

University High School Library Annual Report 2011-12/FY2012

I. Unit Narrative

Major activities, accomplishments, and challenges

Instruction

Instruction and collaboration with teachers is a major component of library services at Uni High. The librarian meets with teachers to discuss learning goals of assignments and, when appropriate, to help design research-based units that embed information discovery, synthesis, and evaluation skill-building activities. Library staff met with a total of 132 classes outside of the computer literacy course sequence. Class project websites and wikis (<http://www.uni.illinois.edu/library/classprojects/index.php>) were developed or revised for a number of assignments, most notably: Subfreshman Science (Obsolete Science, Astronomy, Science Fair), Literary Criticism (used by several upper level English classes), Subfreshman History (“Milestones” project, Veterans oral history project), Sophomore English (Gender Gap in Education), Senior History Seminar research guide, and Algebra 2 (Roller Coaster project). New sites were created using LibGuides and a few old ones were converted to LibGuides. Most pages now include a new (free) resource called Sweet Search (<http://www.sweetsearch.com>), a Google-powered custom search engine that only searches 35,000 Web sites a staff of research experts select for credibility and is designed for use by secondary school students. In early summer 2012, the librarian was invited to attend a bloggers’ early-release webinar on significant changes to our citation management software, NoodleTools (http://www.uni.illinois.edu/libraryblog/june_2012/noodletools_update). In addition to allowing note-taking, outlining and thesis statement development, peer-sharing, teacher commenting, and integration with Google Docs, the new version includes a dynamic Formatting Guide, “intelligent” forms, the ability to annotate and archive sources, and a number of other features.

The librarian and the G.A. helped several teachers develop wikis for a variety of classroom uses. When relevant, the library links to those wikis. In-library class visits rose this year (from 92 to 132) after having initially declined when the laptop cart became available for use in classrooms. Now faculty are beginning to see the advantages of using the cart in the library when their students are engaged in research work. A few changes in teaching personnel also contributed to the increase.

The computer literacy class count for the year was 168 sessions. The Computer Literacy 1 and 2 curricula undergo frequent revision, particularly for the librarian-led units on web searching, website evaluation, social information and communication tools, and ethics. Both classes include a heavy emphasis on “managing your digital footprint.” As a school without filtering software, Uni is in the unique position of engaging in direct discussion with students about managing their privacy and personal online interactions. This year the VuFind catalog was taught exclusively for the online catalog unit because it now allows searches to be limited to the school’s collection. Several of the librarian’s assignments for Computer Literacy 1 can be found at <http://www.uni.illinois.edu/library/computerlit/index.php>.

The Computer Literacy 2 teaching team continuously refines the requirements for the 10-week independent group projects. Students groups design, research, and execute a project, culminating in an end-of-semester presentation to the class and invited guests. They use the computer software and skills covered in Computer Literacy 1 and 2 and must also learn a new piece of software or a technique that was not taught in class. Evaluation of student work is based heavily on how the groups have organized their work, cooperated with others in the group, and how members have taught and learned from one another. The project catalog now includes many Web 2.0-based projects. Each teacher supervised and graded a share of the student groups, using forum software to read and comment on required weekly progress reports. A course overview can be found at <http://www.uni.illinois.edu/library/computerlit/description2.php>. This year the librarian directly supervised projects involving hypothetical election campaigns for television character Manny Delgado and Oscar the Grouch (including the creation of press releases, a radio spot, a video commercial, and designs for a bumper sticker and t-shirts!), a classic board game recreation, an online teacher resource on infographics, and two musical compositions resulting in digital audio recordings. Many of the groups meet in the library to work on their projects.

Technology

The library became the major hub in the school for the circulation and basic management of a variety of mobile devices and other technology. Circulation of our 8 loanable laptops averaged 14 transactions per day. Library staff also took over managing reservations for the high-demand laptop cart and the two computer labs, once usage began to outgrow a paper-and-pencil reservation system. Senior Library Specialist Paul Kotheimer handles all reservations using Outlook calendars. The librarian served on the Technology Committee and taught or assisted with a series of technology workshops for faculty, who were all issued laptop computers at the end of the previous school year. Topics included e-books, Evernote and other iPad apps, incorporating website evaluation in the curriculum, and “multigenre” web tools for teaching and learning. In general, library staff act as go-to people for help with laptop questions, particularly when the shared services IT support staff is not available. The library continued to maintain, upgrade, and circulate its video cameras and digital audio recording devices. Circulation statistics are listed in the statistics section below.

Other activities of note:

- For this year’s Barnes and Noble Books by the Bushel event, sponsored by the Junior League, the library selected e-book titles to load on a Nook Tablet that was purchased as a gift. The library now has four Nook Tablets loaded with public domain titles and a range of popular current fiction titles. The tablets and the current books were purchased using gift and school monies. As tablets, they add to the library’s ability to offer Internet-capable mobile devices to students.
- The collection was weeded in Dewey Decimal ranges 700-810.

Significant changes to unit operations, personnel, service profile, or program

- For the first time in decades, Uni High implemented a new school day schedule. The open “Uni Period” that is built into the schedule three days a week has a significant impact on library use – the place is packed to the gills! We are exploring options for managing the crowds.
- After significant delays, the upgrade of Library Specialist Paul Kotheimer’s position to Senior Library Specialist was implemented at the start of the new fiscal year (July 1, 2011). As noted above, his responsibilities now include the management of reservations for the school’s two computer labs, the laptop cart, the iPod touch cart, and ever increasing numbers of mobile devices. He also assists users with a variety of media production tasks. With reduced G.A. hours, he has taken on responsibility for maintaining the school archives and has incorporated use of the scanner for some materials (e.g., current newspaper articles about Uni High).
- Because Graduate Assistant appointments are now set at 9 months, the library is closed for two months in the summer. During those two months, Paul takes care of technical processes and call slips at Uni in the mornings and works at the Grainger library in the afternoons.

Contributions to Library-wide programs and public engagement

- The library continued with its participation in the Preservation Office’s Integrated Pest Management program. Biology teacher Dave Stone contributes his expertise and labor in helping library staff identify specimens.
- The Uni High Library hosted a number of current and potential GSLIS students who came to observe various facets of school library operations and interview the librarian. The librarian gave guest lectures in several GSLIS courses.
- The Uni High Library participated in Library Snapshot Day.
- A lesson taught by the librarian was filmed for regular use in the GSLIS class on school librarianship.
- Jim Hahn (PI), Frances Harris (Co-PI), and Dave Bergandine (Co-PI) (unsuccessfully) submitted a proposal to the Institute for Museum and Library Services for the development of a mobile computing lab. The grant would have supported a summer camp that included community area high school students as well as Uni High students. They followed up with a proposal for the Library’s Innovation Grant program, which was also unsuccessful.
- The librarian routinely responds to e-mail questions from other school librarians and school technology personnel requesting permission to use or adapt elements of the website, particularly as we incorporate more Web 2.0 applications and services. We also receive queries and requests to use instructional material from the Computer Literacy section of the website.

Unit activities, current and projected, which advance the Library’s strategic initiatives

Goals 2.3 and 6.3:

Though the Uni High librarian is not a “subject” specialist, her heavy involvement in preparations for the Subfreshman 1-1 laptop program (see Goals below) will definitely “promote use of information, instructional, and scholarly support services.” The program itself, conducted in a school that provides open (i.e., unfiltered) access to the web, will be innovative in a way that both draws on best practices and leads the way.

Goals 3.1 and 4.3

The planned digitization of the Uni High yearbooks will make an otherwise hidden collection visible. Availability of this collection will make it easier for scholars to study the school that is the home of the “new math” movement and other educational innovations.

Graduate Assistant information

The Uni High Library employs a .33 FTE graduate assistant, who is paid from state funds and essentially acts as assistant librarian. A unique requirement of this particular library is that it cannot be staffed by undergraduate students because the supervision of minor children is involved. Students form strong personal bonds with the graduate assistant, who serves as a role model and mentor.

The major responsibilities and contributions made by G.A. Miriam Larson were as follows:

Multi Genre Tools Wiki & Presentation – Created a wiki with a variety of multi-genre technology tools that might be used in the classroom. Presented to Uni teachers during a technology workshop organized by the school technology committee.

Class Projects Pages – Created and updated class projects pages to support student research and classroom instruction. Used Wikispaces and LibGuides to create these reference guides.

Weeding – Weeded the Uni Non-Fiction collection from Dewey No 700-810.

Collection Development – Created a list of quality, recently published books that Uni should consider ordering to replace books that were weeded.

Displays and Bulletin Boards – Designed and created displays and bulletin boards that promoted the collection as well as online resources. Subjects ranged from travel books and Asian American Heritage Month to web tools and found poetry.

Website Updates – Updated web links and began to prepare the Uni Website for transition to new CMS. This included updating links that will no longer work after ORR is retired, creating preliminary plans for a front page for the new Uni Library Page, and transferring information to LibGuides to lessen the amount of information on the current website.

Readers Advisory Blog – Updated “Uni High Reads,” the blog that highlight new books and provides a simple readers advisory tool to Uni students.

Graphic Novel Database – Updated the LibraryThing database that allows students to search within Uni’s collection of graphic novels.

Fun with Children’s Books, An Agora Days Class – Planned and taught a four-day course about children’s literature during Uni’s special Agora Days week.

Revised Complaint Form – Researched and revised Uni’s “Request to Reconsider Materials” form based on Uni’s policy and ALA best practice.

Nook recommendations – Collected Nook recommendations from students.

Grading – Assisted with grading Computer Literacy assignments for two courses taught by the librarian.

Found Poetry Competition – Collaborated with teachers to conduct a found poetry competition in which students used a variety of found poem forms. More than 25 students participated.

Equity and Diversity – Served on school-wide equity committee and worked to promote diversity through book promotion and publicity. Created bulletin boards including one on Asian

American Heritage Month, World Religions, and a bulletin board created in collaboration with the student Gay Straight Alliance.

Issues of concern related to physical facilities

The library office was rearranged to accommodate the school's iPod Touch cart and a cabinet for circulating laptops to students. The school administration arranged for electrical upgrades to support this additional equipment. Four of the eight lounge chairs still need replacement, as they are much loved by students. The senior class gift was to include funding for chairs; we're still waiting for receipt of the funds ;-).

Space constraints (as well as pedagogical demands) require an ongoing weeding effort. Barring the construction of an entirely new facility, an upgrade of the rest of the electrical system and the addition of more computer workstations or mobile computing devices are most needed. Though the latter enhancements might result in loss of seating space, shrinkage of the print periodical collection may offset the impact.

Issues of concern related to information technology

The lack of good discovery tools for reference titles that come with online counterparts is problematic, particularly if the title is not licensed for use by the whole University community. In general, access to digital content is far less than ideal. Using LibGuides and other hand-created finding aids is only a partial solution.

Exemplary school library programs now routinely loan loaded e-readers to their students. Due to licensing requirements, accessibility concerns, and a host of technical issues related to the use of consumer devices, the University places many restrictions on their use. Yet e-readers have a lot to offer current and future generations of students. This unit recently initiated a very small-scale experiment with four e-readers. As is the case with many instances of technological innovation, legal and logistical factors impede the progress of implementation.

Goals

Progress on last year's goals:

- Uni High is moving inexorably toward a 1-1 computing environment, though no specific plan is yet in place. The library will examine how to realign services and collections to fit. An initial step will be to reduce the number of print periodical subscriptions, retaining only those titles that are used for recreational reading or are not available online. Creating more collaborative work spaces in the library will be another goal.

Nineteen print serial titles were canceled this year: National Review, Consumer Reports, Current History, Motor Trend, New Republic, Foreign Affairs, Nation, Utne Reader, Bloomberg Business Week, Health, National Science Teachers Association membership (4 titles), ReadyMade (ceased), Shonen Jump (published only online), Americas, La Raza, and Smithsonian. Decisions were made based on the level of use as browsing material in combination with the availability of titles in the Library's licensed databases. Fewer print

reference materials were purchased. Eventually, these reductions will lead to additional space in the front room of the library where we hope to add more collaboration space. In the meantime, we have been able to convince more teachers to have their classes meet in the library when their students are using the laptop cart for research purposes or for group projects.

- Conduct a complete redesign of the library website using the University Library content management system. A non-trivial task, we anticipate a sizable commitment of staff time.

Unfortunately, we were not able to make any progress on this goal because Robert Slater, the Library's beloved creator of all things web whose services are much in demand, did not have time to customize the template for our unit. In the meantime, all three staff members took the CMS training. We hope to see progress in this area in the year to come.

- Explore the use of LibGuides as a replacement tool for building class project pages.

Merinda Hensley was kind enough to conduct in-house training for the librarian and the graduate assistant. Every new class project page is now created as a LibGuide. Some frequently used pages were also converted to LibGuides. It's a great tool – if the CMS doesn't work out to be feasible for us this year, it might not be a bad idea to convert our entire website to the LibGuide platform!

Goals for FY2011-2012

- The library program will be heavily involved in the Subfreshman 1-1 laptop initiative. This program is a unique opportunity to integrate information literacy skills throughout the curriculum of a single grade level. Our goal is to work with the subfreshman teaching team to implement and then assess the success of this endeavor.
- Along with the Computer Literacy teaching team, reevaluate the Computer Literacy 1 curriculum in light of the impact of the 1-1 laptop initiative. It is anticipated that the course, currently taught to half of the grade level each semester, will need to be restructured to fit more tightly into the year-long flow of the core courses that depend on use of the laptops.
- Proceed with digitization of the school yearbooks, in concert with the Digital Content Management unit. Publicize the collection to students, staff, parents, alumni, and other stakeholders.
- Continue to pursue options for migrating the unit website to the Library's CMS platform.

II. Statistical Profile

1. Facilities

Total user seating:

37 at tables

4 at carrels

6 at public workstation or index tables
8 informal

2. Personnel

Frances Harris (Faculty)
Paul Kotheimer (Senior Library Specialist) (February 22, 2010 – present)
Miriam Larson (Graduate Assistant) (33%) (August 16, 2011-May 31, 2012)

3. User Services

Data generated by the Office of User Services except for the following:

Circulation of electronic equipment:

Laptops	2511
Voice recorders	120
Still cameras	60
Full-feature video camcorders	56
Portable pro audio recorder	44
Camcorder accessories	20
Flipcam mini-video camcorders	18
External stereo microphone	6
Nook tablets (April-May)	10

Number of hours open to the public per week

- Summer II 2011: 0
- Fall 2011: 42.5
- Spring 2012: 42.5
- Summer I 2012: 42.5, first 2 weeks, 20 hours second week, 0 hours thereafter
Note that the Uni calendar does not correspond exactly to the University calendar. Uni is still in full session (42.5 hours per week) during part of Summer I.

Number of students enrolled in independent studies or practicum experiences supervised by unit faculty or staff: None

Credit course rubric and name for any credit-bearing courses taught by unit faculty or staff, and the number of students enrolled:

Frances Harris (Computer Literacy 1) (66 sessions with 15-35 students per session) (Fall 2011 and Spring 2012)

Frances Harris (Computer Literacy 2) (102 sessions with 9-36 student per session) (Fall 2011 and Spring 2012)

Number of presentations to (or instructional sessions with) groups:

280 (including Computer Literacy 1 and 2)

Number of participants in group presentations:

6,105 (including Computer Literacy 1 and 2)