Public Services

Georgia Tech Library

Public Services

Annual Report 2007-2008

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 saw a number of initiatives in working closely with students, assessment of various operations, and outreach/collaborative efforts across unit lines. Along the way, we achieved a number of accomplishments, witnessed a number of transitions, and faced some challenges.

Student Engagement

The Library continued to work throughout the year with the Student Advisory Group. In addition to providing feedback on a number of initiatives such as the one book project, the group also assisted with review of the proposed Library renovation programming and the programmatic/physical transition planning with the Clough Undergraduate Learning Commons (CULC).

As a result of extensive planning in the previous academic year, Freakonomics had been selected as the title for the 2007-2008 one book project. The Library hosted several project sessions including one led by Bob Fox. The project was expanded in scope this year to provide for participation by all students rather than just freshmen. While project events were well-received, the project itself was somewhat hampered by turnover in its student...
administration and lack of funding. The book project will be suspended for the upcoming year.

In addition to Student Advisory Group input on CULC planning, a number of students participated in programming and initial design work for the proposed renovation of 2 West. Focus groups, open forums and online message boards are some examples of the opportunities students had to contribute their thoughts and ideas.

A number of events held throughout the year were also successful in informing students of available Library services. Public services staff led and participated in activities such as FASET orientations, the Welcome event in the Rotunda, the RATS week "CeLiBration" event for incoming freshman, and the Graduate Student Expo.

Activities

A new group was formed in the Public Services Division during the year. Brian Mathews and Dottie Hunt left their positions in the Information Services Department to form the new User Experience group. Intended to work closely with the Library’s user communities, this department will also help coordinate the Library’s communications and outreach to those communities.

Public Services staff had a hand in a number of successful updates to the Library’s physical appearance and function. A comprehensive renovation of the Library staff lounge took place during the year. In addition to a completely refreshed appearance, the kitchen facilities were upgraded and new furnishings were purchased. The Architecture Library also saw a number of improvements to its appearance and functionality. Through projects funded by both the College of Architecture and the Library, physical improvements such as painting were combined with new furniture and an improved layout. A refreshment of the technology in the Library West Commons was undertaken in the spring and summer of 2008 with funding from a successful Technology Fee request. Input from students led to such improvements as the introduction of walk-up terminals and increased numbers of printers and scanners.
Following the highly successful opening of the Library East Commons, programming for the next proposed renovation began in earnest this past year. A committee of Library and OIT staff with experience from the previous two commons projects initiated discovery work on a potential renovation of 2 West. The new User Experience group helped lead the gathering of student input in this process. The year ended with the wrap up of the first phase of student input and the beginning of the initial design process with campus facilities personnel and outside vendors.

The work on the potential renovation for 2 West is only one example of how the Public Services Division reaches out to others in the Library and on campus in meeting its mission. Other work with OIT includes the daily management of the LWC and the LEC with regard to training, technical, and staffing issues. Library/OIT joint activities such as the Commons Oversight Committee and the Partnership Advisory Council keep our communication lines open and provide the basis for joint Technology Fee funding requests. Partnerships and outreach with other campus units such as the Counseling Center and CETL increase the Library's visibility and make good use of our facilities.

Intra-divisional work in the Library this year included significant contributions from ISD and Collections Development staff in scholarly communications efforts, participation in the development of web tools and resources, support for the creation of a research forum in the COA, and the development of the Library 2.0 program. Cooperative activities beyond the Library included the Constitution Day committee and the ongoing Tuesday Talk program.

Assessment

With campus competition for resources increasing, assessment activities will only gain in importance. A number of such activities took place during the past year. In addition to its work with the 2 West programming, the User Experience group led by Brian Mathews made a number of overtures to various student constituencies across campus to establish feedback mechanisms. The LEC coordinator, Charlie Bennett, also interacted with a number of students and faculty throughout the year gathering input on satisfaction with the
space and its programming. A more formal period of assessment is planned for this space in the upcoming year.

Collection Development staff made significant progress during the year in developing a "Journal Value Database" that will provide access to all Library staff information useful in assessing the impact of particular journal titles. Architecture Library staff also assisted in assessment work during the year providing information critical to the reaccreditation of the COA. Ongoing assessment functions include informal feedback to staff, emails from the Library’s web page through the "Tell us" function, written notes in the suggestion box, and direct student feedback in the Library.

Transitions

In any large unit, change is inevitable. A number of programmatic changes and events have already been noted. On a more personal note, we acknowledge several staff changes that took place this year. Bonnie Tijerina resigned to take a position at UCLA. Her position in Collection Development was filled by Guy Leach from Georgia State University. Cathy Carpenter assumed the role of head of the Architecture Library. She was joined there by Stephanie Kretchmar who filled the position previously held by Jennie Law. Sherri Brown accepted the newly-created position of First Year English Instruction librarian. Finally, Martha Saghini retired from the IDD with her position being filled by Gladys Toppert.

Challenges and Opportunities

A seven-month long project to update the heating and air conditioning of the Crosland Tower and bridge offices was completed in May and brought about greater control of this feature which often was the source of criticism for library staff and users. The noise and disruption of the process though drove a number of students out of the building. The temporary reduction of seating in the affected areas also had a negative effect. As a result, gate counts for each month during this project were lower than the corresponding month in the previous year.
A challenge for the upcoming year will be the loss of the Library parking lot due to work for the CULC building. It is anticipated that the loss of this parking will have a negative effect on evening use. Library administrators were working with parking and transportation personnel to identify and implement alternative arrangements.

Public Services departments began developing more detailed action plans based on the Library’s strategic plan. As many of the goals are somewhat budget dependent, potential funding cuts for FY 09 will impact these plans. Other areas that will be affected by looming budget difficulties for the next year include position vacancies that may not be filled and cuts to an already challenged acquisitions budget. As most facilities improvements are made with foundation funding, we hope to continue progress during the next year on planning for 2 West renovations.

While potential funding issues may prove to be an obstacle in some areas, we are still hopeful for another successful year based on the many talents of the Public Services staff, the successful partnerships that are in place, and the goodwill between the division and GT students.

Submitted by Bob Fox

Associate Director for Public and Administrative Services

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