

Reference and Information Services Department

Annual Report FY 2008-2009

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Reference and Information Services Department Mission Statement

The mission of the Reference Department is to provide an organized collection of print and online resources and teach Information Literacy skills regarding the access and usage of both on and off campus information services to the Prairie View community to enable them to become information literate, independent researchers.

Reference and Information Services Department Vision Statement

The Reference Department seeks to become a comfortable 'place,' both in the Library as well as online; the optimal source for information for all users, regardless of location, as we equip the Prairie View student to evaluate, access and use information in a critical manner, carrying this ability to all aspects of their lives.

Executive Summary

For the first time in a while, we appear to be in a period of stasis. There were no changes in personnel, and we continue at full capacity.

The Reference and Information Services Department continues serves as the primary point of contact for patrons seeking assistance with library research. The number of inquiries received in a variety of forms (electronic, onsite, telephone) dropped slightly as well as the number of face-to-face requests; the number of electronic resources accessible from outside the library grew.

This data supports a paradigm shift for the reference department; we are beginning to see a move away from frontline reference desk service (all statistics dropped) to 'behind the scenes' work; more Instruction classes and scheduled (faculty) research requests (both increased).

The staff assisted patrons in the use of the Library's resources and services; helped patrons to use the Information Services collection, including the Internet, government documents, print serials, the online library catalog, and online databases; and instructed patrons in how to locate and use resources. Librarians rotated time at the Reference Desk, which was professionally staffed 95 hours per week (during peak times in the semester, assuming 7 AM opening), with additional hours covered by student workers and part-time staff.

The Reference and Information Services Department offers a number of special services that support research and instruction, such as online database instruction, library use instruction, and orientation tours. The Information Services staff is also responsible for:

- Answering Information Services questions
- Conducting in-depth research upon request
- Maintaining the Information Services collection
- Staffing the Reference Desk
- Conducting library use instruction classes
- Conducting library tours
- Maintaining statistical records of departmental usage
- Creating and maintaining print and web-based instructional guides
- Assisting patrons with traditional and online library resources
- Committee assignments as assigned
- Serving as a collection development liaison to specific colleges/departments
- Supervising and monitoring student workers
- Participating in collection development duties

Staff

Desk coverage, due to a full staff, was more predictable than it has been in previous years. Illness, vacations, and professional commitments occasionally required a librarian to pull a longer-than-expected stint at the Reference Desk, but there was little impact overall on other potential duties (i.e., library instruction). A formal desk schedule remained in place throughout the year, but in practice it often needed to be ignored and changed without warning.

Each librarian continued to have individual responsibilities beyond maintaining the Reference Desk. These responsibilities include (but are not limited to) committee work (heavy at times), collection development for the department and liaison areas, and library instruction. Librarians continued to work closely with individual campus units and campus/regional/state committees.

Services and Collections

Answering patron questions remained the top priority of the department. The scope of these questions was very broad, and time per question ranged from a few seconds to days. Patron traffic at the Reference Desk continued to be heavy at times, with the heaviest coming in the early afternoon, but dropping sharply after 9 pm to be almost non-existent.

Statistics continued to be kept regarding hourly headcounts in the department. Peak times were mid-morning through mid-afternoon, but the evening and even late night hours did not drop off as dramatically as expected. The 7 am start was popular, but the changing and unpredictable hours of operation for the computer lab in 210 were problematic. This is most problematic during the summer, where the lab opens at 10, and we open at 8.

Based on the same time frame last FY, we saw a modest 3% increase in printouts, compared to 29% last year. This is possibly due to the elimination of cover sheets. There was also a 5% increase, compared to 48% gain last year, in the number of RI sessions. We also saw a 25% decrease in hands-on instruction sessions at the reference desk. This is consistent with last year's direction; last year saw a drop of 18%. There has been a 1% decrease in the use of the reference material (statistically equal), and a 56% decrease in ready reference usage. This is on top of a 49% decrease last year. The scale of change has led us to more aggressively evaluate the currency of the reference material itself.

Use of the vertical file remained non-existent, due primarily to increased use of the Internet for most assignments. Consequently, no attention was paid to its maintenance.

Ready Reference use has dropped to the point that we have pared it down to a few core titles; mostly those we want to protect from loss or damage. All other Ready Reference titles have been incorporated into the general reference collection. New campus programs have required the development of certain collection areas. The reference librarians made suggestions regarding which reference titles should be considered for standing orders, and this has been passed to the Library Administration. All reference librarians have contributed to the reference collection through collection development, and the collection is stronger than it has been in years.

The reference collection is finally being shelf-read. Reference librarians are taking this burden on, but it is a long process. We continue to shelf-shift to alleviate a "traffic jam" that has been in the middle of the collection for a number of years. Reference librarians need to be more "hands-on" with the physical collection.

One major difficulty with library instruction throughout the year was the availability of instruction space. All instruction classes are either in the New Science Building, in the individual classrooms or other computer labs across the campus we have managed to

locate. In crisis, the staff has relied on the NOMAD workstation and R108 for non-hands-on sessions, but this is sub-optimal. This situation is quickly becoming more and more problematic.

"Ask a Librarian!" has stayed an important factor in our reference services, despite a 22% decrease in actual usage. The librarians continue to make an effort throughout the year to answer the questions in a 24-hour turnaround period.

This last year saw the addition of scanning (in Reference) and faxing (in Circulation) services. Statistics for the scanning show it to be useful and appreciated by the students and faculty. It is hoped this will be reflected in next year's survey.

Our online presence is slowly emerging. Our Subject Guides are longer and more extensive, and our Electronic Resources by Subject pages are also becoming streamlined with more relevant information in a tight, easy to use format. Each reference librarian has ownership of some of these pages, and has contributed to their upkeep.

The department distributed a User Satisfaction Survey. Our satisfaction rate was high, and there was the usual plea for longer hours (nights and weekends). One interesting fact that emerged was that while our online journals were seen as useful to patrons, the print journals were not.

Reference Department Needs

The department is still noticeably struggling from the lack of a stable instruction space. This continues to hamper, if not outright impede, the success of offering classes. The previous year has seen us once more have to cancel classes simply due to the absence of a classroom. It is, again, hoped that this next year will see a permanent location where we will not have to contend with other University functions for teaching space. Our instruction program owes its continued existence, let alone success, to the ingenuity and flexibility of the librarians (especially those responsible for scheduling classrooms) and the outstanding cooperation from many departments across campus, not the least of which is the Office of Distance Learning in the New Science Building.

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS FY GOALS AND SUCCESS

Goals for FY 2008

- (1) At least 20% of our instruction sessions offered this upcoming FY will be either multiple classes to the same section or team taught. At least 80% of the users will report satisfaction with library instruction.
- (2) Each reference librarian will have no less than 1 online tutorial, tour or instruction module complete with an assessment component on the library website by the start of spring 2009 semester.
- (3) At least 25% of all Research Instruction courses will be explicitly tied (in writing) to specific learning outcomes as defined by ACRL's Information Literacy standards.

EXECUTIVE ASSESSMENT OF ACTIVITY

- (1) For the first goal, we obtained 12% for the first part, and surpassed the 80% mark for the second. During online discussion among the reference staff, it was decided to scale back to a gain of 15% for the upcoming FY.
- (2) Due to administrative reasons, this goal was untouched, and therefore not assessed this cycle.
- (3) We are at 11% with this goal. Only 15 classes this past AY used the template and saved to the shared drive.

GOALS FOR 2009-2010

- 1- The Reference Department seeks to expand our regular desk service by intrusive roaming. This should impact the number as well as quality of transactions.
 - a. Starting fall 2009, the daily tally sheet will be changed to allow for roaming transactions to be counted.
 - b. These transactions will be included in the monthly and annual reports.
 - c. Reference Librarians will conscientiously employ methods that will increase their opportunity for roaming reference transactions.

- 2- The Reference Department will create a common syllabus with a common assessment tool for lower level class to ensure that Bloom's Taxonomy is addressed.
 - a. Reference Librarians will meet to create a common syllabus and assessment tool.
 - b. Lower division classes (1000-2000) will be concerned with lower levels of Bloom, and upper division classes (3000-4000) will primarily address higher levels of Bloom.

- 3- The Reference Department will replace the Make Time for Research workshops with discipline-specific workshops.
 - a. Librarians will solicit input from faculty regarding content.
 - b. Librarians will work in concert with Department Head to ensure there is a coherent syllabus that could be utilized by anyone in the Department.

ASSESSMENT

- 1- Add a column to our reference desk tally sheet to track roaming statistics. Continue to indicate on the online survey which questions are roaming, and continue to provide narratives.
- 2- Work to create a reference departmental common syllabus and assessment tool.
- 3- Create discipline-specific workshops in conjunction with Department Head and faculty representative with common syllabus (outline), content, and assessment.

Departmental Research, Creative, and Scholarly Activities

GAY

Memberships:

ALA

ACRL

Spectrum Scholar Initiative Program

Black Caucus

RUSA (Reference and User Services Association)

Business Reference Services Section

TLA

College and Universities Division

Black Caucus

Library Instruction, Genealogy, Reference and Administration Round Tables

TLA Districts 5, 7 and 8

OTHER

American Association of University Women

Beta Phi Mu

Phi Kappa Phi

Alpha Sigma Lambda

Golden Key

Committee Assignments:

National:

Conference Planning Sub-Committee Chair, BCALA 2010

ALA Committee on Literacy 2009-2011 (offered)

State:

Genealogy Round Table, Chair 2008-2009

Black Caucus, Councilor Alternate 2007-2010

Scholarship Stipend Chair 2007-2010

TexShare Education Services Working Group 2007-2010 (Texas State Library and Archives Commission)

University:

Learning Effectiveness Team

Women's Council for Leadership and Service Committee

Library:

Handbook and Publications Committee (Chair)
 Special Events Committee (Chair)

Black History Month Committee (Vice Chair)

Boards, Signage and Displays Committee
 Collection Development and Government Documents Committee
 Community Affairs, Publicity and Marketing Committee
 Electronic Services and Web-Design Committee
 Information Literacy Planning Committee
 Distance Library Services Task Force
 Social Committee
 Fine Arts Appreciation Committee

Publications and Presentations:

“Got EBSCOhost Database College Library Research Skills,” TLA District 8 Conference at Lonestar College October 2008

“Innovative Ideas: Managing and Collecting for a Genealogy Library,” TLA, Dallas TX April 2008

“Web 2.0 Genealogy Researching,” TLA, Dallas TX April 2008

“K-20 Learners: Preparing our Students for College and Career,” TLA, Dallas TX April 2008

Gama Gama Sigma March 2009

HISD “Name that Book” Contest Judge May, 2009

Conferences and Workshops:

HBCU Library Alliance March, 2009, Atlanta GA
 TLA Houston Texas March-April 2009

GRUNDY

Memberships:

State Bar of Texas (Inactive)
 American Association of Law Librarians (AALL)
 Legal Information Services to the Public Special Interest Section (SIS)
 Research Instruction and Patron Services Special Interest Section (SIS)

Committee Assignments:

Collection Development & Government Documents (Chair)

Distance Library Services Task Force (Vice Chair)
 Information Literacy Planning Committee (Vice Chair)

Building & Facilities Task Force
 Electronic Services & Web-Design
 Library Assessment Task Force
 Social Committee
 Special Events Task Force (Local & National)
 Technology & Systems Task Force

Publications and Presentations:

Compiled, edited, updated and converted to PDF format multiple handouts for the Research Instruction classes. These included many course specific handouts as well as basic reference resources such as style guides, including a new IEEE Citation Style guide.

Taught a 6-hour introductory legal research class (similar to a 1st year law school legal bibliography course) for the Pre-Law Institute for Mentoring Students (Pre-LIMS) Summer Program

Graduate School Support

Provided multiple Research Instruction sessions for Graduate students

Assisted multiple masters' and doctoral candidates in finalizing theses research; locating missing references, ensuring these conform to and follow the American Psychological Association (APA) guidelines.

Formally added to the Dissertation Approval Process of the Graduate School as a 'gatekeeper' step in the defense for candidates.

LI**Memberships:****ALA**

ACRL

- Asian, African and Middle Eastern Section (AAMES)
- Instruction Section

LIRT (Library Instruction Round Table)

- Research Committee

TLA

- Division 1, Roundtable U, District 8
- College and University Libraries
Library Instruction

Committee Assignments:

Collection Development & Government Docs
Distance Library Services Task Force
Electronic Services & Web-Design
Information Literacy Planning Committee
Special Events Task Force
Technology & Systems Task Force

SATO**Memberships:****ALA**

ACRL

Asian / Pacific American Librarians Association

OTHER

Kansas Library Association
Association of Architecture School Librarians

Committee Assignments:

Collection Development and Government Documents Committee
Fine Arts Appreciation Committee

Information Literacy Planning Committee
 Preservation Planning and Disaster Recovery Committee
 Publication
 Technology and Systems Task Force

Conferences and Workshops:

Association of Architecture School Librarians (AASL) Annual Conference,
 Portland, OR, March, 2008

SHAW

Memberships:

ALA

ACRL

- College Libraries Section
- University Libraries Section
- Instruction Section

LIRT (Library Instruction Round Table)

LAMA (Library Administration and Management Association)

- Library Organization and Management Section
- Measurement Assessment and Evaluation Section

TLA

College and Universities Section

Reference Round Table

Beta Phi Mu

Committee Assignments:

National:

ACRL / CLS Best Practices Committee

LAMA BES Safety & Security of Library Buildings Committee

NMRT Resume Review Service

State:

Subject editor for Philosophy for the online version of Texas Reference Sources
 for TLA Reference Round Table (<http://www.txla.org/pubs/trs/TBB.html>)

University:

University Academic Council
 SACS Core Team
 QEP Task Force
 SACS Data Team
 University Institutional Effectiveness Committee
 Faculty Advisory Council
 Graduate Council

Library:

Library Assessment Task Force (Chair)
 Information Literacy Planning Committee (Chair)

Search Committee (Vice Chair)

Publications Committee
 Electronic Services and Web Design
 Distance Library Services Task Force
 Acquisitions and Materials Budget Committee
 Boards, Signage and Displays Committee
 Building and Facilities Task Force
 Collection Development and Government Documents Committee
 Technology and Systems Task Force

Publications and Presentations:

Prairie View A&M University User Satisfaction Survey (2009). In I. Y. Wang (ed.), *Library Service English* (pp. 408-417). Taipei, Taiwan: Airiti Press.

"Introduction to Library Assessment," District 8, Texas Library Association, October 2008.

Multiple book reviews for Choice, ARBA

Conferences and Workshops:

District 8, Texas Library Association, October 2008
 SACS Annual Conference, San Antonio, December, 2008
 Annual Assessment Conference, TAMU, February 2009
 HBCU Library Alliance, March 2009, Atlanta GA

Other:

Adjunct Professor of Philosophy at Lone Star Community College