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Reference and Interlibrary Loan Departments : Annual Report : 2002 - 2003

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Annual Review
Reference and Interlibrary Loan Departments
July 1, 2002 – June 30, 2003

The 2002/2003 year was exceptionally active for the reference and interlibrary loan departments. Interlibrary loan activity, in particular, was up with increases of 11% in borrowing and 14% in lending. New software upgrades in interlibrary loan allowed materials to be requested more efficiently and staff in this area are now fully trained. This has allowed the department to provide excellent service despite the increase in requests. This is an area that will require additional staffing if activity continues to increase.

The Poynter Library reference librarians have noticed some new trends in our reference activity. Although research and instructional questions still account for approximately half of all the interactions at the reference desk, questions of a technical (software, access, and printing questions) nature appear to be increasing. In a survey conducted during the fall semester, technical questions accounted for 14% of the questions received.

With the increasing number of traditional and lower-level students, there has also been an increased use of the public reference computers, particularly during the daytime hours. To help ensure student access to the machines, a policy change was made to the majority of the public access computers. All of the computers in the main computer area behind the reference desk now require the user to enter a USF netID prior to accessing the computers. In addition to library resources, the computers that require a USF netID are also equipped with Microsoft Office. This has been very beneficial to the students by allowing them to do library research while they are also accessing course materials and writing research papers. To allow our community users access to the USF online catalog and other electronic library resources, a number of machines remain available for open use.

In order to allow additional access to USF librarian expertise, two of the Poynter reference librarians are now providing regular coverage for the USF Libraries chat reference service. Poynter librarians have also been active in the TBLC/CCLA statewide chat service that will begin in the summer of 2003. Poynter Library was accepted as a beta-testing site for this new service and Tina Neville is a member of the Advisory Committee for the statewide reference chat program.

Annual activities as they relate to the Poynter Library Goals:

Poynter Library Goal #1: *Provide optimum collections and services to meet the demands of USF St. Petersburg's expanding curriculum and faculty.* **(USF Goal #4)**

- *Develop print, media, and electronic collections to support the lower level general education curriculum.*

Nearly 500 new titles across a wide variety of disciplines have been added to the reference collection during this fiscal year. Particular attention was given to adding titles that would be useful for the newer disciplines and the lower-level courses that are now offered at USFSP. As always, diversity was an important consideration during acquisition of new reference titles with approximately 7% of the new titles directly related to women's studies or ethnicity.

The entire reference collection underwent a major weeding during the summer of 2002. At that time, every reference book was examined for currency and relevance. Many older materials were sent up to the circulating collection and a number of outdated directories were withdrawn. Attempts were made to purchase updated copies of relevant older editions and to fill in gaps in the overall collection. This project has made the reference collection more relevant and efficient for library users.

- *Achieve library standards for separate SACS accreditation.*

During the fall semester, 153 students participated in an evaluation of reference services. Each student was asked to observe the reference librarian on duty, then ask them a reference question. The students then provided answers to questions regarding the approachability and helpfulness of the librarian. The responses were discussed in a spring library faculty meeting. All Poynter reference librarians participated in the meeting. A number of useful suggestions were made on how to better encourage students to ask questions and how to increase librarian's awareness of new resources and skills. These suggestions will be implemented during the 2003/2004 fiscal year.

- …*upgraded computer* … *equipment to take advantage of new teaching technologies.*

During the fall semester, the head of reference kept a sample listing of reference and information questions asked at the reference desk. The questions were analyzed to look for areas that may need improvement. One glaring area of concern was the need for additional software on the library computers. With the increasing use of Blackboard for courses, students need increased access to Word documents and PowerPoint presentations in order to do their course assignments. Since many assignments involve library research, it is more efficient for the students to be able to access library resources and course assignments on the same computers. During the spring semester, Microsoft Office was added to the majority of the public computers in the reference department.

Poynter Library Goal #2: *Contribute to the intellectual growth and quality of life of the campus student body.* **(USF Goal #4)**

- *Develop library services, including reference and instruction, appropriate for campus distance learning students.*

Mika Slaughter, formerly a visiting instructor, was hired onto a permanent line in the Fall of 2002. In addition to her other duties, Ms. Slaughter has been charged with developing

services and resources for distance learning students. During the 2002/2003 year, she has created a web site specifically for distance learning students and has been providing library services to distance learners via phone and email. The services have included a RAP session conducted over the Internet.

During the Spring semester, a library instruction session was conducted for a USF class that was taught on the SPC Clearwater campus. Library instruction to off-site locations is an area that may expand in the next few years. Because of the driving time, continuation of this service by current reference staff will put a major stress on local staff. This may be resolved through the addition of a "north campus" librarian or by using chat software that allows co-browsing (such as that used in the TBLC/CCLA project) to provide live instruction to remote locations.

During the 2002/2003 year, the interlibrary loan department also added additional services for distance learners. The ILLiad software system already provides a method for most interlibrary loan articles to be delivered electronically to the student; however, if an article or an interlibrary loan book is sent to the Poynter Library through the mail, the interlibrary loan department will now forward the materials to the student's home address.

Poynter Library Goal #3: *Foster campus-community relationships and increase participation in the intellectual and cultural life of St. Petersburg and Pinellas County.* **(USF Goal #7)**

- *Strengthen relationships with other Pinellas County libraries and cultural institutions.*

Poynter Library reference librarians are very active in regional library activities. The Poynter Library has been a beta-test site for the new state-wide reference chat service and will be active participants of that new service during the 2003/2004 fiscal year. Several librarians serve on Tampa Bay Library Consortium committees and are regular attendees at local workshops, Suncoast Information Specialist meetings and other events that allow for networking with colleagues.

- *Create programming and exhibits of interest to community patrons.*

Reference Librarian Mika Slaughter created several outstanding exhibits for the library. An exhibit of Hispanic heritage and history was on display in September 2002. Native American history and culture was highlighted in November 2002 and she created an exhibit for Black History month in February 2003.

Suggested Departmental Goals for 2003 / 2004

Continue outcomes assessment activities for reference and interlibrary loan.

Discuss reference desk relocation and structural changes with the physical plant department to make the reference desk more approachable for users and to make it more ergonomic for reference staff.

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Enhance marketing services and outreach to students.

Monitor interlibrary loan activity and staffing to ensure a continuation of quality service in that department.

If the opportunity presents itself, try using co-browsing chat software to provide library instruction to remote sites.

Reference and Interlibrary Loan statistics:
July 1, 2002 – June 30, 2003

	FY 2002/2003 (new)	FY 2001/2002 (previous)	Change
Reference:			
Instruction:	7272	7627	down 5%
Information:	10809	9121	up 19%
Telephone:	2014	1923	up 5%
ILL Borrowing:	**2002/03**	**2001/02**	**Change**
Items requested from outside USF	2242	2096	
Items requested from within USF:	2510	2541	
Requests cancelled or filled locally:	1103	658	
Total borrowing requests handled:	**5855**	**5295**	up 11%
Total books received:	2023	1865	
Total articles received:	2223	2333	
Total items received:	**4246**	**4198**	
Fill rate for USFSP patrons:	89%	90%	
Number of Marine Sci. requests :	1698 (29%)	1894 (36%)	
Number of USGS requests:	573 (10%)	612 (12%)	
ILL Lending:	**2002/03**	**2001/02**	**Change**
Requests received from outside USF:	3924	3207	
Requests received from within USF:	2574	2478	
Total requests received for USFSP items:	**6498**	**5685**	up 14%
Total book requests filled:	4215	3782	
Total article requests filled:	645	656	
Requests cancelled (unable to fill):	1620		
Total requests filled:	**4860**	**4438**	
Fill rate for USF St. Pete items:	75%	78%	