Research and Information Services (RIS)
ANNUAL REPORT, July 1, 2019–June 30, 2020
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With contributions from RIS librarians and staff

Research and Information Services (RIS) is, as its name indicates, the central gateway to the Library's research and information services, supporting all groups in their work as scholars. RIS is dedicated to increasing the research skills of faculty, staff, students, and community members, educating the campus regarding the many ways in which the Library supports research and teaching, and also assuring that scholars are connected to the relevant subject/area liaisons and disciplinary libraries. We provide interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary research support services through administration of the Library's central in-person reference point and a virtual reference service; management of core online and print reference collections; instruction (including the Savvy Researcher workshops co-sponsored with the Scholarly Commons); professional development for reference staff; online guides and tools to support independent information discovery; and logistical support and leadership for the shared staffing of reference services in the Main/UGL Hub.

I	Unit Narrative

1. <u>Major Activities and Accomplishments</u> (additional details in other sections below):

- Successfully transitioned Main/UGL Hub operations from the second floor of the Main Library to the new first floor Information Desk, including integration of the adjacent consultation space and accessible study space.
- Continued to be the largest single contributor to the coordination and staffing of the Main/UGL Hub and to instruction for the Savvy Researcher workshops (all members of RIS contribute to the Main/UGL Hub, Piper Martin and the 10 RIS GA's are primarily responsible for instruction);
- Created Main/UGL Hub schedules involving 50+ faculty, staff, and GA's that maximized mentoring and mentorship opportunities for all participants (Carissa Phillips and Wendy Gregory carry out this work three times per year, creating schedules for Fall, Spring, and Summer terms);
- Trained/oriented all new GA, staff, and faculty participants on Main/UGL Hub operations and procedures (Wendy Gregory is primarily responsible for this, with Piper Martin contributing to training for LibChat);
- Continued responsibility for Library-wide training/support on LibStaffer software for scheduling (Carissa Phillips and Wendy Gregory are the primary providers of this support);
- Updated main "how to" guides for using the library catalog and my account features to align with the new Primo catalog interface (Piper Martin and RIS GA's);
- Assisted Business Information Service staff in delivering their BUS 101 instruction sessions; also gave feedback on lesson plan and slides (Piper Martin and RIS GA's);

- In collaboration with Scholarly Commons, planned, promoted, sought participation in, and executed Savvy Insights, an event to share information about the kinds of workshops offered through the Savvy Researcher series that included an information fair and lightning talks (Piper Martin and RIS GA's).

Activities related to the COVID 19 situation
- With iSchool colleagues, coordinated the Admitted Students Visit Day Career Fair including a last-minute move from in-person to Zoom (Piper Martin);
- Moved all Main/UGL Hub functions to remote operations, including troubleshooting at-home set-up and connections for all staff contributing to the Hub (all RIS staff);
- Ongoing communication and documentation of changes in Library and campus services to ensure accurate information was provided to patrons (all RIS staff);
- Creation and upkeep of library guide on expanded access to online resources (Piper Martin);
- Creation of online tutorial in LibWizard for use in asynchronous ESL classes and conversion of all RIS Savvy Researcher lesson plans for synchronous, remote delivery (Piper Martin and RIS GA's);
- Updates to Main/UGL Hub scheduling to incorporate an added layer of mentoring shifts & recruitment of mentors (Carissa Phillips and Wendy Gregory);
- Review of transcripts for all patron interactions completed via LibChat and delivery of feedback to quickly correct any confusion over changes in services/policies and to monitor common patron questions for creation of FAQ's.

2. Challenges:
The first two bulleted challenges have become even steeper in our new remote environment. Additionally, keeping GA's engaged in projects without the regular in-person contact is an added challenge.
- Maintaining consistent mentorship environment for GA's;
- Ensuring an appropriate level of service to patrons across a large desk staff with varying levels of knowledge and aptitude;
- Balancing coverage of Main/UGL Hub service hours with instruction and other projects while working within allocated GA and (outside) unit-defined staff hours.

3. Significant Changes:
- Departures: RIS had no departures from its full-time faculty or staff. Six of our GA's graduated in May 2020.
- New hires: RIS welcomed four new GA's in August 2019.
- Continuing: Sarah Christensen (academic professional), Carissa Phillips (faculty), Piper Martin (faculty), Sara Holder (faculty), David Morris (faculty), and Wendy Gregory (Library Operations Associate).

4. Contributions to Library-wide programs:
- Reference, Research Consultations and Other Information Services
    - As a partner in the Main/UGL Hub, in FY20 RIS contributed 51% of the overall staffing of

the Information Desk and VR Desk in Fall 2019 and Spring 2020. During Winter, Interim, Summer I and Summer II, RIS continued to be the only unit with responsibility for staffing the Main/UGL Hub, with contributions from two UGL GA's.

- o Carissa Phillips and Wendy Gregory collaborated on the complex task of determining staffing levels for each semester, analyzing availabilities from the 50+ Hub contributors, and scheduling the shifts at both desks so that mentoring and mentorship opportunities were maximized for all participants.
- o RIS faculty and staff continued to have either primary or sole responsibility for securing time commitments from Hub contributors, training workers for Hub services, managing service, technology and facility issues, and assessing the functionality of Main/UGL Hub operations and services.
- o Main/UGL Hub staff are responsible for triaging all email that comes through the Ask-a-Librarian email service and for answering a majority of the questions.
- o In FY20, the Main/UGL Hub recorded 16,378 interactions at the Information and Virtual Reference Desks.
- o Sara Holder served as chair of the Reference Management Team, on the Task Force for Research Support, on the CAPT subcommittee for Library Emerging and Integrated Technologies Coordination (LEITC), and on the ILS Coordination Team.
- o Piper Martin served on the CAPT Electronic Resources subcommittee.

- Instructional Services
  - o In FY20, RIS librarians, staff, and GAs led a total of 98 group presentations. The majority of these sessions were part of the Savvy Researcher series (52) and the English as a Second Language program (29). The total number of attendees was 838.
  - o Sarah Christensen, Piper Martin, and several RIS GAs led 8 tours for a total of 83 attendees.
  - o Piper Martin and Sarah Christensen served on the Student Learning Assessment Team.

- Collection Management
  - o Sara Holder served as the Central Public Services Division representative on the Collection Development Committee.

- Staff Training and Development
  - o In FY20, RIS continued its role in supporting both the GA Orientation and the Hub Training sessions. Sara Holder worked with Zoe Revell and Jake MacGregor to organize and plan the Library-wide GA Training program. Piper Martin and Wendy Gregory taught and/or co-taught sessions for GA Training. Piper Martin also co-taught several workshops for the Hub Training program. In addition, RIS GAs supported the Hub Training program by assisting the instructors with preparation and attendance and ensuring that resources and handouts were available online after the session.
  - o Wendy Gregory continued to have sole responsibility for training all students, staff, and faculty who contribute to the Main/UGL Hub services to ensure that they understand the established service protocols for responding to questions in-person, through email,

through phone, or through text. Training also includes troubleshooting technical problems (printers and copiers) as well as responding to emergency situations should any arise.

- o Sara Holder and Carissa Phillips served on Peer Review Committees and each served as chair of a search committee. Carissa Phillips also served as an editor for tenure documents.
- o Sara Holder served as chair of the Residency Implementation Group.

- Public Engagement
  Within RIS, public engagement is largely directed by Sarah Christensen, with support from RIS GAs. Some examples of projects from the FY20 year are:
  - o Coordination and support for the Library Ambassador program;
  - o Coordination and design of READ posters for the U of I Library;
  - o Coordination of ongoing outreach/engagement programs: Small Press Fest, Human Library, Edible Book Fest, ExploreCU, HackCulture;
  - o Organization and leadership of Library contribution to Fall 2019 Quad day as well as various other tabling events and new student programs;
  - o Coordination of the Library's social media accounts via the Social Media Working Group, which Sara Christensen co-chaired with RIS GA's;
  - o Coordination and staffing of in-person tours of the Main Library building (Sara Christensen, Piper Martin, RIS GA's);
  - o Serving on the Strategic Communications & Marketing Committee and the Public Engagement Interest Group (Sarah Christensen).

- Space Planning
  - o Sara Holder served on the 220 Exploratory Use Team and the Library as Catalyst Project Programming in the Main Library Building Working Group.

5. Progress made on Unit Annual Goals for FY20:
- Evaluate RIS's service portfolio in conjunction with the design of a first-floor reference service point in the Main Library [Strategic Framework 2019-23 – SD2]. RIS met this goal with the successful completion and move to the first floor Information Desk.
- In anticipation of operational changes related to the Library as Catalyst project, investigate opportunities to expand the existing collaboration between RIS and UGL across all service areas to meet evolving demands for reference, projects, and instruction. A corollary to this goal would be to consider how this expansion can contribute to the common pre-professional experiences we provide for our units' GAs [Strategic Framework 2019-23 – SD2 & SD4]. Work toward this goal is ongoing. RIS and UGL GA supervisors have begun collaborating on training opportunities for the GA's and holding regular joint GA meetings. Once the successful candidate for the Undergraduate Teaching and Learning Librarian position in on board, planning will begin in earnest for further collaboration on instruction work.

6. Unit Annual Goals for FY21:
- Continued from FY20 - In anticipation of operational changes related to the Library as

Catalyst project, investigate opportunities to expand the existing collaboration between RIS and UGL across all service areas to meet evolving demands for reference, projects, and instruction. A corollary to this goal would be to consider how this expansion can contribute to the common pre-professional experiences we provide for our units' GAs [Strategic Framework 2019-23 – SD2.5 & SD4.5].

- Build on the work that was initiated by RIS GA's and JJ Pionke to assess the accessibility of the first floor Information Desk environment and services and the utility of the room 109 accessible study space [Strategic Framework 2019-23 – SD2.4].

7. Number of GA's, FTE, and funding source:
   - RIS was approved for 3.595 GA FTEs in FY20 and employed 10 GA's.
   - All of the RIS pre-professional graduate students are funded with State of Illinois funds.

8. Major responsibilities assigned to the GAs in the unit, and an overview of the contributions made:
   - Instructional Services (all activities done in collaboration with Piper Martin, RIS GA Supervisor):
     o Created new online tutorial in LibWizard since all ESL classes will be asynchronous for Fall 2020.
     o Revised and updated all lesson plans, for both in-person and online sections of all four ESL classes (512, 515, 522, 592).
     o In collaboration with Scholarly Commons, planned, promoted, sought participation in, and executed Savvy Insights, an event to share information about the kinds of workshops offered through the Savvy Researcher series that included an information fair and lightning talks.
     o Re-wrote one of the lesson plans to be delivered in the Office of Undergraduate Research's undergrad workshop series.
     o Converted all lesson plans to be delivered synchronously and remotely.
     o Converted all lesson plans and handouts to meet current accessible document standards.
     o Scripted, directed, planned, and edited a short video on what citation managers do for the Choosing a Citation Manager workshop LibGuide.
     o Assisted Business Information Service staff in delivering their BUS 101 instruction sessions; also gave feedback on lesson plan and slides.
   - Reference, research consultations and other information services:
     o Provided assistance to Library patrons in-person and via phone, email, and chat as part of the Main/UGL Hub and Ask-a-Librarian services.
     o Updated LibGuides for which RIS is responsible, with particular focus on the new catalog.
     o Created new LibGuide on creating inclusive and accessible social media posts.
     o Contributed to updating data discovery and access LibGuides (in collaboration with Carissa Phillips).
     o Reviewed and updated all FAQ's that RIS maintains.
     o Assisted in providing tours of the Main Library building.

- Public Engagement:
    - Assisted in coordination and creation of content for the Library's social media accounts.
    - Ran the Main Library's Twitter account.
    - Participated in #askalibrarian on Twitter.
    - Helped plan and run the Social Media Working Group meetings.
    - Assisted UGL in gaming event.
    - Planned and carried out weekly changing of the Audubon bird prints until March 2020; re-organized print folders in Fall 2019.
- Staff training and development:
    - Collected materials for and attendance of Reference Hub Training sessions; sent reminder emails to LibNews; uploaded instruction materials to Compass and added attendance data to Box folder (in collaboration with Sara Holder).
- Collection Management
    - Updated documentation for processing print reference materials (in collaboration with Wendy Gregory).

II   Statistical Profile

1.   Facilities

- User seating counts (through Dec. 2019):
    - At tables: 36
    - At long tables: 2 tables x 10 seats each = 20
    - At round tables: 4 tables x 4 seats each = 16
    - At public workstations (including scanning and print release stations): 19
    - Informal/other (soft seating): 8

- Number of hours open to the public per week:
    - Summer II 2019: 47.5 (all on weekdays)
    - Summer Intersession 2019: 42.5 (all on weekdays)
    - Fall 2019: 76.5 (63.5 on weekdays, 13 on weekends)
    - Winter Break 2020: 42.5 (all on weekdays)
    - Spring 2020: total 76.5 (63.5 on weekdays, 13 on weekends)*
    - Summer I 2019: total 40 (all on weekdays)*
    * After March 2020, "hours open to the public" became "hours during which remote services are available."

2.   Personnel

- Staff:

Name	Position	FTE
Wendy Gregory	Staff	1
Sarah Christensen	Academic Professional	1
Sara Holder	Faculty	1
Piper Martin	Faculty (joined RIS July 13, 2017)	1
David Morris	Faculty (half-time with Literature & Languages)	.5
Carissa Phillips	Faculty (half time with Scholarly Commons)	.5

- Graduate Assistants:

Name	FTE
Justin Aceves	.35
Victoria Lieggi	.35
Madison Martin	.35
Derek Otis	.33
Miranda Phair	.33
GraceAnne Roach	.5
Claressa Slaughter	.45
Angela Solis	.35
Erin Sulla	.33
Michael Tahmasian	.25

- FY20 Student Assistant wage budget and Student Assistant FTE:
  RIS was allocated $5,221 in FY20 for student assistant (SA) wages, which RIS applied to two student assistant positions for a total of 12-16 hours per week (.30-.40 FTE). One student assistant worked through December 2019 and the other through February 2020.

3. **User Services**

- Gate Count:
  In room 204, gate count is measured by usage of the room in four categories – public computers, printers/scanners, laptops/tablets, etc., and other with a headcount taken each hour. For Fall 2019 (RIS moved to the first-floor space as of Jan. 2020, which does not have a gate count) the total for all categories was: 20,272

- Reference interactions: 16,378

- Presentations:
  - Number of presentations to groups: 98
  - Number of participants in group presentations: 838