

**University Libraries
Research & Instructional Services Department
Annual Report for 2006/07**

General

The Research and Instructional Services Department invested a significant amount of time in the fall 2006 and spring 2007 semesters to conduct an intensive self study. This was a collaborative/team effort involving all faculty and staff in the Department. As reflected in the Departments' Faculty Activity Reports, activities pertaining to the self-study were dominant in everyone's agenda and will continue to influence the strategic direction of the Department. Because of the study's significance, both in terms of outcomes and action plans, I have dedicated a section of the RIS annual report to provide some highlights:

Research and Instructional Services Self-study: Outcomes and Action Plans

The information generated by the self-study will be used for strategic planning, realignment or revision of services/programs, etc. The following are outcomes and action plans from the study in specific areas under the RIS domain:

Reference

- Reference Service Philosophy has been developed
- Adoption of service standards and desk behaviors (including determination of core competencies required to maintain the service standards)
- Planned reconfiguration of reference to better support research within the disciplines (Science & Technology and Social-Sciences & Humanities will allow for increased subject focus and provide for cross-training opportunities within the two groups)
- Planned increase of subject expertise through hiring of librarians with subject qualifications or subject experience
- Better integration of all forms of reference (in-person, live ref, IM, e-mail, phone, one-on-one (off-desk) consultations etc)

Future plans:

- Increasing the participation of librarians in provision of reference services at service desks and online via chat (at least 60-70%)
- Collecting statistical data more consistently and use this to determine and proactively address trends

- Developing an effective and sustainable training program for all personnel working at service desks
- Incorporation of ongoing assessment measures of reference
- Evaluating reference trends and models and planning for appropriate service model for Virginia Tech

Instruction

- Have determined the extent to which current instruction meets ACRL IL Standards
- Freshman survey information applied (survey had been modified by Instruction Team)
- Reconfigured physical classroom to enhance student participation
- Created Underclass Web areas for 1105 & 1106.
- Changed library tour to establish connections between LC classification, the library web pages and the Library physical space
- Collaborative links being forged with English/Communication Departments

In-Progress:

- Aligning instruction with ACRL information literacy standards (starting with the first-level courses)
- Improve the instruction infrastructure in the libraries (classrooms, resources, etc)
- Tracking the groups of students who are currently being reached and developing alliances with collegiate faculty in order to reach more groups
- Development of online version of the Grad Skills Course
- Collaboration with Committee for Liberal Education
- Incorporation of assessment as an integral part of the instructional programs
- Getting on board with major instruction-related university initiatives – such as focus on outcomes assessment, QEP, etc

Future Plans:

- Track changes on how undergraduate and graduate education is being re-envisioned at Virginia Tech and gear library instruction accordingly
- Develop tools for outcomes assessment of instruction
- Adopt a more systematic approach to the LHTU series (also development of Endnote training into a program – Beginners/Intermediate/Advanced)
- Integration of the library into pathways of learning

- Evaluate upper-class library instruction
- Explore development of a “first-year experience” program

Outreach/Marketing

- Have defined Virginia Tech populations
- Have reviewed current outreach activities
- Future plans:**
 - Develop a more detailed definition of Virginia Tech populations
 - Determining library needs of various Virginia Tech populations
 - Packaging and promoting relevant library services accordingly

College Librarian Program

Strategies for Enhancement:

- Develop plans to attract/retain librarians and create a strong complement of subject expertise across all disciplines represented at Virginia tech
- Seek new positions in order to address workload issues as well as to increase scope of subject expertise and capacity for higher quality research support (try to change the current ARL statistics and rankings downward trend)
- In general, the primary criteria for hiring librarians will be subject expertise. This could be through a degree or advanced degree in the subject (as much as possible) or extensive experience to increase RIS Departments' capacity to support higher level research
- Other criteria will include teaching skills, technology skills and other attributes

Professional Positions – Projections:

- Fill two current vacancies with science, and humanities librarians
 1. Mathematical Sciences Librarian
 2. Performing Arts/Foreign Languages Librarian
- Fill next available non-subject-designated vacancy with engineering librarian
- After 2nd engineering librarian is hired, fill the next available non-subject-designated vacancy with an instruction librarian

Branch Libraries:

- Recommended technology options to facilitate Branch Library Personnel's virtual participation in RIS meetings

- Provided portfolios of the services provided by each of the Branch Libraries to their respective constituencies
- Recommendations on ways of drawing ongoing feedback from users of the Branch Libraries for evaluation purposes
 - Survey tool to be developed to monitor patron satisfaction with branch services, collections, and physical spaces. While all branches are certain to benefit from conducting surveys, a survey of Northern VA faculty, students and staff may be particularly helpful to determine what additional resources, staffing, and services may be needed

Assessment (Statistics/Data)

- Matrix listing data collected on a regular basis has been created (Inner Lib) and will continue to be maintained (a good one-stop when making decisions to assess where we are)
- Page includes ARL benchmarking
- Outreach Form has been changed – systems working with updates (to be implemented beginning Fall '07semester)
- Live/Ref transactions being brought in line with other reference data collected at Ref desk i.e. Directional Vs Reference
- Benchmarking spreadsheet data (ARL & SCHEV Peers) available on Inner Lib and will be updated periodically
- Changes to reflect consistent approach to counting stats
- Newman building use survey in progress

Website

- Webmaster position description developed (position subsequently filled)
- Surveyed library users on Navigation – results will be used to enhance navigation and usability
- Incorporation of a Web analyzing tool – Google analytics (to the home page-for trial purposes) and Webalizer to the server (free tool)
- Plans for redesigning the library website to conform to the new VT look

Personnel Development

- Identified preliminary training needs for staff & faculty
- Mini training sessions for undergraduates to be held monthly - Will focus on new databases, Addison features, Live Ref ... etc

- Second RIS monthly meeting will offer training opportunities (including external speakers)
- Develop specific training based on the Reference Guidelines developed by the Reference Team

(a Powerpoint presentation is available providing additional background information on the study – See Appendix I)

Other Departmental Highlights

Statistics

RIS noted a decline in both instruction and reference statistics in the spring semester resulting from the impact of the 4/16 VT tragedy. Statistics shown below are, therefore, not typical, especially given that April is usually one of the busiest months, as well as the weeks preceding final exams.

Reference Statistics

2006 –2007			2005 - 2006		
	Reference	Directional		Reference	Directional
Ref Desk	5,705	4,367	Ref Desk	6,589	4,343
Lobby Desk	3,417	8,476	Lobby Desk	5,440	11,270
Tower Desk	2,701	4,182	Tower Desk	2,988	5,523
LiveRef	2,957		LiveRef	3,472	
Virtual	27,121		Virtual	31,468	
Off-Desk	2,268	5,361	Off-Desk	2,391	1,113
AskUs	1,529		AskUs	1,763	

Outreach statistics (from Outreach forms):

	Number of	Participants	Total time (in hours)
Classes:	648	13,463	869.50
Presentations:	64	1,632	56.33
Tours:	88	1,331	70.95
Reference:	834	936	584.40
Other:	326	9,383	343.10

Newman Library technology updates in RIS

- Installation of Teamspot in one of the fourth floor Group Study Rooms to facilitate collaboration across multiple laptops

- Procurement of Student Response System (Clickers working on radio frequency) to facilitate interactivity and instantaneous assessment during library instruction sessions (location – 207 Instruction Room)
- Interwrite Pad with Blue Tooth Technology to enable library instructors free movement while teaching - Allows remote control of the computer and projected image (location 207 Instruction Room)

Other Updates:

Publication of a comprehensive Library guide for students (booklet) for 2007-2008

Art and Architecture Library

Planning for the temporary move of the Art and Architecture Library to facilitate renovation of Cowgill Hall was a key activity. The Library is now in its new temporary location in the Surge Building. Other work continued, with significant progress made on visual resources. This was boosted by the hiring of a new Visual Resources Curator.

See Appendix II for detailed annual report of the Art and Architecture Library

Northern Virginia Resource Center

The RIS Department invested in equipment updates to facilitate more robust communication and access to electronic collections and resources. **See Appendix III** for more details

Vet Med Library

The Veterinary Medical Library's contributions in the areas of instruction and services have strengthened the programmatic ties with the College. This is acknowledged by the College in renewing the Adjunct Faculty status of the Librarian for another three years.

See Appendix IV for more information on the Vet Med Library

Outreach/marketing Report

RIS continues to actively reach out to the various student populations with tailored programs. **See Appendix V** for detailed report of outreach and marketing initiatives.

Support for the University Strategic Plan

Learning

eLearning and Information Systems

GIS:

To further the Research & Instructional Services Department's commitment to support the CAD/GIS teaching and research initiatives here at Virginia Tech, we added a Dell 690 workstation equipped with a widescreen monitor and a 750GB external drive. The power of this workstation allows for greater scalability in handling larger and more complex drawings and statistical/spatial datasets. The external storage allows more flexibility in acquiring or delivering large datasets.

We are also collaborating with the Information Technology Division of Virginia Tech and several other partners from both academic and administrative departments, to develop an Enterprise Geographic System (GIS) for the University. Such a system will provide access to hosted/distributed spatial data to the University community and streamline the process of inter-departmental data sharing.

TeamSpot:

In collaboration with Teaching and Learning technology, Library has implemented TeamSpot in one of the Group Study Rooms. TeamSpot is the cross-platform digital infrastructure that helps teams actively work together. TeamSpot creates walk-up collaboration zones where groups can explore information in real-time and interactively co-create digital work products.

TeamSpot enables groups to:

- Work together on large public display screens while interacting from personal laptops
- Easily move files between computers by dragging and dropping
- Copy and paste URLs, images, or text snippets across computers
- Easily discover and share online materials and real-time data

- Automatically create a take-away archive of shared information
- Work on parallel tasks and then rapidly integrate the results

Student Response System:

Many universities are actively addressing the need for ongoing assessment of teaching/learning. RIS has procured a Student Response System (clickers) that allows immediate assessment and feedback during classes and other forums. Data from this will be used to improve library instruction content and delivery

Collaborating to Educate the Whole Student

Collaborated with the Admissions Office to include a library component in the Admissions Open Houses

Outreach to international students – Collaborating with Cranwell International Center to provide library orientation for new international students in the fall and spring semesters

Support for the Library Strategic Plan

Collections:

1.1.1 The Director for Collection Management and the Subject Librarians Worked with Virginia Tech's academic departments to acquire 2005-2006 faculty publications for the libraries' collections and for inclusion in the second annual Virginia Tech Faculty Authors Recognition Day event held February 22, 2007. A total of 142 VT faculty publications were added to the collections and are included in the Faculty Authors' bibliography for 2005-2006 publications.

1.5.1. Progress is being made towards developing a list of all source and target sites for which it is possible to initiate open URL linking and measure current VT applications in place against this list.

Services:

2.1.3 A full progress report on the IMLS LibX funded project (PI Bailey) has been submitted by the Director of Technical Services.

2.2.1 A number of new sessions were offered Research and Instructional Services librarians at the Northern Virginia Library Resource center on EndNote and Westlaw

2.2.2. The EndNote training program is expanding. There were a total of 64 EndNote classes reaching a total of 890 participants: **see Appendix VI** for a report on the use of web resources related to EndNote training. Furthermore, statistics on EndNote classes offered also reflect a growing interest. Plans for developing the program into a series are still in progress. Vicki Kok has introduced an intermediate level workshop on EndNote.

Information Literacy:

3.1.1 The Research and Instructional Services Department now has representation on the University Curriculum Committee on Liberal Education. Carolyn Meier's involvement with the Committee will provide the vital links needed in developing an information literacy skills program for undergraduates

3.1.2 The Research and Instructional Services Instruction Team conducted a thorough assessment of lower level library instruction classes to determine the extent to which they are aligned to the ACRL Information Literacy Standards for Higher education. Gaps were identified in the instruction program and the Instruction Team has already begun to implement some changes to address the shortfalls.

3.2.1 The recipients of information grants formally presented the results of their work under the grants on Wednesday afternoon, Nov 29, 3:30-5:00, in the Library Boardroom. The five, \$5,000 grants were jointly funded by the University Libraries and the College of Liberal Arts & Human Sciences to encourage teaching faculty to redesign courses to incorporate information literacy principles. The grants were awarded in summer 2005. The presentations reflected what the professors (and their librarian collaborators) learned after three semesters of implementing their grant projects in their classrooms. A press release was issued following the seminar, **see Appendix VII**.

3.2.3 The Library has established a good working relationship with the English Department. Library instruction sessions are now required in an increasing number of the freshman English sections. Furthermore, one of the Graduate programs in the English Department requires taking the Library Research Skills class (Grad 5124).

3.2.4 Underclass web areas have been created on Blackboard for English 1105 and 1106 courses

3.3.1 Usage of the Information Skills Module (ISM) was assessed based on web logs. **See Appendix VIII** for a full report on usage trends

3.3.2 The Grad 5124 course is currently being reviewed for expansion to NoVA and other extended campuses. Upon consideration of available resources (availability of librarians, teaching infrastructure, etc) to effectively teach the course, it was decided that the most feasible way to develop the course would be to offer it online. The Research and Instructional Services department is currently planning a pilot: online deployment of parts of the course for delivery to the Business students at NoVA. Research and Instructional Services is collaborating with IDDL (Betsy Tretola and Peter Macedo), who have offered to assign personnel to support the development of the online version of the course. Two Research and Instructional Services librarians were invited to participate in the summer FDI course on developing online courses (Scheduled for July 10 – 12.

Systems:

5.2.1 The Libraries Web Team, and the Research and Instructional Services Department's Web Working Group conducted a number of studies and usability tests of the Library website as a preliminary assessment of what activities users are conducting on the Library website and how easily they can find the information they are looking for. This information will be used in the website redesign process. The recent hiring of a University Libraries webmaster this summer has provided the library with the needed expertise and dedicated time

to begin work towards the conversion of the library website to conform to Virginia Tech's new 'corporate look' website

Staff:

7.1.1 A comprehensive review of services and programs in Research and Instructional Services was conducted fall 2006 and spring 2007. The Department not only identified current positions needed to provide excellent research support to users, but also projected the staffing needs for the next five-year period. As a result one position (Webmaster) was filled and two faculty positions are in the process: Performing Arts and Foreign Languages Librarian position and Mathematical Sciences Librarian position.