Communications Library

Subject areas: The Communications Library includes the following subject areas: Advertising, Broadcasting, Communication Theory, Journalism, Media Studies, Public Opinion, Public Relations. The collection does overlap with certain subject areas included in the LIS Library: Internet research, Publishing and Book Arts.

The College of Media currently includes the departments of Advertising, Journalism, Institute for Communications Research and WILL. The College is in the process of creating a new department of Media and Cinema Studies and adopting the Department of Agriculture Communication.

Current assessment: Since 2003, the Communications Library has been operating with steadily diminishing resources. Most critically, the Library has been loosing staff and student assistance due to attrition, costs, and budget cuts. In fall 2003 the library lost half of its full time staff to attrition. Only 1 full-time librarian, 1 full-time staff member (1 LTS) and 1875 student hours per year remain. The Communications Library has experienced an increase in demand for its services, facilities and materials for at least the past five years (see data below). Library services and facilities have steadily grown in popularity as the College of Media has grown in enrollment, courses, and faculty.

In order to better utilize its staff in accordance with the increased demand during the Fall and Spring semesters, the Communications Library has relied on creative approaches to how it staffs the Library. Half of the student wage budget is spent during the fall semester and half during the spring semester. During the summer months the library is staffed only by full time personnel. Time away from the library for vacations, sick-leave, and personal time is managed tightly, often with the assistance of emergency staffing provided by other libraries in the division. Simply put, no duplication exists in the use of person hours.

The growth of the College of Communications is daunting. For three years additional faculty and instructors have been added to handle increasing enrollments, which doubled in fall 2006 when sophomores were added to what was previously a two-year college. Enrollment is expected to increase substantially again in fall 2008 when freshmen are admitted. Of particular note, undergraduate users typically need more assistance using library resources and accessing information.

The following is a snapshot of the increased demand already seen for the Communications Library:

> **An increase in the number of patrons who visit the library:**
> Gate Count Statistics:
> Academic year 2005/06: 34,192 patrons visited the Communications Library.
> Academic year 2006/07: 43,184 patrons visited the Communications Library, an increase of 26%.
> Academic year 2007/08: 49,791 patrons visited the Communications Library, an increase of 15% from the previous year and 46% from 2005/06.
>
> **A significant number of patrons stay to use the library:**
> Head Count Statistics:

Academic year 2005/06: 10,971 people used the Communications Library.
Academic year 2006/07: 18,080 people used the Communications Library, an increase of 65%.
Academic year 2007/08: 23,379 people used the Communications Library, an increase of 29% from the previous year and 113% from 2005/06.

Library Instruction Sessions:
Academic year 2005/06: 4 instruction sessions
Academic year 2006/07: 7 instruction sessions, an increase of 75%
Academic year 2007/08: 30 instruction sessions, an increase of 329%

Increase demand on equipment:
Academic year 2006/07: On an hourly basis, we experienced patrons waiting in lines to use the 4 computer terminals.
Academic year 2007/08: Library IT provided us with 3 additional computer terminals. With 7 computer terminals, we still have patrons lining up to use our computers during peak times of the day.

Increased demand on staff:
Because of the lean staffing level, the Communications library operates below a bare minimum level of service. The lack of person hours prevents the development of new instruction programs for the College's growing undergraduate population that would mitigate the need for individual assistance. We cannot work with faculty on integrating more library resources and services in their instruction, promote library resources and services within the College or work on development efforts with the College or Library Advancement Office.

There is no way, with the current level of staffing, that the Communications Library can hope to meet the future needs of the faculty and students who use its resources, services and facilities.

Vision:
To position the communications library as a resource center for a growing population of resource hungry students; to facilitate the educational mission of the college of media, while maintaining current services for serious communication studies researchers.

▪Staffing levels will be increased and better skilled in order to support the needs of the College of Media and other communication studies researchers. The result will be improved services (library instruction, reference service), longer service hours, etc.

▪Communications Library will house a more comprehensive collection in communication studies (including Speech Comm and Cinema Studies and possibly, internet research and publishing if Sue and the faculty in GSLIS agree)

Work Started:
▪Since September 2, Lori Carroll has been working half-time in the Communications Library assisting with collection processing, user services, circulation duties.

▪Drafted a proposal to transfer the Speech Comm collection from ESSL to Communications.

Concerns:
Major concern is that we will not receive enough staff to support the growing needs of the College.

Staff and Services: Additional staff would allow us to accomplish the following:
•Provide the level of public service, collection processing and collection maintenance that we provided to the communication studies collection and its users before our reduction in staff in 2003.
•Allow us to meet the service needs of our growing undergraduate population.
•Extend our evening and weekend hours during the fall and spring semester and extend our daytime and evening hours during the summer semesters (we are currently open 1-5pm during the summer) by reassigning our fall and spring weekday student staffing.
•Update the Communications Library website on a regular basis.
•Allow the Communications Librarian to devote more time to reference and instruction.