

## Who Do We Serve? (Mason Square Snapshot)

- Library serves students, employees, and community around Mason Square campus of George Mason University (Arlington, VA).
- Student body mostly graduate, doctoral, and working professionals who attend class from 4-10 p.m.
- One of two libraries on campus, the other primarily serving law students and employees, plus licensed attorneys.



## What is Night at the Library?

- Twice-a-semester event that aims to connect students to their subject librarians and encourage consults and general questions.
- In student lounge, space managed by University Life.
- All past events held in 5:30-7:30 p.m. window.



## It Started With an Idea

- Event was initially imagined as an event for one college on campus (Schar School of Policy and Government).
- It came from a desire to reconnect Schar students to library services and offerings after period with no dedicated subject librarian.
- Lorena approached program leaders for perspective on how best to engage their students.
- One program leader suggested the combination of free food and consultation.
- Library team lead was supportive but brought up budget limitations.

## The First Collaboration

- Need for budgetary support and space led Lorena to campus University Life.
- University Life offered student lounge, pizza, and even assistance naming the event.
- Two events were held in Fall of 2023 under the initial model (pizza + librarian consults available.)
- University Life served as main data collector during these events, collecting names and e-mails as is standard for campus events.
- Events were considered successful with plans made for two more events in Spring 2024.
- Despite success, event felt “passive,” and there was a desire grow and its impact.

## The Second Collaboration

- Lorena approached staff member Lex Spencer, whose role includes supporting Mason Square Library’s marketing, outreach, and engagement.
- Lex observed the final Fall 2023 event, finding a need for better data collection that could lead to follow-ups, as well as a better method for distributing food.
- The clear way to combine these needs was in creating a sign-in form that also served as a food ticket.
- This meant the event needed a member of staff to support so librarians could remain free for consultations.
- Two more events were held in Spring 2024 under the new model, which provided better data and also lent opportunities for follow-ups.

## Challenges & Solutions

### Challenges

- Communication between Library and University Life can be difficult, and support can fluctuate, especially when their events schedule gets busy.
- Library has 8 total faculty/staff, so dedicating 3 employees to one event can make coverage challenging.

### Solutions

- Library and University Life continue to work on fostering better communications, plus more realistic date & goal-setting.
- Planning within the team is vital, but we have also discussed the potential of moving the event time for better overall coverage.

## Results So Far

- Approximately 135 attendees across all 4 events, counting repeats. (Sept - 45, Oct - 20-25, Feb - 40, Mar - 26)
- 27 Questions collected and answered since implementation of forms in Feb 2024.
- 10 in-depth consultations over Feb/Mar 2024 events.
- 9 repeat attendees Mar 2024 (36% attendees at previous Feb event.)
- 270+ Slices of Pizza Served

