

2002 Report

User Education Committee

September 2002

Sue Searing

Members of the User Education Committee during 2001-02:

Linda Ackerson, Cindy Ashwill, Bob Burger (ex officio), Paul Callister, Lori DuBois, Frances Jacobson Harris, Karen Hogenboom, Chris Quinn, Sarah Reisinger, Lynne Rudasill, Sue Searing (chair), Julia Spann (graduate assistant), and Jane Wiles.

The committee meets monthly, usually on the second Monday of the month. Minutes are posted on the committee web site and submitted to Library Office Notes. During the past year, the committee has made significant progress in several directions.

Three members of the committee (Bob Burger, Lori DuBois and Sue Searing) served on the search committee for the new position of Coordinator of Information Literacy Services and Instruction, and the entire committee gave advice on the position description. Lisa Janicke Hinchliffe began work in July. She reports to the Associate University Librarian for Services, Bob Burger.

The User Ed Committee put a new program in place this year by offering workshops for Teaching Assistants. These workshops -- one in the humanities, one in the social sciences, and two in the sciences and technology -- were scheduled and publicized with the help of the campus Office of Instructional Resources. The committee members who designed and delivered the workshops were: Sarah Reisinger, Chris Quinn, Linda Ackerson, Karen Hogenboom, Lynne Rudasill, and Paul Callister. Lura Joseph, who is not on the committee, also took part in this effort. TAs who completed the workshops earned credit toward a Graduate Teaching Certificate that OIR offers. The focus of the workshops was on core resources for undergraduates, and the objective was to enable TAs to design and facilitate undergraduate assignments that involve information-seeking. We expect to repeat these workshops annually.

Members of the User Ed Committee provided ideas and participated actively in the Library-GSLIS Teaching Alliance, which was co-directed by User Ed chair Sue Searing and Interim GSLIS Dean Linda Smith. With funding from the Provost's Initiative on Teaching Advancement (PITA), the Teaching Alliance organized six events during the academic year and was judged a success. Program topics included: peer evaluation of teaching; teaching in high-tech classrooms; distance education; understanding diverse learning styles; creating instructional web pages; lecturing effectively; and exploring the elements of exemplary teaching. A copy of the year-end report is available from

Sue Searing. With renewed funding from PITA for 2002/03, the Teaching Alliance will continue its programming with a special focus next year on undergraduate teaching and learning. Lisa will replace Sue as co-director.

In addition to these major new initiatives, the User Education Committee engaged in a number of more routine activities, such as:

- Investigating options for screen-capture software and selecting SnagIt.
- Advising the instruction librarians in the Undergraduate and Reference Libraries on content and scheduling of open workshops, tours, and other orientation activities.
- Examining prototypes for the Library Gateway and WebVoyage and providing feedback to the designers.
- Advising the Office of Development and Public Affairs on publicity strategies for the transition to Voyager.
- Speaking to the student campus tour guides about the library.
- Sharing experiences at campus events, like the Faculty Retreat on Active Learning, and national events, like the LOEX conference and ALA programs.
- Meeting with Tom Teper to discuss strategies for raising users' awareness of preservation issues.
- Organizing informal lunch discussions on topics such as preservation (with Tom Teper & Jennifer Hain) and on interface design and informal learning (with Mike Twidale, GSLIS).
- Maintaining U of I's participation in the CIC Instructional Librarians group.

There are a few things the committee did not accomplish that remain important -- most notably, a complete review and updating of the "Learn to Use the Library" web pages.

With the arrival of a Coordinator for Information Literacy Services & Instruction, the role of the User Education Committee will no doubt change. The committee looks forward to improved communication and coordination regarding library user education and increased opportunities for collaboration in the coming year.