

Annual Report from the University Library

July 1, 2012-June 30, 2013

The 2012-2013 academic year marks the tenth year of the plan first formulated in 2003 for the revitalization of the library. The library's continued development is in no small measure due to this plan, and a significant challenge for the past several months and academic year 2013-2014 will be to develop a similar plan for the library's continuing vitality in the long run. The continuing vitality of the University Library is recognized in the University's stated goal of increasing its academic excellence and distinctiveness (*Strategic Plan 2011-2016*, Goal 1, objective 3, strategy 4, on page 8).

1. *The Library Building, Facilities, and Programming*

The building was changed or renovated minimally in the year; rather, certain changes stemming from the 2011 renovation continued to be implemented, such as the new materials security system that uses RFID tags, organization, selection, and display of the special collections in the "nanawall" at the rear of the Library Café.

The Library continued to experience very high rates of usage, especially during the latter portions of each semester. During Hurricane Sandy and the record-setting February snowstorm the Library staff endeavored to keep the building open when possible in the midst of a 5-day power outage, 4-day snow closure, and transportation restrictions on State highways.

The Library sponsored Conor Grennan, author of *Little Princes: One Man's Promise to Bring Home the Lost Children of Nepal* on October 17, and Jodi Kantor, author of *The Obamas*, on February 20. Cormac O'Malley spoke about the Irish revolution on March 11. Michael White, novelist and author of *Soul Catcher* read and spoke on October 16, and *Literary Spring 2013* brought poets Wally Swist and Steven Schroeder on April 16 (these three co-sponsored with the English Department). The speakers were all very successful and attendance was reasonably good, although scheduling in particular in February was made difficult by competition with other events re-scheduled from the snow storm.

The library staff started a book club, a reading circle with widely accessible books, such as Conor Grennan's book (above). The book club had small attendance, but those involved wish to keep going with it to build a circle of participation. This is part of outreach to the whole University community; another part is the leased collection of popular reading on the first floor.

The University began construction of a new building for the John F. Welch College of Business in April 2013, with completion intended in 2015. This building will also house a new center for pedagogy as well as a writing center. When the Jandrisevits Learning Center moves from the library building, renovations of the lower level and second floor can begin, to complete the project begun in 2009 with the exterior. It is critical to the continuing usefulness of the library that these renovations be planned and executed following a comprehensive plan so that both the utility and attractiveness of the spaces is maximized.

2. *Library Services*

The Library's web presence continued to develop with more thorough implementation of the web site and more consistent branding of all the allied services such as proprietary leased databases (an ongoing project). After experiencing some disruptions the Library transferred server support to Acquia.com, the premier host for sites using the Drupal content management system. The Director of Digital Library Technology and Services (Cindy Li) received very

thorough Drupal training in order to maintain and update the site at minimal expense. The library is planning to make the web site useful with mobile devices by embracing Responsive Web Design (RWD), possibly with a new vendor.

Continuing library technology awareness and evaluation led to re-evaluation of the Millennium software (from Innovative Interfaces, Inc.) that the library has used very successfully since 2000. The server supporting this integrated library system has been in need of replacement since it was last upgraded in 2006. After examining several options the library staff elected to remain with Innovative Interfaces but migrate the Millennium system to the new Sierra platform which uses more open-source software and Postgresql SQL, sophisticated object-relational database management software which will allow new queries and capabilities. In addition, this new platform will be hosted remotely (“in the cloud”) by Innovative Interfaces, relieving the University of the expense of replacing the aging Millennium server. The system was migrated from that local server to the cloud server on May 29, and Sierra will go live in later July. In addition, the system will begin to enable users to sign on via MySHU, and use a mobile version of the catalog later in 2013.

The library staff also evaluated discovery-layer services in Fall 2012 and chose to suspend further conversations until “in production” availability of Innovative Interface’s Encore-ES service (which uses Ebsco data) in late June. Although no decision has been reached, further conversations are anticipated now that this service is available for real-world examination.

Reference and reader services continued to experience a shift in emphasis and types of inquiries. More complex inquiries have been received, which while fewer in number require in each instance more time for response. In addition reference librarians necessarily began to respond to inquiries concerning skills and material which had previously been included in Information Literacy 101 instruction. Significant materials and services were made available to First Year Seminar instructors in support of the Information Literacy dimension of their courses, but faculty implementation and inclusion of such curricular materials and services was very uneven. The staff continued to develop responses to other high-impact educational practices such as comprehensive globalization, undergraduate research, and outreach to the Honors program. In tandem with other practices aimed at higher student retention, the library’s effective outreach to undergraduates has increased, as shown in comments and responses to the Library’s student user survey administered online and in two physical locations on campus on February 28.

The Patent and Trademark Resource Center continued outreach to area entrepreneurs and specialists, and the library invested in further training for two librarians at the annual PTRC training week in Alexandria, Va. This service is increasing the University’s visibility in the business and legal communities, and its particularly well suited to further development in cooperation with the Innovation Center in Stamford.

Digital Commons continued significant development, and by June 30 held over 821 records for digital objects. For example, in May DigitalCommons@SHU provided 5,766 full-text downloads; theses from the Master of Science in Exercise and Nutrition are consistently among the downloads. *The Shenachie*, a newsletter of the Connecticut Irish-American Historical Society, is also consistently popular; articles were downloaded 421 times in May. Since going live in 2008, over 84,100 full-text objects have been downloaded, are highly visible in Google Scholar, and ranged with numerous other Digital Commons sites in the new Digital Commons network, <http://network.bepress.com>

The library continues to prepare materials and policy recommendations regarding Copyright and Intellectual Property policy, but during the year these activities were often suspended to allow time for the University Librarian to lead the search for a new Lead Instructional Designer. (The previous incumbent left SHU on August 31.) This search has interviewed two rounds of

candidates and has not yet been successfully concluded; the job market for instructional designers is very brisk due to the growing popularity of online teaching and learning. Significant candidates have been identified in recent weeks and it is hoped that the search can be concluded in the next months. During the Spring the University received a gift from a Trustee for the new center for innovative pedagogy, will be named and opened in 2015, and this has increased the University's determination to staff this center in an appropriate and highly visible manner.

Librarians' service to the wider profession included presentations and publications by Robert Berry, Amy Jansen, Cindy Li, and Beverly Lysobey. These presentations were made at conferences in Hong Kong, New York City (Law Librarians) and San Diego (Special Libraries Association, Business Section). Three librarians (Gavin Ferriby, Amy Jansen, and Cindy Li) serve the profession on national or state committees in LITA (Library Information Technology Association), ACRL (Association of College & Research Libraries) and CCALD (Council of Connecticut Academic Library Directors).

3. Resources and Budget

The library's resources budget was essentially flat (\$25,000 was brought in with two new academic programs in the general budget: Doctor of Nursing Practice, and Master of Science in Applied Psychology, but these programs also brought additional commitments to offset the additional resources). Due to continuing 5%-7% increases in database subscription costs, additional funds had to be found to prevent the loss of monographic purchases. Approximately \$45,000 was gained from cuts in the print serials budget as serials continue to migrate from print to digital format, and this allowed the purchase of monographs (\$45,000). Despite impressions that might be gained from popular media, print monographs continue to be an important resource for students and faculty of the social sciences and humanities. As shown in a recent Pew Research Center survey has shown, young people continue to chose books in print either instead of or in addition to e-books.¹ Insofar as further cuts to the print serials budget may not be possible for the next few years, monograph purchases are at risk.

During the 10-year NEASC visit in April, the library visitor asked very pointed questions about library resources funding, and requested extensive figures (both raw and percentages) which were provided per her specification. The Library's percentage of the University's Educational & General expenditures as reported to Moodys has continued to decline from 2.23% (FY10 approved budget) to 1.93% (FY13 approved budget). Funding at the FY10 approved level would enable the library to purchase or lease \$316,946 more services and resources.² This pattern of support has a very serious long-term negative impact on the quantity and quality of scholarly resources available to students and faculty.

New databases and services begun during the year include *Euromonitor Passport GMID* and *Bizminer* (business information services), *EasyBib* (online citation management for undergraduates), and additional backfiles for *Web of Science*. Acquisition of these resources was made possible by de-subscribing other resources (such as *NetAdvantage*). Other new resources included *HaPI* (Health and Psychosocial Instruments), *EdiTLib* (educational technology and e-learning), and *Philosopher's Index*.

¹ Pew Internet & American Life Project, *Younger Americans' Library Habits and Expectations*, <http://libraries.pewinternet.org/2013/06/25/younger-americans-library-services/> --in particular, "three-quarters (75%) of younger Americans say they have read at least one book in print in the past year, compared with 64% of adults ages 30 and older."

² Reported E&G for FY13 approved budget is \$104,276,020.00: x 2.23% = would equal \$2,325,355 total library expenditures, minus \$2,008,409 approved FY13 library total expenditures = \$316,949.

The library staff also completed fuller implementation of the new features of SerialsSolution's *360Resource Manager* and *360Counter*, a tool for processing and displaying standards-compliant library digital database and journal usage. (The standards allow for a true like-with-like comparison –database usage statistics have been plagued with noncomparability since previously vendors defined and counted usage statistics in varying ways.) These usage figures –which can be figured down to the cost per full-text download—enable more effective management of expensive digital subscriptions and reveal patterns of usage or non-usage which are informative as contract renewals occur.

The University's increasing number of graduate-level degree programs will demand further specialized resources which are by their nature more expensive than general databases. In April the State of Connecticut announced changes in the iConn contracts (effective July 1). Ebsco's *Academic Search Premier* will now be paid by the State –a savings of \$38,000 unfortunately completely canceled by annual increases in the costs of other databases.

4. *Challenges and Opportunities*

The greatest challenge to the University Library is unquestionably how to sustain current levels of high-quality digital and print subscriptions or purchases in an era marked by both essentially flat budget expenditures and annual 5%-7% increases (some increases are as high as 10%). The Library's print monograph collection, small though it is, is more than simply a legacy archive and its maintenance and selective enhancement is very important for the university's stated goal of increasing its academic excellence and distinctiveness. The annual increases in database costs put critical pressure on the print monographs budget at a time when print content turns out to have significant usage and sharing capabilities not granted in more restrictive digital contracts.

In addition, continuing library development remains important for adequate services to undergraduate and graduate residential and non-residential students. The building is at effective seating capacity at peak usage times (like restaurants, it never works out that 100% of seats are occupied, but +90% are occupied regularly). Students chose to study in the library, not only for its ambiance, but also for its services and support. One important finding from the student user survey was the importance of quiet study space on the second floor, and in the Spring the staff expanded efforts to maintain users' awareness of quiet behavior upstairs. Expanded tutoring in the Jandrisevits Learning Center regularly requires library space on the lower level, which puts additional pressure on seating and building usage. It will be important that the building continue to be renovated in a manner which will gain useful study spaces so that the Library can better serve students, one of its primary constituencies.

The attached library statistics present a complex (and contradictory) picture of change. Building usage is a complex statistic but usage is clearly up since 2011 (Table A).³ Print book circulation (Table D) shows a continuing drop in circulation by students, but growing circulation by faculty/staff. Library instruction sessions (Table E) dropped precipitously because IL101 sessions had previously been included in that count. It is puzzling why there was a drop in inter-library loan article requests (from SHU users) but a modest rise in print book requests (Table H-1); while downloads of e-reserves articles continued to climb (Table F). Visits to the library web site continued to grow (Table J).

³ FY2011 Patron Count in the building is an estimate; May 2011-March 2012 there were no gates, so gate counts were extrapolated from other months (and may be skewed). The method of calculating the gate count also changed in March 2012 with the new gates. Beginning September 2012 there has been open access (with SHU card) to the Cambridge Center during hours the building is open, so gate counts there reflect not only a great number of users, but users at more hours.

More worrisome are two significant drops: Reference Desk Activity (Table C) and Database visits (Table J). Library staff are closely analyzing more detailed reference transaction statistics. Fewer “easy” or “short” queries have been received; proportionately more are more challenging and time-consuming to respond to. IL101 students had been assigned a question to investigate with a reference librarian, and those questions were asked much less often, contributing to the decline in the number of queries. That number of queries in any case has dropped significantly. In response, librarians will be engaging in new ventures: a reference librarian consulting in the Writing Center or the Pitt Center (student-athletes evening study area) or both; library reference online chat availability; further outreach and promotion of all reference services including SMS (texting) and online queries. Other new initiatives are being developed.

The drop in database visits (online database usage, Table J) in FY13 contrasts strongly with gains in FY 11 and FY12. These figures are (unfortunately) in the same general line as those reported in other libraries and across the profession. A few qualifications are in order: these statistics are aggregated from over 20 vendors and reflect varying definitions; more vendors during the period 2009-2013 converted their statistics to the COUNTER standard which resulted in certain changes.⁴ Previous IL101 instruction required the use of two or more databases. But the 200% drop cannot be explained fully by those qualifications. It is the (anecdotal) sense among librarians that faculty are less rigorously demanding resources and results from database searches rather than from Google or Yahoo searches (especially Yahoo Finance). More users are expecting a one-source unified “discovery service” search option in the past year, which is not yet offered. Selecting and configuring a discovery service is a high priority for FY14. The health professions are moving even further towards evidence-based instruction, which requires less searching of databases at the beginning of the clinical process, but more clearly focused research during it (thus the raw count may go down, but the importance of the relevant results increases). Librarians are working to improve user access to databases and improve database search instruction.

As the library turns to planning for the coming years, critical questions have changed. Ten years ago the question was how to expand library services to increase their academic credibility on campus, and to provide a building, services and collections in a manner consistent with the institutions the University regards as its peers. Now the central question has changed from “How do we provide a very good library?” to “How does the library educate students and faculty and support the curricular excellence and distinctiveness for which the University strives?”

Ten years ago three essential elements of present services were not yet contemplated: mobile computing, discovery services, and institutional repositories (Digital Commons). The shape of computing and information seeking in 2023 cannot yet be guessed, but the skills and abilities to filter information for relevance, reliability, and comprehensiveness, as well as to present information credibly and with integrity will remain important. The opportunity to increase the library’s focus on high-impact educational practices (in particular, first year instruction, undergraduate research, globalization, and honors programs—and consequence, student retention) will mesh with the University’s wider mission and services.

⁴ COUNTER (**C**ounting **O**nline **U**sage of **N**etworked **E**lectronic **R**esources) means a consistent, credible, and compatible method for recording and reporting database usage statistics. This Code of Practice (standard) allows for true like-with-like comparisons between differing vendors and helps to derive useful bibliometrics for reporting type of use and calculating cost per use.

Practical, present opportunities for the coming year include:

- Additional outreach to new or lesser-served constituencies such as Stamford students, SHUOnline students and faculty, student athletes, and students seeking help with writing;
- Increasing coordination with instructional design and concepts that support innovative pedagogical practice in a variety of instructional formats;
- Participation in the University's 50th anniversary events with speakers such as Jaron Lanier, author of *Who Owns the Future?*
- Provision of new formats and services such as increased mobile presence, a discovery service, and enhanced digital reference services.

--respectfully submitted, Peter Gavin Ferriby, Ph.D., University Librarian