

Research and Information Services (RIS)

Annual Report for July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022

Prepared by Sara Holder, RIS Head
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 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 Main 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.

As one of the recommendations of the Main/UGL Integration Group and as the result of much collaboration and planning, in May 2022, the personnel and services of RIS merged with many of the personnel and services of the UGL to form a new unit called Teaching, Learning, and Academic Support (TLAS). Going forward, the annual report of services provided through RIS will be included in the TLAS report.

I Unit Narrative

Major activities and accomplishments:

- Successfully migrated all Main/UGL Hub functions from remote back to in-person mode, including providing orientation for staff and GA's who joined the Library while services were operating remotely and providing refreshers for those who started in the Fall semester before in-person services ceased (all RIS staff);
- Adapted enhanced mentoring mechanisms used during the remote period for in-person mode to continue support for the team providing Main/UGL Hub services and to others contributing to the Ask a Librarian chat service (all RIS staff);
- Worked with colleagues from UGL to design, name, and organize a merged unit that would continue to provide services previously offered by both units and oversee a new UGL-like study space in the Main Library;
- With the renewed possibility of in-person instruction, continued to experiment with delivery models for graduate ESL sessions and RIS-led Savvy Researcher workshops (Piper Martin

- and RIS GAs);
- Continued to review transcripts for patron interactions completed via LibChat and email responses sent via RefLib to provide constructive feedback to staff and GA's and to correct (when possible) any misinformation provided to patrons;
- Collaborated with iSchool colleagues and led Library efforts to plan and execute an online employment fair as well as an in-person (after a 2-year hiatus) and Library-based event for admitted iSchool students. (Piper Martin);
- Sara Holder was chosen as the recipient of the Library's 2022 Outstanding Faculty award.

Challenges:

- Transitioning services back to in-person after the long period of remote services;
- Balancing coverage of Main/UGL Hub service hours with instruction and other projects while working within allocated GA and (outside) unit-defined contributions of staff hours;
- Planning and executing a merger of two longstanding units.

Contributions to Library-wide programs:

Reference, Research Consultations and Other Information Services

- In FY22, RIS faculty, staff, and GAs continued to fill the majority of Main/UGL Hub shifts. Senior RIS staff and librarians also took on most of the mentoring duties that were continued after the transition from remote to in-person service to provide additional support for GAs and other Hub staff.
- Wendy Gregory continued to execute the complex task of determining staffing levels needed for Main/UGL Hub services in each semester, with particular attention to adjustments that would enable all participants to increase their skills and ensure consistent, quality service for patrons.
- 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 and technology issues, and assessing the functionality of Main/UGL Hub operations and services.
- RIS faculty and staff were responsible for triaging much of the email from the Ask-a-Librarian email service and for answering many of the questions. They also mentored and supported other Hub staff in acquainting or reacquainting themselves with guidelines for participating in this service.
- In FY22, the Main/UGL Hub recorded 14,065 interactions at the Information and Virtual Reference Desks in Desk Tracker. Returning to in-person services had a clear influence on Information Desk services as face-to-face interactions had the largest number (5907), with IM/chat interactions a close second (4918).
- Sanga Sung is responsible for the govinfo@library.illinois.edu email as well as referred questions related to government information.
- Carissa Phillips conducted 167 research consultations with 662 students, all via Zoom. The vast majority of these meetings were with teams from Illinois Business Consulting (50) and BUS 301 Business in Action (65), during which I suggested strategies for approaching the

- research on their experiential client-based projects.
- RIS GAs participated in #askalibrarian on Twitter.
- Sara Holder served as chair of the Reference Management Team, co-chair of the Main/Undergraduate Library Integration Working Group, and chair of the Study Space Planning Group.
- Piper Martin served on the CAPT Electronic Resources subcommittee.

Instructional Services

- In FY22, RIS librarians, staff, and GAs led a total of 121 group presentations. The total number of attendees was 1453.
- In addition to leading instruction sessions for the graduate ESL program and the Savvy Researcher series, Piper Martin and RIS GAs assisted UGL colleagues with RHET 105 and COM 101 instruction.

Collection Access and Management

- Sanga Sung worked with Acquisitions and Cataloging as well as the Main Stacks in reviewing uncatalogued Federal and UN microfiche and print items and helped to create/amend collection development policies and workflows.
- Carissa Phillips served as the CPS representative on the Collection Development Committee.

Organizational Development and Training

- In FY22, RIS continued its role in supporting both the GA Orientation and the Hub Training sessions. Sara Holder worked with Zoe Revell 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, Wendy Gregory, Sarah Christensen, Sanga Sung, and Karen Hogenboom also taught and/or 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.
- 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, troubleshooting technical problems as well as responding to emergency situations should any arise.
- Carissa Phillips served on a Peer Review committee and also served as the CPS Division chair.
- Piper Martin served on the search committee for the iSchool MS/LIS advisor.
- Sara Holder served as chair of the Wellness Committee.

Diversity, Equality, Inclusion and Accessibility

- Carissa Phillips Chaired the Visiting Diversity Residency Librarians search.
- Piper Martin served on research project advisory committee for a former iSchool student who is planning on surveying former BIPOC iSchool students on their experience of the curriculum (with Chris Prom and Victor Jones).
- Sarah Christensen served on the Diversity Committee.

- Sara Holder served on the campus Technology Accessibility Review Committee.

Outreach and Public Engagement

- Within RIS, public engagement is largely directed by Sarah Christensen, with support from RIS GAs. Some examples of projects from the FY22 year are:
 - Small Press Fest and Human Library events;
 - Coordination of the Main Library's social media accounts.
- Sarah Christensen served as co-chair for the Outreach and Engagement Committee and as a member of the Strategic Communications & Marketing Committee.
- Sanga Sung and several RIS GA's put together three online exhibits (International Asteroid Day, Constitution Day, and World Television Day) and two physical exhibits (Constitution Day, Federal Depository Library Anniversary).

Significant Changes:

- Departures: David Morris (Classics Librarian) left the University in August 2021; Karen Hogenboom retired in March 2022. Five of our GAs graduated in May 2022.
- New hires: RIS welcomed Evie Cordell (E-Learning Librarian) and five new GAs.
- Continuing: Sarah Christensen (academic professional), Carissa Phillips (faculty), Piper Martin (faculty), Sara Holder (faculty), Sanga Sung (visiting faculty), and Wendy Gregory (Library Operations Associate).

Progress made on Unit Annual Goals for FY21:

- [Continued and updated from FY21] With the coming realization of the first phase of the Library as Catalyst project and the decision to bring RIS and UGL into one unit, our combined unit personnel will work to devise an operating structure and name for the new unit and an assessment strategy through which we can how best to adapt once we are providing services through that structure [Strategic Framework 2019-23 – SD2.5 & SD4.5]. This was a major focus for RIS and a large part of the UGL team this year, which has resulted in the creation of the Teaching, Learning, and Academic Support unit (TLAS) that began operations as of May 16, 2022.
- [Continued from FY21] Build on the work that was initiated by RIS GAs 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]. Additional attempts were made to gather feedback from patrons about the accessible study space; however, the response was not robust. Statistics from LibCal show that the room is used frequently but it's not clear whether patrons are choosing the room due to its accessible layout and technology.

Unit Annual Goals for FY22:

- This will be the final annual report for RIS. Activities formally reported here will be included in the annual report for Teaching, Learning, and Academic Support.
- The TLAS unit will be determining new goals for FY23 as part of the merger process between

the Reference and Information Services and Undergraduate Library staff. Goals will be defined and articulated for the new unit report that TLAS submits at the conclusion of FY23.

Number of GAs, FTE, and funding source:

- RIS was approved for 3.59 FTE funding in FY22 and employed 10 GAs.
- All of the RIS pre-professional graduate students are funded with State of Illinois funds.

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):

- Based on feedback from ESL curriculum coordinators, revised the ESL online tutorial again for better flow and updated content and reviewed it throughout the year for accuracy.
- Compiled and wrote up the results from the assessments for online ESL classes: a critical reflection for 512/15 and a survey for 522. Overall feedback was extremely positive.
- Taught 17 sections of in person 512, 515, 522, 525, and 592 classes.
- Gave feedback on search strategy or source evaluation worksheets to 22 sections of 512, 515, 522, and 525.
- Coordinated ESL instruction and feedback sign up process, including maintaining the ESL wiki page.
- Created new ESL instructional materials and updated existing lesson plans and Cephalonian cards.
- Created a rubric for in-person instruction.
- Helped transition the RIS savvy workshops to a hybrid format and addressed issues with as they came up.
- Revised, updated, and tweaked all Savvy Researcher lesson plans and accompanying handouts and slide presentations.
- Wrote lesson plan for and taught a new workshop on Adobe InDesign.
- Taught 62 workshops in person and via Zoom.
- Helped UGL teach their RHET 105, COM 101, and ESL 112/15 instruction sessions.
- Updated and revised the RIS instruction program presentations for other GAs.
- Completely updated, revised, and overhauled RIS instruction coordinator document to reflect current practices (had not been done since pre-pandemic).
- Assisted eLearning Librarian with feedback on Canvas module; wrote and sought feedback on 3 video tutorial scripts; took Adobe Rush and Canvas trainings.
- Co-taught 2 Hub training sessions with GA supervisor (READ scale and chat transcript review).

Reference, research consultations and other information services:

- Assisted Library patrons in-person and via phone, email, and chat as part of the Main/UGL Hub and Ask-a-Librarian services.
- Helped the Data Discovery Librarian create a LibGuide on how to discover datasets based on a recommendation that came out of the ITHAKA S+R “Supporting Big Data Research” project.

The guide was still in progress at the end of FY22.

- Updated LibGuides for which RIS is responsible, with continued focus on the new catalog.
- Reviewed and update all FAQ's that RIS maintains.
- Ran a check on all of the internal and external FAQ; identified broken links and outdated information; began work on updating.

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.
- Changed Audubon bird plates in 2nd-floor display case each week, including designing a very successful social media Twitter tie-in during March Madness where people voted on which birds they preferred.
- Helped support the Social Media Working Group (mainly spring 2022); filled in for communications director at campus-wide social media directors meeting when needed.
- Continued to work on a virtual tour of the libraries with Visual Resources and Outreach Specialist and Media Commons staff.
- Assisted the Government Information Librarian with virtual and physical exhibits.
- Staffed orientation fairs for students in summer 2022.

Staff training and development:

- With staff and GAs from UGL and Grainger, created and delivered MS Teams training to facilitate use of the Reference Teams space that was created to enhance communication across Reference Hub sites.
- Provided support for Reference Hub Training sessions, moderated Zoom sessions to troubleshoot any presentation and connection issues; collected materials for and attendance of; sent reminder emails to LibNews; uploaded instruction materials to Compass and added attendance data to Box folder (in collaboration with Sara Holder).

Collection Management

- Assisted Reference Specialist with processing of the print reference collection.
- Began working with the Government Information Librarian on a print collection assessment.

II Statistical Profile

Facilities

- User seating counts: N/A
- Number of hours open to the public per week:
 - Summer II 2021: 47.5 (all on weekdays)
 - Summer Intersession 2021: 42.5 (all on weekdays)
 - Fall 2021: 76.5 (63.5 on weekdays, 13 on weekends)

- Winter Break 2022: 42.5 (all on weekdays)
- Spring 2022: total 76.5 (63.5 on weekdays, 13 on weekends)
- Summer I 2022: total 40 (all on weekdays)

Personnel

- Staff:

Name	Position	FTE
Wendy Gregory	Staff	1
Sarah Christensen	Academic Professional	1
Evie Cordell	Faculty (joined RIS October 2021)	1
Karen Hogenboom	Faculty (retired March 2022)	1
Sara Holder	Faculty	1
Piper Martin	Faculty	1
David Morris	Faculty (half time with Literature & Languages; left the University August 2021)	.5
Carissa Phillips	Faculty (half time with Scholarly Commons)	.5
Sanga Sung	Visiting Faculty	1

- Graduate Assistants:

Name	FTE
Sarah Appedu	.33
Caleb Britton	.33
Anri Brod	.33
Amanda Crego-Emley	.33
Kari Darby	.33
Heather Douglas	.33
Hannah Jones	.33
Holly Peterson	.33
Eva Jeffers	.33
Emily Zerrenner	.33

- FY22 Student Assistant wage budget and Student Assistant FTE:

RIS was allocated \$5,221 in FY22 for student assistant (SA) wages; one SA - Shirel Ponnudurai - was hired and worked throughout the Fall 21 and Spring 22 semesters.

User Services

- Gate Count: N/A
- Reference interactions: 14,065
- Presentations:
 - Number of presentations to groups: 121
 - Number of participants in group presentations: 1453