

Reference and Information Services Department

Annual Report FY 2006-2007

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Reference and Information Services Department Mission

The mission of the John B. Coleman Library Reference and Information Department is to provide support to the evolving Prairie View A&M University curriculum through instruction regarding access to and usage of information services both on campus and at distant locations, consistent with the mission of the Library, and supporting the University's mission of teaching, research and service.

The Reference and Information Services Department is charged with educating the University community in the development of the reference, research, and critical thinking skills necessary to be independent, productive scholars and life-long learners. The Reference Department is dedicated to the core principles of intellectual freedom and universal access to information.

The Reference and Information Department fulfills the Library's stated mission of "instruction in all aspects of information retrieval, the transmission of scholarly information," by:

- Ensuring high quality service and consultation to users both on campus and in remote locations through the proactive use of electronic media.
- Teaching Information Literacy skills so users will be able to access, evaluate and utilize information from appropriate sources ethically and legally.
- Organizing and presenting information sources, both print and online, in a logical and consistent manner.
- Assessing user satisfaction as a concerted ongoing evaluation process.
- Building and maintaining the John B. Coleman Library Reference Collection based on the evolving curricular needs of the University.

Reference and Information Services Department Vision

The John B. Coleman Library is at the center of the PVAMU campus which emphasizes its place in serving the University Community and emphasizes the need for life-long learners to include library and research skills in their needed tool kit for life-long learning.

The establishment of the Library as a "place" is vital to the future of the University. The Reference and Information Services Department sees itself as an integral part of the Public Service arena, and a significant contributor to creating a positive atmosphere inside the building and reducing library anxiety.

In keeping with the mission of Prairie View A&M University and the John B. Coleman Library, the Reference and Information Services Department will optimize access to information for our users regardless of location as we support the teaching, research and service goals of the University Community.

Executive Summary

As in the last report, we continue to be in a period of steady transition. Personnel changes again were a factor, but not to the dramatic extent of last year. Things have solidified, and we are better prepared to make substantial changes in operation.

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.

As our survey (below) might be interpreted to indicate, some patrons were unsure of the effective difference between the Information desk and the Reference Desk. While not an overwhelming problem, this needs to be kept in mind.

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 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.

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
- 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

In FY 2006-2007 Yubao Li joined the Reference staff as a Reference and Instruction Librarian, and Stephen Shaw was promoted to Head of Reference and Information Services. Other personnel changes that affected the Reference Department in a positive way include E. Jean Brumfield as Distance Services Librarian, and Karl Henson as Webmaster and Electronic Services Librarian. Both are instrumental in focusing the energy of the Reference team back towards our students. Due to these new faces, we have had to rely substantially less on other departments to provide basic desk coverage. This should be further alleviated when our last candidate is potentially hired this coming FY.

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 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, although no clear pattern emerged of high and low periods.

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 awareness on the part of the faculty of the need for more instruction in the use of library resources is encouraging.

Due to the upcoming SACS visit, statistics were kept regarding hourly headcounts in the department. This consistently showed peak times during 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.

Monthly statistics show an interesting trend; based on the same time frame last FY, we saw a 28.82% decrease in printouts, a 19.27% decrease in the number of RI sessions, but

a 15.98% increase in hands-on instruction sessions at the reference desk. There has been a 18.31% increase in the use of the reference material, and a 10% increase in ready reference usage. (AS OF AUGUST 1, 2007)

Use of 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. It is heartening to see that there is renewed interest by librarians in this content, and a desire to digitize the vertical file.

The Ready Reference and general reference collections enjoyed increased traffic. 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. All reference librarians have contributed to the reference collection through collection development, and the collection is healthier than it has been in years.

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. This has been on the table for a number of years and does not seem to be resolving itself. It might be close to deciding if the materials need to be blended into the collection at this late date at all.

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. Reference librarians are taking this burden on, but it is a long process.

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, 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!" has stayed stable, despite a slight 5.35% decrease in actual usage. The librarians continue to make an effort throughout the year to answer the questions in a 24-hour turnaround period, although this has not always been possible, due to a variety of factors, primarily staffing and time-of-posting.

Our online presence is becoming more coherent. 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. Online tutorials using Camtasia are next, and beta versions of some of these already exist.

Our Reference Department handbook has been totally revised and updated to reflect the point of view of a new employee to the reference department; what would they need to know on a daily basis.

The department created and tabulated a User Satisfaction Survey. There were a solid distribution concerning race, age, rank in school, college affiliation. Our satisfaction rate was high, and there was the usual plea for longer hours (nights and weekends). One disturbing factor at least for this department was the reliance on the Internet (25%) when doing research, as opposed to asking Reference Librarians (17%) or using databases (13%). There is still work to be done.

Reference Department Needs

The department is still noticeably 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 once more have to cancel classes simply due to the absence of a classroom. It is still 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.

Summary of Previous FY Goals and Success

Goals from FY 06:

- (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 for FY 06 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.

Indicators of Success for FY 06:

- 1.1 Reference staff did exceptionally well here. This proved to be a tremendous source of contact for us; outreach is our strong suit.
- 1.2 This did not happen for a variety of reasons. At times the Reference staff seemed territorial regarding subject areas. This remains an issue to work on, and we are already making significant inroads.

- 2.1 This was mostly accomplished; the areas that were touched were weeded and assessed professionally and accurately, but there were still liaison areas that were yet attended to. This remains an issue of concern.
- 2.2 This project has had mixed results. At times, there was a concerted effort made to read the collection, but inertia drove the project to a slow halt. Again, we need to redouble our efforts here.

- 3.1 This is already in place, and growth is steady. With the advent of Camtasia and SnagIt, we are poised to create specific tutorials almost on the fly that can be targeted to each RI class.
- 3.2 Results for this show that although we are still in the planning stages, we are making contacts with faculty that might be willing to have us teach multiple times for each section. This should provide inroads towards implementing an IL program.

Another facet to this is team teaching; which is still in its infancy for our department. Although when used it was successful, remembering to use it and finding participants is not consistent.

- 4.1 Statistics are not available for this.
- 4.2 We have not met as a department on this issue, but as indicated above this does not seem to be a problem; we are already making strides here.

Goals and Objectives FY 2007-2008

Goals for FY 07

- (1) At least 10% of our instruction sessions offered this upcoming FY will be multiple classes to the same section. We will meet with students early in the semester, and then again towards the end. A further 10% will be team taught; these might easily overlap. At least 70% of the users will report satisfaction with library instruction.
- (2) 75% of the Subject Guide and Database Subject pages will be up to date and current by the end of fall 2007. They will continue to be evaluated annually or as needed.
- (3) The Reference Collection will be shelf-read and evaluated by the start of summer 2008.

Objectives / Method of Assessment

Goal 1

(1) At least 10% of our instruction sessions offered this upcoming FY will be multiple classes to the same section. We will meet with students early in the semester, and then again towards the end. A further 10% will be team taught; these might easily overlap. At least 70% of the users will report satisfaction with library instruction.

Method:

[a] Reference librarians will track the number of sessions taught, and indicate how many were team-taught. The number should be 10% of the total.

[b] Reference Librarians will track the number of times unique course sections are taught more than once. The number should be 10% of the total.

[c] User surveys and interviews will be used to measure “user-satisfaction” with library instruction classes conducted by the Reference Librarians. Evaluation forms will be provided for all students attending the library instruction program.

Goal 2

(2) 75% of the Subject Guide and Database Subject pages will be up to date and current by the end of fall 2007. They will continue to be evaluated annually or as needed.

Method:

[a] Each librarian will meet with both the Head of Reference and the Electronic Services Librarian each semester to discuss areas of responsibility for these pages. A checklist will be completed and filed for each page every semester; the target is 75% compliance.

Goal 3

(3) The Reference Collection will be shelf-read and evaluated by the start of summer 2008.

Method:

[a] Reference librarians will submit a written statement (short) to the Department Head in spring indicating their personal progress in this area. The goal is 75% compliance.

Departmental Research, Creative, and Scholarly Activities

GAY

Memberships

- American Library Association (ALA)
- Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL)
- Spectrum Scholar Initiative Program
- Black Caucus
- Reference and User Services Association (RUSA)
- Business Reference Services Section

Texas Library Association (TLA)
 College/University Division
 Genealogy Round Table, Chair-Elect 2007-2008, Chair 2008-2009.
 Library Instruction, Reference and Administration Reference Round Tables
 Black Caucus, Councilor Alternate 2007-2010
 TLA Districts 5, 7 and 8

Committee Assignments

Chair: Handbook and Publications Committee
 Chair: Special Events Committee
 Vice-Chair: Black History Month Committee
 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
 Search Committee
 Social Committee

Publications and Presentations

Presented Researching Family: Celebrating Culture, Libraries, and Tradition at the 2007 Texas Library Association Conference in San Antonio, Texas April 11-14, 2007
 Along with Assistant Director, Juanita Walker, presented *Keeping the Culture through Engagement, Enlightenment, and Empowerment in Genealogy researching from the Africa to the America* at the Black Caucus 6th National Conference of African American Librarians, Forth Worth Texas August 2-5, 2007.

Published A Librarian's Tell: Losing Weight by Gaining Will Power and Words of Wisdom in the summer 2007 issue of the *Texas Library Journal*.

Conferences and Workshops

Texas Library Association's Texas Legislative Day, February 5-6, 2007. Austin Texas.

Texas Library Association Conference in San Antonio, Texas April 11-14, 2007 (Volunteered at the Black Caucus, Texas Woman's University and the Registration Booths.)

Black Caucus 6th National Conference of African American Librarians: Culture Keepers VI: Preserving the Past, Sustaining the Future in Forth Worth, Texas August 2-5, 2007.

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)
- American Bar Association (ABA)
- Houston Area Law Librarians (HALL)
- Special Libraries Association (SLA)

Committee Assignments

- Chair, Collection Development & Government Documents
- Vice-Chair, Distance Library Services Task Force
- Vice-Chair, Information Literacy Planning Committee
- 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, 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.

Conferences and Workshops

“Rise to the Challenge!” 100th AALL Annual Meeting & Conference, July 14-17, 2007, New Orleans, LA .

LI**Memberships**

ALA

ACRL

Library Instruction Round Table

TLA

College and University Libraries

Library Instruction

Committee Assignments

Boards, Signage & Displays

Collection Development and Government Docs

Distance Library Services Task Force

Electronic Services & Web-Design

Information Literacy Planning Committee

Special Events Task Force

Technology & Systems Task Force

SHAW**Memberships:**

ALA

ACRL

College Library Section

University Library Section

Instruction Section

Library Instruction Round Table

TLA

College/University Division

Reference Round Table

Committee Assignments:*National:*

College Libraries Section (CLS) Standards Committee
 --renamed ACRL / CLS Best Practices Committee
 Publications Committee, ACRL

State:

Subject editor for Philosophy for the online version of Texas Reference Sources
 for TLA Reference Round Table

University:

University Academic Council
 Committee to Develop Procedural Guidelines for Doctoral Studies
 University Institutional Effectiveness Committee
 Faculty Advisory Council

Library:

Chair of Library Assessment Task Force
 Chair of the Information Literacy Planning Committee
 Vice-Chair Search Committee
 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

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

Multiple book reviews for Choice, ARBA, and the Journal of Web Librarianship

Conferences and Workshops

ALA Annual conference, Washington D.C. June 2007
 SACS Conference, Orlando Florida, December, 2006

Other:

Adjunct Professor at Cypress-Fairbanks Community College