

7-15-2015

Founders Keepers Newsletter 2015-07-15

NIU Libraries

Follow this and additional works at: <https://huskiecommons.lib.niu.edu/ua-library>

Recommended Citation

NIU Libraries, "Founders Keepers Newsletter 2015-07-15" (2015). *University Libraries Archive*. 41.
<https://huskiecommons.lib.niu.edu/ua-library/41>

This Newsletter is brought to you for free and open access by the Teaching & Learning Archives at Huskie Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in University Libraries Archive by an authorized administrator of Huskie Commons. For more information, please contact jschumacher@niu.edu.

Founders Keepers

Upcoming Events

- Aug. 9—Summer Session ends
- Aug. 24—Fall classes begin
- Sept. 7—Labor Day (campus closed)



Assessment Committee Update, by Nestor Osorio & Jana Brubaker

The Value of Academic Libraries, A Comprehensive Research Review and Report, is a report prepared by Megan Oakleaf for the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) in September of 2011. Its Executive Summary states:

“Academic libraries have long enjoyed their status as the “heart of the university.” However, in recent decades, higher education environments have changed. Government officials see higher education as a national resource. Employers view higher education institutions as producers of a commodity — student learning. Top academic faculty expect higher education institutions to support and promote cutting-edge research. Parents and students expect higher education to enhance students’ collegiate experience, as well as propel their career placement and earning potential. Not only do stakeholders

count on higher education institutions to achieve these goals, they also require them to demonstrate evidence that they have achieved them. The same is true for academic libraries; they too can provide evidence of their value. Community college, college, and university librarians no longer can rely on their stakeholders’ belief in their importance. Rather, they must demonstrate their value.”

In essence, the role of the Assessment Committee is the creation of assessment instruments from which the University Libraries can demonstrate our value to the university community. With this goal in mind, the committee, which has representation from all the units of the Libraries, has been working since its inception on formulating strategies for the development of two reports: an Assessment Plan and a Status Report. This is the first

time the University Libraries have been engaged in a comprehensive assessment project, and we are now part of the institutional assessment cycle.

Because this is the first time for us, the Status Report will only include some basic information about the Libraries. We have to comply with a complete Assessment Plan that includes three parts: History and Context; Mission, Goal and Objectives; and Assessment Methods. The due date for the completion of these reports is September of 2015.

Following the expertise provided by the Office of Assessment Services, the committee has created a series of grids collecting the major functions of each department of the Libraries. In a grid, each function is correlated to Goals and Objectives of the University Libraries Strategic Plan. We have also identified...

(continued on p.2)

Assessment Committee, continued

measures, evaluations and assessments that have been done in the past in each unit; we have almost completed this part of the project. The next step is to identify a set of assessment tools for some of the functions of each department; not every function requires an assessment and these tools can be utilized by several departments.

In order to keep the activities of the committee

available to our members and to the Library staff, information about the work of the committee and about assessment of academic libraries is found under the label "Assessment" in our Blackboard community. You are invited to view this documentation!

We hope that this progress report will serve as a vehicle to increase awareness among our colleagues about the importance of continu-

ous assessment of our collections, facilities, infrastructure, and services, as well as a call for your active participation. The members of the Assessment Committee are: Jana Brubaker, Rosanne Cordell, Cindy Ditzler, Stacey Erdman, Larissa Garcia, TJ Lusher, Sarah McHone-Case, Ete Olson, Nestor Osorio, Joseph Thomas, and Lynne Thomas.

New Curator of Manuscripts

Sarah Cain started as the new curator of manuscripts on July 13, 2015 in the Regional History Center. Welcome, Sarah!

Ladka Khailova to Present at International Conference

Ladka Khailova's presentation, "Flipping Library Information Literacy Sessions to Maximize Student Learning: Towards Best Practices for Design and Implementation," has been accepted for the Georgia International Conference on Information Literacy. The Georgia Inter-

national Conference on Information Literacy provides the opportunity to share research and best methods related to teaching, learning, and assessing essential lifelong learning skills. Congratulations, Ladka!



A Farewell from Brian Prall

Well, Founders friends, after twelve years it is the end of the line for me, August 3rd specifically. I began here when I was but a boy fresh out of high school in August of 2002, working as a student employee in Circulation. My Scout Master, Cliff, called me to tell me they were hiring. I worked all four years of college in Circ, making many dear friends and meeting my wife Ellen. Had Mike Duffy been a day earlier on his phone call to hire her at the music library, her first preference as a music major, we might never have met.

After graduation in 2006, I spent nine months away from Founders, not because I was miraculously with child or anything, but because you were not hiring, and neither was anyone else. I spent six months in unemployment hades followed by a three month stint as an activities assistant at Pine Acres in the spring of 2007. Pine Acres had its charms, and I have a soft spot for the elderly, but it was hard to afford the ring I wanted to give that girl I met in Circulation on \$9.25 an hour. Lo, a position opened up in IDS that paid \$10.78 an hour! And the rest is history.

A lot has changed in the

eight years I've been in IDS, mostly in the reductive sense. We used to have an information desk, a periodicals department, a microfilms department, and nearly twice as much staff. I found a letter in my desk to potential donors to the student appreciation party from when I first served on the committee about six years ago. It said we employed over 200 students. That too has fallen drastically. There were some increases along the way, though, mostly the cost of parking. The only thing that really did not change much in the entire eight years was my pay. ;)

Now I am off to work on a Masters of Divinity at the Seminary of the Southwest in Austin, Texas. It is a three year program, after which I hope to be ordained priest in the Episcopal Church. It's been a long time coming and I am ecstatic to finally be given the go-ahead by my bishop and the Commission on Ministry from the Diocese of Chicago.

Texas no doubt will be the perfect environment for a guy who cannot stand heat, loves all things winter, and is a mortal enemy of arachnids (I would appreciate care packages of snow and Raid). SSW is one of about ten Episcopal

seminaries in the country and is one of three that I was accepted to, the others being Yale Divinity School and Virginia Theological School. Given that there is an annual flag football game between seminarians at SSW and the neighboring Presbyterian seminary, I like to tell people I turned down an academic scholarship to Yale for a football scholarship to Texas. In reality, SSW was just a better all-around fit for a seminarian with a family. I don't think I'll contribute much to the football team, unless somehow they figured out how to make skating and a puck part of the game.

In closing, I'm going to put on my preachin' cap, or biretta, for a minute. First, I would like to thank God and all of you for the experiences I've had here. Good or bad, they have all contributed to the spiritual stew that will hopefully make me an effective priest. And second, I will be sure to keep all of you, the library, NIU, and Illinois in my prayers, and I don't mean that in any cynical way given the troubling times in the realm of higher education. I sincerely pray that NIU is able to continue in its mission and that Founders remains a valuable asset in that mission. It may require making

some changes, thinking outside the box, and creatively getting out and becoming a more active member of the NIU and broader communities. In the church we call this evangelism. Y'all who still believe in the value of the library and what it can contribute not just to academia, but to information literacy in our culture, need to get out there and go tell it on the mountain! We may be parting ways, but our paths aren't all that different. You have your work cut out for you convincing the Internet generation that libraries are still vital. I'll have mine cut out for me trying to grow a church in a society that increasingly does not seem to find them relevant. It doesn't help that your average Episcopalian is 109 years old.

But alas, I believe in you and will continue to pray for your success. I've gotten to know a few of you and couldn't help but notice that, when it comes to librarianship and sharing what libraries have to offer, you got G.A.S. (Give A Shhh . . . hoot. We'll go with hoot for this newsletter). I pray you never lose that.

Thank you all again.

Love,
Brian Prall



Fond Memories...

(photos provided by Pat Arne & Andrea Brack)



A delicious idea!



Circulation keeping track of Cliff!

Libraries Program Prioritization Task Force

Dean Dawson has appointed the University Libraries Program Prioritization Task Force, including Joe Thomas, Ron Barshinger, Jana Brubaker, Rob Ridinger, and Cindy Ditzler. The Task Force will advise and assist the Libraries' Management Group in preparing the documentation for the upcoming Program Prioritization review. Dean Dawson consulted with the Associate Deans, Library Council, LOSAC, and SPS employees, who forwarded the names of UL employees who might be able to serve.

The Last Word

Nestor and Jana have given us a good introduction to the work of the Assessment Committee and assessment in academic libraries. It has been an eye-opener to see how much assessment already takes place in University Libraries! Libraries have measured what we do for many years, but those measurements weren't always useful in telling us how well we were doing. Still, trends in usage, numbers of questions, gate count, etc., give us a reasona-

bly good idea of what our users are coming to us for, and whether they are continuing to expect the same services from us. What is truly different in having to become involved in the university assessment process is that the university is finally expecting assessment from us. Libraries have often sat outside the inner circle of academic processes on their campuses, in part because what we do is so different from what is done in other academic units and is simply not

understood. The university assessment processes and program prioritization give us an opportunity to explain not only what we do, but also the centrality of University Libraries to the academic mission. For these processes, we are no longer talking to each other within the walls of the libraries; we are presenting ourselves to the rest of the campus. Putting our best efforts into these university processes will certainly be worth the effort!

