This report summarizes accomplishments and activities for the entire Public Services division of the Library. While, by necessity, endeavors of individual departments within Public Services are incorporated here, readers are encouraged to review the separate reports of those departments for more detail.

This academic year has been one of student engagement, recognition, assessment, boundary crossing, and laying the groundwork for future success. Come along as we look back and look forward.

Student Engagement

The Library prides itself on the level of student engagement and interaction and the PS division leads this effort. Foremost in this area is the Library’s Student Advisory Group. First composed after the creation of the Library West Commons (LWC) to help inform the development of future Library projects, this group was instrumental in garnering student input, especially through focus groups, for the Library’s East Commons (LEC) which opened Fall 2006. This group also engaged in other projects this year including the formation of a book club, Book Jackets, and providing leadership for the campus “one book” project.

After a successful introduction with freshmen during 2006, the campus book project was expanded in focus to include all students for the upcoming year. The Library hosted the student-led committee meetings over the past year which incorporated participation from Library staff as well as campus faculty and staff. The Library also sponsored a visit by Villanova University Librarian Joe Lucia to help guide the development of the project. After the committee narrowed down the book choices through a process designed to maximize co-curricular activities and to ensure compatibility with Tech’s programs and student interests, the student leaders of the committee provided an opportunity for a student vote. Based on the results of that vote, the committee selected Freakonomics as the book for the 2007 project.

Student participation was incorporated throughout this past year in the planning for a future Library renovation and the concurrent construction of the Innovative Learning Resource Center (ILRC). Students provided input on issues ranging from information technology integration to café spaces.

The Library participated in two student-led studies during the year. One was an undergraduate research project designed to understand student use of Library space based on time of day and number of individuals within the group. While
limited in scope, this study produced interesting results that have helped to inform the ILRC development process. The second study, by two students in the College of Architecture, looked into design and feasibility issues regarding the installation of a mural in the Ferst Room.

Several events throughout the year were designed to increase student awareness of Library services and facilities. Each semester, library staff have participated in FASET orientation events welcoming incoming students and providing information about the Library to them. The Library also continued the Welcome event in the Rotunda this year providing subject major specific brochures along with a candy bribe. The RATS week “CeLIBration” was held at the beginning of Fall semester 2007 and again was a popular event. Approximately 700 incoming students joined us for pizza, popcorn, and a series of fun activities ranging from speed dating, board games, Ninja tag, Dance Dance Revolution, comedy improv, and the ever popular poker tournament.

The newly opened LEC was used not only for several of the “CeLIBration” events but also provided an outlet throughout the year for student engagement and expression focused in its presentation space. While this space is normally utilized for small group study, the flexibility built into the space through its adaptable furniture, power supply, and audio-visual capability led to its use for a variety of purposes. From showcasing undergraduate research through honors poster sessions and presentations to highlighting the creativity of Tech students through improv sessions, this space became a student owned part of campus.

**Happenings/Recognition**

The LEC is more than just its presentation space. Opened in Fall 2006 after significant planning by a number of staff in the Library, the LEC represents a transformative stage in the Library’s program. Incorporating the aforementioned presentation space, along with two collaborative computing areas, two soft seating/flexible furniture areas, a full-service café, and a redesigned circulation department, the LEC represents the latest in Library facilities from its revolutionary overhead power/data/lighting grid to its flexible computing and study areas. Designed with significant student participation from the ground up, the LEC boosted Library attendance in a manner similar to that of the LWC opening and led to a gate count in excess of 1,000,000 for the year - a 16 per cent increase from the previous year.

The Library upgraded two existing circulation positions to focus primarily on the LEC. These individuals promote the facility and its programming, tailor an outreach program to increase awareness of the LEC, and provide specialized assistance with the computer and audio/visual equipment.
The LECs facility and programming have garnered not only the attention of students as evidenced through gate count but have generated a significant buzz in campus publications. Articles such as “Beyond the ordinary: A guide to the Library” in the August 25, 2006 *Technique*, “Library East Commons reinvents study space” in the September 8, 2006 *Technique*, and “East Commons re-engineers Library programming” in the August 21, 2006 *Whistle* reflect this.

The Library’s innovative programming also has attracted national attention and the Library continues to host national and international visitors who want to transform their own spaces. In recognition of the transformative change brought about not only by the LEC, but also by the LWC and the innovative Resource Center providing services from a number of campus partners, the Library was awarded the prestigious Association of College and Research Libraries Excellence in Libraries award for 2007. The Library took advantage of the award ceremony to create a campus celebration honoring all who had a hand in this effort. The award also helped maintain the media momentum for the space with articles such as “Tech wins Library of Excellence award” in the February 16, 2007 *Technique*, “National Prize on Library Shelf” in the Spring 2007 *Georgia Tech Alumni Magazine*, and “Library Rates National Award of Excellence” in the Summer 2007 *TechTopics*.

**Assessment**

The LEC came about through intense investigation and assessment of what the Library was doing and what it should be doing. This program of assessment did not end with the opening of the LEC. Feedback opportunities abound and range from continued participation in LibQual+, focus groups, informal feedback to staff, emails from the Library’s web page through the “Tell us” function, written notes in the suggestion box, and the Student Advisory Group. The LEC was also the subject of the previously mentioned student research project. Each of these assessment vehicles provides the basis for refining the Library’s existing services and looking forward to additional opportunities.

**Crossing Boundaries**

A number of the Library’s opportunity areas exist due to working with partners outside the Library. The LWC and the LEC rely extensively on OIT support and the Resource Center on the ground floor is staffed exclusively by partners such as OIT, Advising, and Tutoring. Programming by other campus partners such as the Counseling Center help make the Library a student destination and we will continue to seek out similar beneficial partnerships including such opportunities as a potential Communications Center.
These partnerships require planning and coordination to be successful. Throughout the year, meetings held by the Commons Oversight Committee and the Library/OIT Partnership Advisory Council maintain communication lines and provide an outlet for program development. They also provide the basis for joint Technology Fee funding requests which have provided crucial financial support.

Boundary crossing is also evidenced by Public Services departments coordinating with other Library departments in such areas as scholarly communications. Public Services staff have been actively engaged this past year in providing training opportunities for Library staff in scholarly communications and in creating and disseminating information to teaching faculty.

Other boundaries are of a more geographic nature and bare the difficulties in providing information access to distributed campuses. Bob Fox and Rich Meyer visited the GT Savannah campus to ascertain its ability to provide information resources and a number of Library staff throughout the year have wrestled with this subject to both meet contractual obligations and yet to provide the most information support possible to remote locations.

Transitions

During the year, the Public Services division observed both heartening and bittersweet transitions. Last year’s annual report noted a few position reclassifications and that trend continued. The increasing complexity of the Library’s programming called for a number of such reclassifications this year with this pleasant outcome affecting staff in circulation, reserves, information services, and the Architecture Library. Also on a positive note, as a result of the recently drafted 2007-2011 Strategic Plan, the Library is considering several position re-workings with the first being that of Brian Mathews transitioning from reference librarian to the position of User Services Librarian: Coordinator of Assessment and Communications. This forward thinking position will assist in continuously assessing and adjusting the Library’s services to closely meet user expectations.

On a more sober note though, this past year saw the retirements of three Public Services staff, Cathe Cannon in Special Formats and Maps, Kathy Brackney as head of the Architecture Library, and most profoundly, Crit Stuart as head of the Public Services division. Crit’s leadership was essential in creating and shaping the Public Services agenda.

Laying the groundwork

A number of activities during the past year were designed to help the Library meet the ongoing challenge of providing relevant and timely services. Many
Public Services staff participated in the creation and evolution of the 2007-2011 Strategic Plan. While the Public Services division is intertwined with the Library as a whole in sharing and promoting the Core Values and Commitments noted in the Plan, of particular interest to the Public Services area will be progress in meeting strategic themes related to collaborative partnerships, developing and managing collections, fostering the Library as a place, and creating an empowering and open environment for Library staff.

The importance of these themes to future success is evidenced by groundwork of the past year. This includes broad participation and input from Library staff in the programming activities for the planned renovation of Library facilities and the construction of the adjacent ILRC and collaborative relationships as evidenced by the nascent work for the LWC 2008 refreshment Technology Fee application being jointly prepared by Library and OIT staff.

Other important groundwork begun this year included a site visit to the Clemson University Architecture Library in an effort to influence future development of the Tech Architecture Library and initial discussions concerning a research grant from Herman Miller to closely study the LEC particularly for the implications of a flexible environment on student productivity and satisfaction.

Where do we go from here?

Of course, one year ending leads to another year beginning. A key objective over the next year will be maintaining and developing our outreach efforts with both students and faculty. A number of ongoing programs in this area are noted above and separately in the Information Services Department annual report. Especially with faculty, the outreach program will have a critical collaboration component with other Library areas such as Archives and Digital Initiatives/Scholarly Communication.

Student outreach will continue to be a function of formal channels such as the Student Advisory Group, the various orientation events notes above, and informally through the continuing work of those in the LEC and LWC who assist individuals and small groups.

Finely tuning these outreach efforts will help target our efforts for example along academic subject lines. The new User Services Librarian position will help in this regard and the Library will need to continue seeking out this type of cutting edge position as funding permits.

The Library will continue to work with other Tech units and with external groups to move the agenda forward. The Planned Communications Center represents the final untested collaborative experiment to inform the ILRC process and will
involve representatives from a number of campus areas. General planning and programming work for the ILRC and Library renovation will involve interacting with a significant number of campus organizations and with architectural firms. Similarly, the proposed Herman Miller research study will involve not only that firm but also collaboration with faculty and students in the College of Architecture.

Finally, while a substantial renovation is planned for the future, a number of smaller facilities projects will be addressed during the year including an updating of the staff lounge, a new HVAC system for the Crosland Tower and Library bridge that will profoundly impact Public Services staff at times, and a mini-renovation of the Architecture Library to freshen its appearance and maximize utilization of its limited space.

Stay tuned ...

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