

Information Services Department

Annual Report FY 2005-2006

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Executive Summary

We have been, and continue to be, in a period of steady transition. Although we did not prepare a written report for last FY, this report will summarize highlights. As will be made clear, most of these revolve around personnel changes.

The Information Services Department serves as the primary point of contact for patrons seeking assistance with library research. While the number of inquiries were received in a variety of forms (electronic, onsite, telephone) and the number of electronic resources accessible from outside the library grew, patrons still required face-to-face assistance in accessing and evaluating information at the Reference Desk.

The staff assisted patrons in the use of the Library's resources and services; helped patrons to use the print Information Services collection, including the WWW, 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.

The 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 responsible for:

- Answering Information Services questions
- Conducting in-depth research upon request
- Maintaining the Information Services collection
- Staffing the Reference Desk
- Maintaining the Vertical File of ephemera
- Conducting library use instruction classes
- 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
- Serving as a collection development liaison to specific colleges/departments
- Supervising and monitoring student workers

Staff

FY 2004-2005 saw the beginning of a large transition, with the departure of both Anthony Adam as Head of Public Services and Rebecca Bierman as Reference and Instruction Librarian. We continued with Robert Grundy and Stephen Shaw, both Reference and Instruction Librarians, as well as Willette Stinson, who was removed from

her position as Head of Information Services, and remained as a Reference and Instruction Librarian.

In FY 2005-2006 Dr. Rosie Albritton joined the staff of the Library as Director of University Library Services. Stinson left the University in January, leaving Grundy and Shaw severely short-staffed. For a substantial period of time, Cynthia Hart, Electronic Services Librarian, maintained the reference desk. She was eventually moved down to the first floor to be more directly involved in the Reference Department, but in spring of 2006 she also left the University.

Thanks to the superior collegiality of the rest of the Library staff (especially Jason Russo, Kaia Johnson, Christopher Anglim, Geetha Aradhya, Helen Yeh and Juanita Walker), the desk schedule was met and our rapidly increasing instruction program was not affected. Student workers continued to maintain the Reference Desk during those periods when a professional librarian was not present and to help as needed at other times. We were fortunate to hire Kimberly Gay as Reference and Instruction Librarian in summer 2006, and Shaw was promoted to Acting Head of Reference. It is hoped that we will not have to depend so heavily on other departments for basic operations in the future.

Given the personnel changes throughout the year, desk coverage continued as well as could be expected. Illness, vacations, and professional commitments occasionally required a librarian to pull a longer-than-expected stint at the Reference Desk, to the detriment of 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. All staff members involved were very accommodating.

Each librarian continued to have individual responsibilities beyond maintaining the Information Desk. These responsibilities include committee work, collection development for the department and liaison areas, and library instruction. Librarians continued to work closely with individual campus units (e.g., the College of Juvenile Justice) 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.

The librarians recognized the importance of a mandatory, campus-wide library instruction program, but a comprehensive program was not accomplished due to staffing problems. We hope to continue to make more of an effort in this arena. The fact that we have made such a positive impact with the Instruction classes, combined with an awareness on the part of the faculty of the need for more instruction in the use of library resources is encouraging.

The department still faced the belief of some faculty and administrators that "everything is on the Web," which makes library use unnecessary. This is coupled with an equally

strong perception by some faculty that “nothing accessed from databases could be considered scholarly.” The department integrated more Web-based material into its instructional sessions, including how to ascertain the usefulness of a website. Patron traffic at the Reference Desk continued to be heavy at times, although no clear pattern emerged of high and low periods.

Materials use-- the vertical file--remained low, due primarily to increased use of the Internet for most assignments. Consequently, little attention was paid to maintaining a large vertical file, and print resources purchases were primarily in those areas of heaviest student use, new programs, and updates. The Ready Reference and general reference collections enjoyed increased traffic. In spring 2006 the Ready reference collection was evaluated and material not suited to that area was either removed from the collection entirely, or moved to either the general reference collection, or the upstairs stacks. New campus programs have required the purchase of additional databases and development of certain collection areas (e.g., criminal justice and architecture). Standing orders are being considered for key titles, as this would contribute to the coherence of the reference collection.

A shelf-shifting project was initiated to accommodate a large influx of legal materials which are presently housed on a separate shelf by the Periodicals corner. As this is a labor-intensive effort, this is slow going. One additional problem is the area is in need of shelf-reading. Student workers were assigned various areas in the last year, but a more systematic approach is needed.

One major difficult with library instruction throughout the year was the availability of R210A in the Computer Lab. Since campus IT was outsourced, this room became their training facility. Thus the reference department no longer has clear access to this room, and several planned classes had to be cancelled. Maintenance of the equipment in this room is nonexistent, and the room is presently shut down. Therefore, all instruction classes are either in the New Science Building, or in the individual classrooms. In addition, the staff has relied more 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!" continued to grow in popularity, increasing the number of questions received via email. The librarians have made an effort throughout the year to answer the questions in a 24-hour turnaround, although this has not always been possible, due to a variety of factors, primarily staffing and time-of-posting

Student computer access remained a significant issue, as more assignments required computer use. We were able to have Bruce install various programs on the OPACs so that patron can print files in Word and PowerPoint, but they are still unable to create or modify these files. This maintains the first floor as a research area. Access to WebCT is a continuing issue, as well as occasional system outages. Students were pleased that printing remained free and unlimited from workstations. A policy is being considered, however, to limit the access community users have to this privilege.

Departmental Research, Creative, and Scholarly Activities

GAY

Memberships

American Library Association
 ACRL
 Spectrum Scholar Initiative Program
 Black Caucus
 Reference and User Services Association (RUSA)
 TLA (College/University Division, Genealogy, Administration and Reference Round Tables)

Committee Assignments

Vice-Chair Black History Month Committee
 Chair Special Events Task Force (Local and National)
 Boards, Signage and Displays Committee
 Collection Development and Government Documents Committee
 Community Affairs, Publicity and Marketing Committee
 Electronic Services and Web-Design Committee
 Handbook and Publications Committee
 Information Literacy Planning Committee
 Search Committee
 Social Committee

Publications and Presentations

Presented "Let History Be Your Guide: Ethnic Genealogy Research" at the TLA Conference in Houston, Texas April 25-28, 2006

Presented a PowerPoint presentation to TWU's School of Library Science and Information Studies GLISA Blackboard page covering ALA Annual Conference

Conferences and Workshops

Attended ALA Annual conference

- Named as an American Library Association Spectrum Scholar 2003 fellow.

Attended TLA Conference

- Volunteered at Reference Roundtable, Library Instruction Roundtable and Black Caucus booths.

GRUNDY

Committee Assignments

Chair Distance Library Services task Force
 Vice Chair Information Literacy Planning Committee
 Building and Facilities Task Force
 Electronic Services and Web-Design Committee
 Special Events Task Force (Local and National)
 Social Committee
 Technology and Systems Task Force

Publications and Presentations

Conferences and Workshops

Memberships

SHAW

Memberships:

American Library Association
 ACRL (College and University Libraries sections)
 LIRT
 TLA (College/University Division and Reference Round Table)
 Beta Phi Mu

Committee Assignments:

College Libraries Section (CLS) Standards Committee
 Publications Committee, Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL).
 Library representative for the University Academic Council
 Library representative for the University Assessment Council
 Chair of the Information Literacy Planning Committee
 Co-Chair Handbook and Publications Committee
 Vice-Chair Search Committee
 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
 Subject editor for Philosophy for the online version of Texas Reference Sources for
 TXLA (Texas Library Association) Reference Round Table

Publications and Presentations

Shaw, S.J. (2005). Bibliographic instruction: two models converging in a common goal. In J. Caswell & P.G. Haschak (Eds.), *New challenges facing academic librarians today* (pp. 123-132). Lewiston, N.Y. : Edwin Mellen Press

“Hyperbrary: An Exploration of the Threads of Postmodernism in the Academic Library,” *Interdisciplinary Literary Studies*, Fall 8.1 (2006) (Forthcoming)

12-15 book reviews for Choice, ARBA, and LisJobs.com.

Conferences and Workshops

Attended ALA Annual and Midwinter conferences

- Participated in the Placement Center, as well as the NMRT Resume Review Service.

Other:

Adjunct Professor at Cypress-Fairbanks Community College

Participated in the Assessing Student Learning Outcomes online workshop through ACRL

Reference Department Needs

The department is suffering 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 have to cancel classes simply due to the absence of a classroom. It is hoped that this next year will see a permanent location where we will not have to contend with other University functions for teaching space.

We are also constrained by the location of the printers behind the reference desk. If these were moved out into the open area, the focus of the professional librarian would center on the reference interview, and not the distribution of handouts.

Goals:

- (1) We will maintain and seek to increase the number of instruction sessions offered this upcoming FY.
- (2) A full 100% of the reference department will be shelf-read by the start of summer 2007.
- (3) By the start of AY 2007-2008, a plan will be in place regarding the implementation of an IL program.
- (4) By the end of spring 2007, each reference librarian will be actively involved in outreach to liaison faculty.

Objectives Based on Goals:

- 1.1 Three (3) % of all faculty on campus will be contacted by telephone, email or personal conversation with information about the instruction program, and will be offered the opportunity to create a personalized class for their students.
- 1.2 Each instruction librarian will teach at least 2 classes outside of their 'comfort zone' this academic year.

- 2.1 Each reference librarian will take ownership of their liaison area in the reference department and be responsible for shelf-reading it by the end of spring 2007.
- 2.2 Each reference librarian will be assigned a range in the reference department, and this will also be shelf-read by the end of spring 2007.

- 3.1 By the end of spring 2007, the electronic services librarian will establish a process for placing online tutorials onto the library's web page.
- 3.2 The reference department will hold meetings in conjunction with the Information Literacy Planning Committee to draft an action plan for what an IL program would look like, along with timetables for implementation. A draft will be finished by the start of fall 2007.

- 4.1 Each reference librarian will meet with at least 25% of their liaison faculty in their offices each semester.
- 4.2 Early in fall 2007 the reference department will meet to create a list of concrete ideas for increasing outreach.