Library Mission

The Mission of the University of Mississippi Libraries is to support the scholarship, teaching and research programs of the University by employing contemporary knowledge management techniques to develop collections, provide access to information sources regardless of location, and instruct individuals in contemporary bibliographic methodologies. The Libraries direct their services and programs primarily to students, faculty and staff of the academy and secondarily to citizens of the State and other educational institutions.

This has been a challenging year for the University of Mississippi Libraries, which are dealing with many of the same challenges facing other academic research libraries, including spiraling journal prices, crowded facilities, and a need for new tools to aid in accessing collections. We also saw retirements of experienced faculty, and a need for retooling and training for not only new staff, but also for most existing staff. Finally, with the demand for more full-text electronic resources and increasing emphasis on digitization of unique collections, there is also pressure to upgrade existing technology to keep pace with the needs of both users and staff.
Collections/Resources –

Most users continue to demand and show a preference for full-text electronic resources. Users are no longer content with simple abstracting and indexing databases. More publishers are responding to this demand by offering more content electronically, sometimes as an add on to print subscriptions but increasingly as a separately priced subscription. Libraries have been wary of questionable archiving capabilities for electronic resources and have been reluctant to cancel their print titles. However, as the inflation for serials continues to significantly outpace the budgets for collections, libraries are increasingly forced to choose between print and electronic versions of journals. Libraries are also forced, as we were this past year, to cancel titles outright. Our goal this past year was to cut 10% of our total serial’s budget, given that this is what our serial vendor, Harrassowitz, had predicted as an overall percent increase. As this was the first major serial cut in quite a while, faculty reaction was not as negative as it might have been. Some departments, in fact, used the serials review as an opportunity to add desired full-text resources. Some departments cut more than 10% to accomplish this and, thus, the Libraries were able to add such important electronic resources as the American Chemical Society Journal Archives, Science Online, Beilstein Crossfire, CQ Researcher and the Hispanic American Periodical Index. The Libraries also added an important new electronic database, called TDNet, which provides an A-Z journal list for all print and electronic journals held by the Library. In addition to providing access to all the
individual subscriptions, this service also continually tracks all full-text journals available only through what are called journal aggregator databases such as Lexis/Nexis and Ebsco. This allows easier access to these often hidden titles, which number in the hundreds.

We also took possession of a number of large political archives collections from the Law School, which are now housed in the basement of the Law School and in Farley Hall. Our intent is to begin organizing these collections, starting with the James Eastland Collection. We also hope to improve the environmental conditions as there has been some deterioration in the condition of the collections. We anticipate that the most heavily used items in these collections will eventually be housed in Bryant Hall with the less heavily used collections in Williams or the old Physical Plant. We have reassigned a staff member from Archives and Special Collections on a temporary basis to this project, but will need to advertise for an experienced political archivist in the coming year.

**Facilities/Equipment**

The Library was fortunate to receive funding from a variety of sources, such as the TACIT program, lapsed salary monies, and the Provost’s office which have allowed us to expand our useable shelving space in the Williams and Science Libraries, add new public and staff computers as well as new furniture and workstations for some public areas in Williams. We’ve also been able to add new signage in Williams. We have made preparations for a new coffee area.
Due to the need to remove stored library collections from Farley and Bishop Halls, we have unfortunately used up much of the space gained from the new compact shelving. Additional storage space has been identified in the Old Physical Plant building which will hopefully be vacated over the fall. Upon the completion of renovation of Bryant Hall in a couple of years, we will be able to move the Archives and Special Collections unit out of the Williams Library, thus freeing up much needed space for collections and public use. Another more immediate improvement for the facilities is the addition of wireless networking in most of the public study space in Williams. This wonderful addition, also provided by the Provost’s office, will give users and staff much more access and flexibility.

**Staffing**

This year saw the retirement of two of the most experienced department heads, JoAnn Stefani and Thomas Verich. In the case of JoAnn Stefani, I asked Gail Herrera to assume responsibility for the technical service departments which had reported to Ms. Stefani while retaining most of her previous duties for our integrated library system. Ms. Herrera used this new assignment as interim assistant dean as an opportunity to review workflow and job assignments. She was also able to add more workflow efficiencies through the application of technology. Jennifer Ford was appointed the interim head of Archives and Special Collections following Verich’s retirement. Although there have been fewer organization changes in this unit, there has been an increasing emphasis
on outreach through programs, exhibits and new websites, most notably the
major exhibit on mystery writers from Mississippi.

Other transitions this year included:

Elizabeth Stephan, Assistant Professor and Business Resource Librarian, hired 12/03
Dan Subramanian, Assistant Professor and Chemistry Librarian, hired 02/04
Christina Torbert, Assistant professor and Head of Serials, hired 07/04
Jennifer Ford was granted tenure and promoted to Associate Professor
Feby Joy, Network Administrator, hired 09/03
Alana Pruitt, Library Assistant, Government Information/Media/Microforms, hired 09/03
Piper Martin, Temporary Assistant Professor and Reference Librarian, resigned 06/03
Meredith Futral, Assistant Professor and Reference Librarian, resigned 06/03

There was also a major reorganization of several of the public service units. The
Reference Department moved their main service point near the main entrance to
better serve users. The Media/Microforms Department and service desk merged
with the Government Information/Maps unit. Laura Harper is responsible for this
new unit, and reports directly to the dean. We are still analyzing use of services
to insure that we are offering the services that users need, and that we are using
the appropriate level of staffing at different times. We have added a new service,
virtual reference chat which will allow users to chat online in real time with a
librarian. This new service, which was funded with a grant from the Ole Miss
Parents Association, offers more hours than our current reference desk is open.
It also allows users to chat from their homes, rather than needing to come to the
Libraries. We are working with a consortium of libraries in the Southeast to offer this service.

As new services and collection are added, we are seeing a continuing need for staff training in technical areas and in general management. Wherever possible, we are looking for cost effective options, such as local HR workshops, online courses and workshops offered on nearby campuses.

Publications


**Selected Presentations**


Herrera, Gail. "MetaFind @ The University of Mississippi," III Academic Library Directors' Symposium 2004. Berkeley, California


Exhibits


Aronson, Jennifer. 2004. “Northeast Mississippi Community College Exhibit: James Meredith and the Integration of the University of Mississippi Photographs from the Mississippi Highway Patrol Collection.” J. D. Williams Library.


Ford, Jennifer. 2003. “‘We Cannot Walk Alone.’ Lafayette County, Mississippi African American History.” Hall of Mississippi Writers, J. D. Williams Library.


Ford, Jennifer. 2003. “Faulkner and Ecology.” Held in conjunction with the 2003 Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference. Department of Archives and Special Collections, J. D. Williams Library.


Grants

University of Mississippi Faculty Travel Grant awarded $1,200 to conduct research at the Bibliothèque des Littératures Policières in Paris, France. Awarded February 2004. (Michelle Emanuel)