, Lansing, MI, May 17, 2018

The SPuRS Program

The Student Professional Readiness Series (SPuRS) program is an engagement program at the Haworth College of Business based on the career readiness competencies desired by employers as defined by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE). These competencies are mapped to 3 areas in the foundational level and 3 in the advanced level.

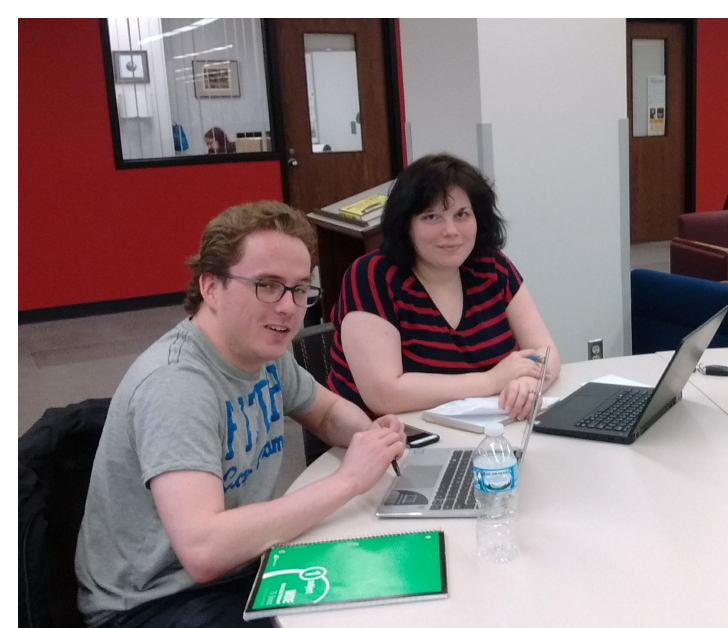
Students must complete:

- 2 tasks from each of the foundational level areas to be accepted in the business program by their junior year and
- 2 tasks from each of the advanced level areas to receive a business degree.

Incorporating Information Literacy into SPuRS

The business librarian met with the director of the SPuRS program in summer 2016 to find an opportunity to integrate information literacy instruction.

After reviewing the competencies and library services currently offered, the research consultation became one of several task options for the problem solving and critical thinking competency, which is mapped to an advanced level area.



- The research consultation is a voluntary activity.
- It is a pre-scheduled activity, so participants can be easily tracked.
- It can be scheduled throughout the year.

Problem Solving and Critical Thinking in the Consult

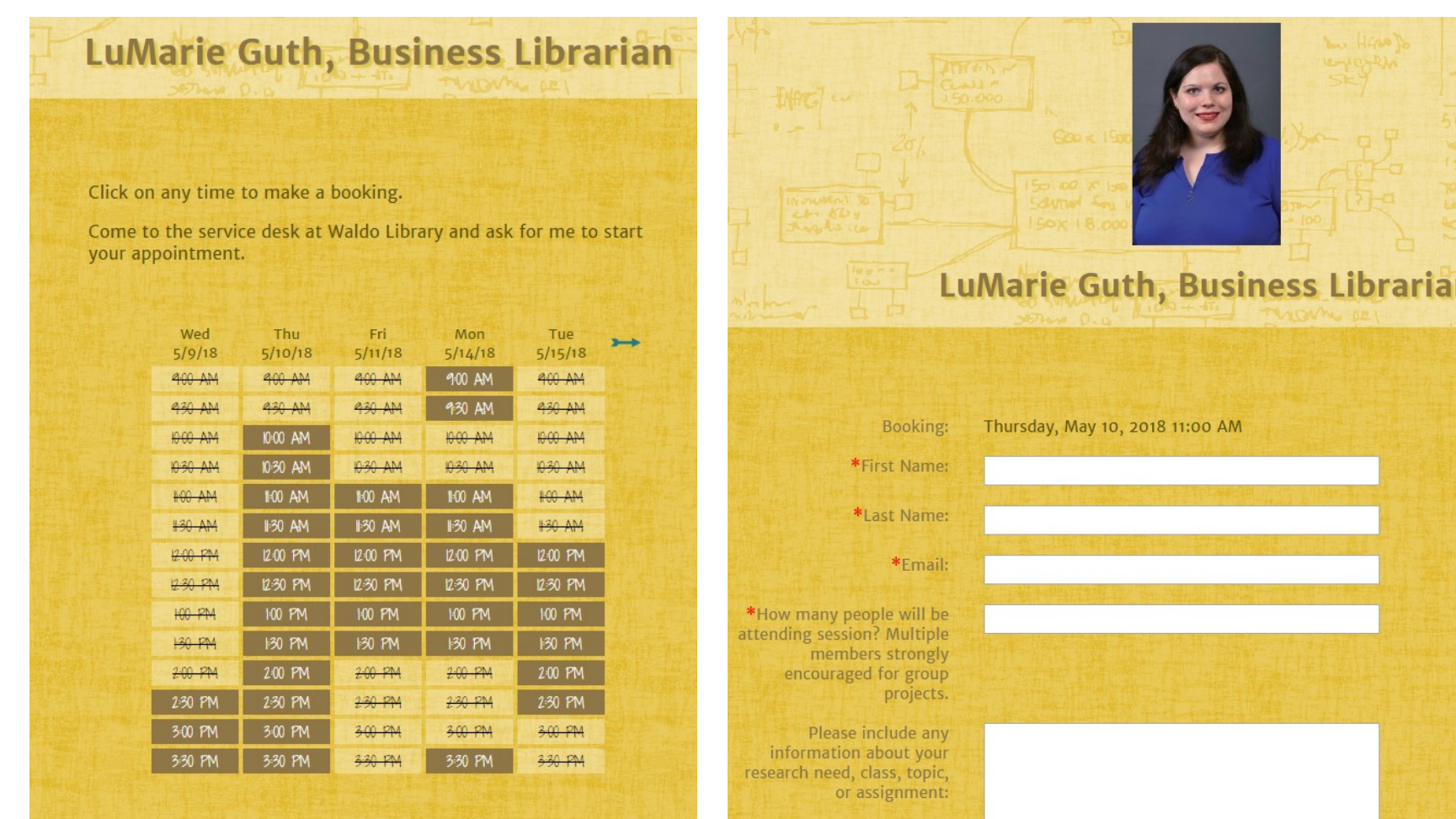
Problem Solving and Critical Thinking are not only an NACE career readiness competency, but are also mentioned frequently in the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business accreditation standards.

NACE defines this competency as, "Exercise sound reasoning to analyze issues, make decisions, and overcome problems. The individual is able to obtain, interpret, and use knowledge, facts, and data in this process, and may demonstrate originality and inventiveness."*

In the research consultation students work with the librarian to build topics, define information needs, choose and revise search methods, and select appropriate sources.

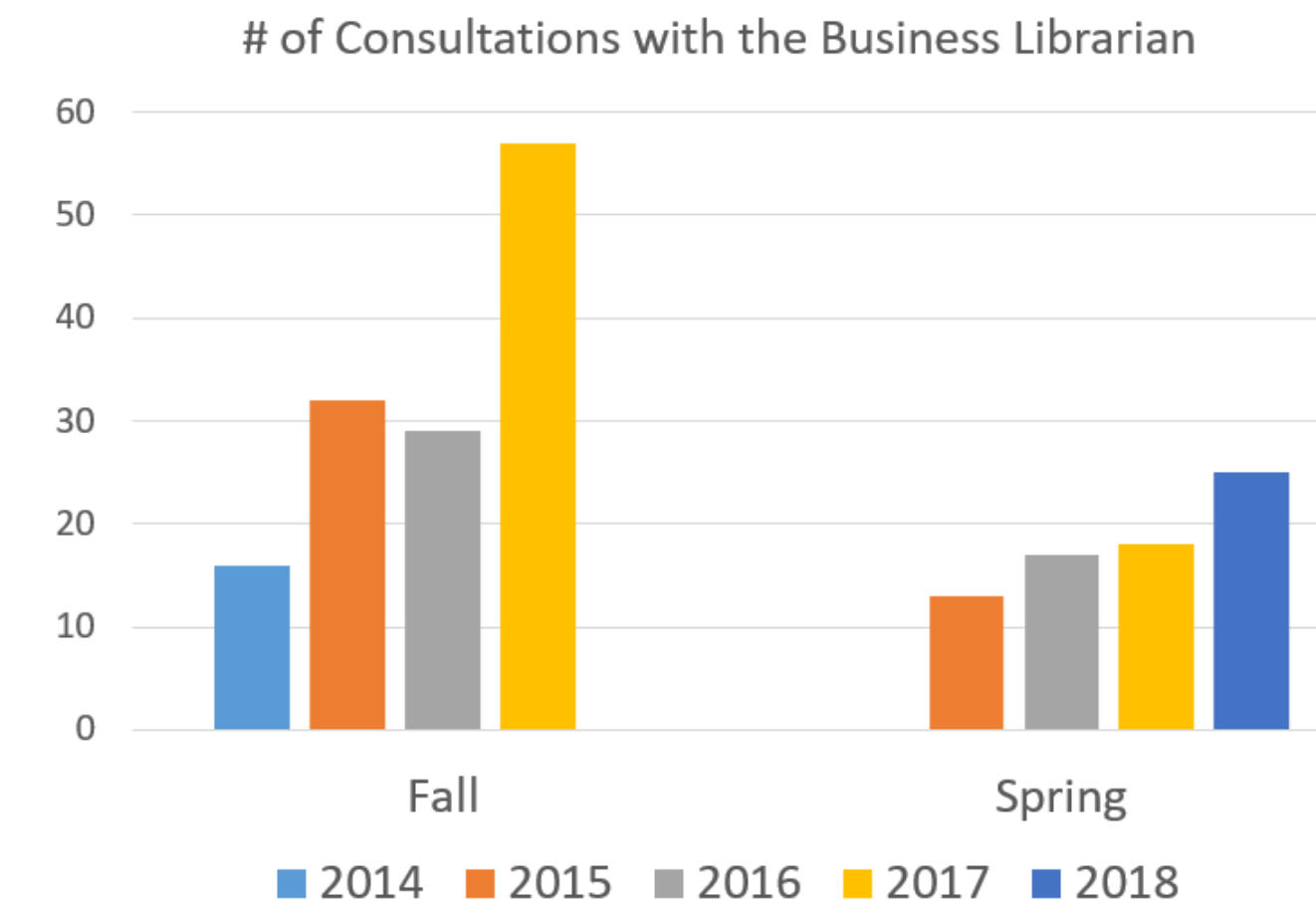
*<http://www.nacweb.org/career-readiness/competencies/career-readiness-defined/>

Adaptations to the Research Consultation for Scaling Up



- The business librarian piloted an online appointment booking system (youcanbook.me) in fall 2016 for the SPuRS program. Youcanbook.me was integrated library-wide in fall 2017.
- Advertised office hours were previously 4-hours a week in the business school, but the librarian opened up all other available times starting fall 2016 for booking at Waldo Library.
- The SPuRS program requires a campus email or student ID number for tracking, so emails are collected in the appointment booking form, and sent to the SPuRS coordinator weekly in a spreadsheet.

Research Consultations with the Business Librarian



Since Fall 2016...

- ...128 student interactions in Research consultations*
- ...encounters with 108 unique students
- ...95 students scheduled with librarian once, 11 students scheduled twice, and 2 students scheduled three times
- ...11 students have received SPuRS credit**

*Some research consultations include more than one person for group projects.

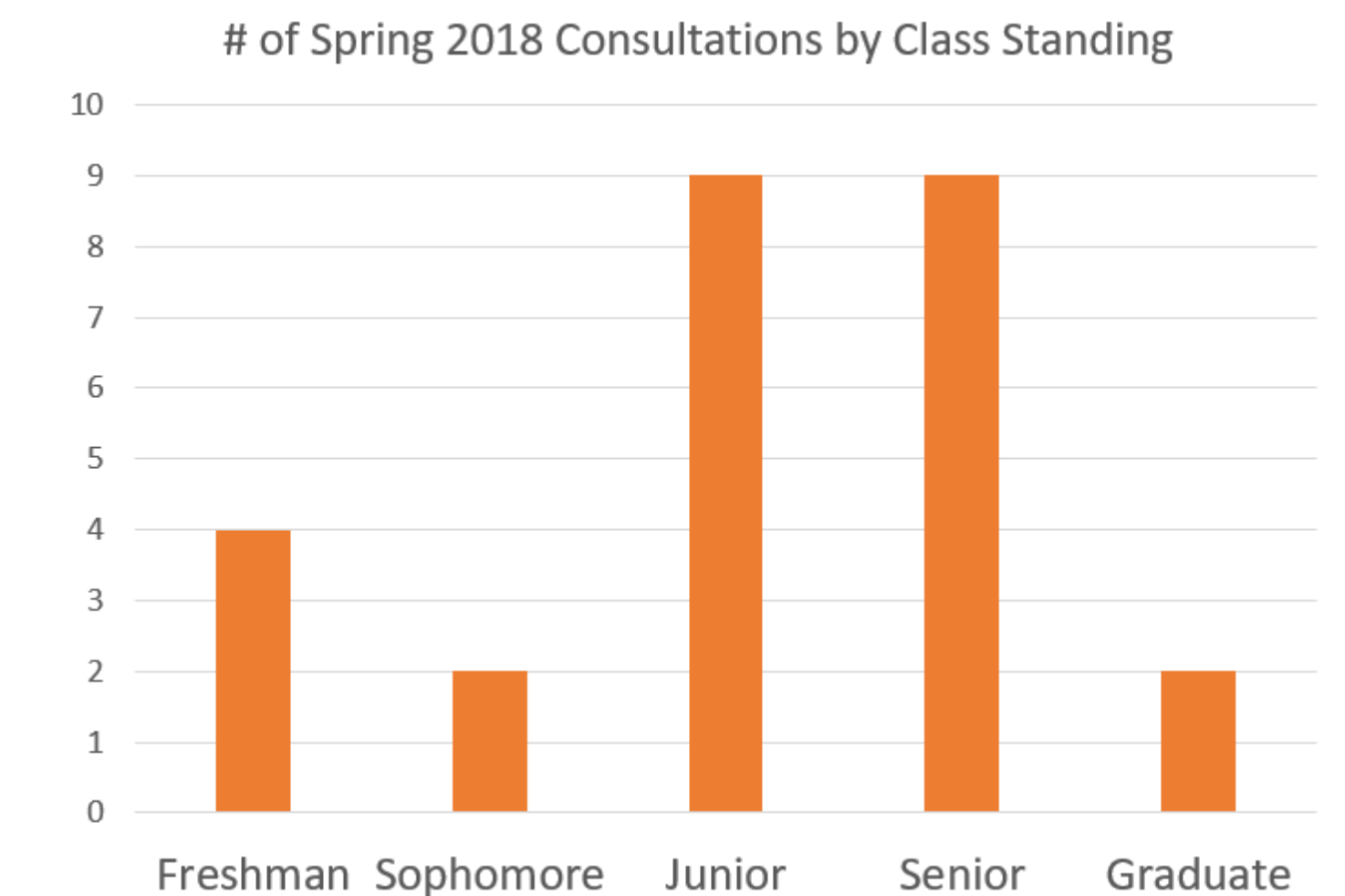
**As of spring 2018 only freshmen and sophomores are in the SPuRS program.

Outlook on SPuRS Research Consultations

In spring 2018, 69% of consultations were scheduled by upperclassmen. The SPuRS program matures to all undergraduates in fall 2019.

As more students need to fulfill requirements to graduate there is an anticipated increase in demand starting fall 2019.

The research consultation is one of several task options for its advanced level area.



Integrating the ACRL Framework into the Research Consultation through Research as Inquiry

To reinforce information literacy instruction in the research consultation, the business librarian reviewed the ACRL Framework for relevant competencies.

Beginning in Fall 2018 the business research consultations will incorporate a worksheet based on Knowledge Practices for the Frame "Research as Inquiry."*

Students will be asked to:

- Document their topic building and search methods,
- Think critically about information needs and gaps, and
- Synthesize the primary discoveries from their sources.

*<http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/ilframework>

