

**Research and Information Services (RIS)**  
**ANNUAL REPORT, July 1, 2015–June 30, 2016**  
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*With contributions from RIS librarians and staff*

Research and Information Services (RIS) is 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, and students, and educating the campus regarding the many ways in which the Library supports research and teaching while also assuring that scholars are connected to their subject 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 references services in the Main/UGL Hub.

## I. UNIT NARRATIVE

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### 1. Major Activities and Accomplishments (additional details in other sections below)

Carrying on the tradition of recent years, RIS 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 as well as English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. In addition, this year brought several new activities and accomplishments:

- Transition of the Reading Room from a long-established general reference space managed by RIS;
- Decommissioning of the RefWorks citation management tool, a year-long process of communication and user support;
- Conversion of the Library's LEARN pages to LibGuides now branded under "University of Illinois Library" and maintained by RIS;
- Coordination of the Library's social media accounts through the creation of a "University of Illinois Library" Twitter account and a "Social Media Working Group," advised by Sarah Christensen and led by RIS graduate assistants, which brings together social media managers from multiple Library units to plan consistent messaging.

### 2. Challenges

- Continuing staff reductions and turnover of personnel in key operational roles, further discussed in related sections below.

### 3. Significant Changes (to unit operations, personnel, service profile, or service programs)

#### People:

RIS experienced further reductions in staffing in Summer 2015 and Fall 2015, and entered October with a smaller staff with relatively little cumulative experience in RIS.

- Departures: Mark Wardecker (visiting librarian) and Jenny Taylor (librarian) left UIUC in July 2015 and August 2015, respectively. This followed the Spring 2015 departure of Kathleen Kern (librarian).
- Transfers out: JoAnn Jacoby (librarian) was appointed AUL for Services and left RIS in October 2015. This followed the early 2015 transfer of two librarians, Merinda Hensley and Karen Hogenboom,

from RIS to the Scholarly Commons.

- New hires: In mid-June 2015, Jessica Moyer joined RIS as Visiting Research and Instruction Librarian, with responsibility for GA supervision and instructional programs. Nicole Helregel joined RIS as an academic hourly in early August 2015 to manage the RIS website and LibGuides as well as RIS's collection development functions.
- Transfers in: On July 1, 2015, Carissa Phillips moved from the Scholarly Commons to RIS, and later became Interim Head of RIS when JoAnn Jacoby transferred out.
- Continuing: Sarah Christensen (academic professional) and Wendy Gregory (Library Operation Associate). As of October 2015, Wendy was the most senior member of RIS, having been with the unit for three years.
- Pending: Sara Holder (librarian) will be joining RIS as its new head on September 16, 2016. David Morris (librarian) will be joining RIS half-time as the Classics and Research and Information Services Librarian on September 16, 2016.

#### Space:

In February 2016, RIS was notified that the Reading Room would be converted from a general reference space into the space for the newly merged Literatures and Languages Library and Classics Library, with an expected completion date of Fall 2016. From mid-March to mid-April, RIS GAs contributed approximately 100 hours of time to researching over 10,000 items held in Room 200 and determining the availability of online versions to inform disposition decisions for the reference items. Ultimately, many materials were accepted into new homes in Funk Library; Grainger Library; Social Science, Health, and Education Library (SSHHEL); Map & Geography; History, Philosophy and Newspaper Library (HPNL); and the Literatures and Languages Library (LLL). However, the great majority of the reference items were relocated to the Retro Reference (Stacks Reference) collection as an interim step to allow a longer-term, more methodical review of the materials planned for Fall 2016.

The interim RIS head and LOA devoted much time to working with stakeholders in the Literatures and Languages Library to ensure the smoothest possible transition of the Reading Room's maintenance, such as student assistant tasks (cleaning tables, dusting, light shelving), opening and closing procedures, and emergency procedures. Work is still ongoing to update RIS wiki entries to reflect new activities and policies prompted by the transfer of the Reading Room to LLL.

#### 4. Contributions to Library-wide Programs

##### *Reference, Research Consultations and Other Information Services*

As a partner in the Main/UGL Hub, in FY16 RIS contributed 46% of the overall staffing of the Info Desk and VR Desk in Fall 2015 and Spring 2016, comparable to the 45% contribution in FY15; RIS GAs and grad hourlies alone accounted for 39% of the Main/UGL staffing during those semesters. During Interim, Winter, Summer I and Summer II, RIS has primary responsibility for staffing the Info Desk (logging into VR, as the VR Desk does not operate during those periods), with contributions from UGL GAs. In FY16, the Main/UGL Hub recorded 22,439 interactions at the Info Desk and VR Desk combined, with 69.8% of those questions coming through the Info Desk and 30.2% coming through the VR Desk. In addition, RIS faculty and staff continued to have either primary or sole responsibility for determining staffing levels for each semester; securing time commitments from Hub contributors; scheduling the shifts at the Info Desk and VR Desk; training workers at the Info Desk; managing service, technology and facility issues; and assessment of the Main/UGL Hub operations and services.

##### *Instructional Services*

In FY16, RIS librarians, staff, and GAs led a total of 142 group presentations and RIS GAs assisted with

another 16 sessions led by non-RIS librarians; this total of 158 represents a dramatic increase of 56.4% over the 101 sessions conducted in FY15. As in FY15, the majority (123) of these sessions were resource demonstrations or lectures, while 19 sessions were tours and another 16 sessions contained at least some tour component. The total number of attendees was 1,631, a modest increase over the 1,550 attendees in FY15. Of the 158 sessions:

- 54 were under the ESL (English as a Second Language) course rubric, of which RIS GAs led 35 and assisted with the remaining 19.
- 66 were part of the Savvy Researcher workshop series, with 60 sessions led by RIS GAs and 6 led by Sarah Christensen. These 66 sessions represent 44.6% of the total Savvy Researcher portfolio of offerings in FY16.
- 35 tours were provided to groups as diverse as Fulbright scholars, Chinese librarian exchange program, Summer Pre-Doctoral Institute (SPI) scholars group, Summer Research Opportunities Program (SROP) scholars group, new TAs from the Graduate College, Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, and 4H clubs.

This increased demand for RIS's instructional services shows evidence of continuing into FY17. RIS's experiences in working with international students has resulted in additional instructional opportunities beyond the ESL courses in Summer 2016. Beginning with Fall 2016, Jessica Moyer will have full responsibility for coordinating ESL sessions through RIS, having transitioned responsibility from Cindy Ingold during FY16. Finally, our continuing co-sponsorship of Savvy Researcher workshops provides opportunities for RIS to create and offer workshops in ever larger numbers.

#### *Collection Management*

RIS contributed to two major collection management efforts in FY16: the decommissioning of RefWorks and the relocation of the reference collection from the Reading Room.

Based on analysis of RefWorks usage statistics, a Citation Management Working Group was convened in July 2015 to evaluate the Library's portfolio of software support and services related to citation management; to make recommendations for changes and improvements to that portfolio; to coordinate any such changes; and to offer support and direction for librarians and users as changes are implemented. In August 2015, the decision was made to cancel RefWorks effective July 1, 2016, and the working group, led by Carissa, managed the decommissioning of RefWorks on behalf of the Library over an eleven-month period, including contacting the 23,000 RefWorks account holders, creating online guides to instruct users in transferring content out of RefWorks, and setting up an email account through which RefWorks users could seek help. RIS GAs were instrumental in conducting additional Savvy Researcher workshops to assist users in identifying new citation management tools, and these workshops were promoted through eWeek as part of the cancellation announcements to campus.

As discussed earlier in Section I.3 Significant Changes, RIS librarians, staff, and GAs contributed a substantial amount of time to preparing for the transfer of the general reference collection out of the Reading Room in Spring 2016. RIS GAs carried the largest task of researching the items in Room 200 to aid in disposition decisions. RIS librarians coordinated the GAs' efforts, and librarians and staff contributed to the discussions about the disposition locations and process, as well as the final configuration of the majority of the holdings now in Stacks Reference.

#### *Staff Training and Development*

RIS had multiple roles in supporting the Hub training sessions throughout the Fall and Spring semesters. Carissa and Jessica each contributed to Hub training in Fall and Spring, leading or co-leading a total of eight workshops. In addition, RIS GAs supported the Hub training program by attending each Hub training session to ensure that the room was prepared and ready for the instructor, and to take attendance on behalf of the instructor, as well as make any resources and handouts available online

after the session. Two GAs gave an hour on alternating weeks in Fall 2015; in Spring 2016, three RIS GAs contributed time weekly to support the sessions.

For the Info Desk, Wendy has sole responsibility for training all new workers 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.

### *Diversity*

- RIS taught sessions and gave tours to the Summer Pre-Doctoral Institute, a program that helps prepare incoming doctoral students from underrepresented populations for graduate-level research and the Summer Research Opportunity Program geared toward undergraduates.
- Multiple positions were open in RIS in FY16, with hiring occurring at the librarian, academic hourly, GA, and SA level. We were successful in attracting a diverse group of applicants, and further successful in hiring a group that is diverse across a number of dimensions.

### *Public Engagement*

Within RIS, public engagement is largely directed by Sarah Christensen, with support from RIS GAs.

- RIS conducted 35 tours in FY16, all of which were coordinated by Sarah. For the public, there were two tours for the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) and two for 4H clubs.
- Beginning in Spring 2016, the management of the Edible Books Festival became Sarah's responsibility.
- Also in Spring 2016, a new Twitter account for the University Library was created from the former LEARN Twitter account. As of August 3, 2016, there had been 285 tweets and the account had earned 415 followers since its February 2016 start. The account is managed by two RIS GAs, who are responsible for content and for maintaining the best practices guide they created with advice from Sarah. Sarah was instrumental in convening the Social Media Working Group, which is co-chaired by the two RIS GAs who manage the Twitter account, to bring together social media managers from all over the Library to coordinate and collaborate on content for their social media accounts.
- Sarah was appointed as co-chair of the Public Engagement Working Group in April 2016. The group's charge includes conducting an environmental scan of public engagement activities throughout the Library and recommending a mechanism for recording public engagement activities.
- ExploreCU has continued to grow with assistance from RIS GAs. The software it is hosted on was updated to the newest version, which required a lot of data cleanup to ensure information is consistently and thoroughly presented. One new tour was added in collaboration with the City of Urbana, and another tour is being planned in collaboration with the City of Champaign and the Champaign County Historical Museum.
- Using Reddit, Sarah hosted two "ask me anything" sessions with volunteers from the University Library to promote librarianship and engage users.

### *Web content redesign and re-branding*

In FY16, Nicole was RIS's representative on the "LEARN/Help & Services migration task force" led by Dan Tracy. Through the efforts of this group, Nicole led the RIS GAs in migrating the content from fifty LEARN or other general information pages to twenty new LibGuides. In early August 2016, the rebranding of all former LEARN pages to University of Illinois Library pages was completed and RIS now manages the content of those pages. As of June 30, 2016, RIS managed a total of 67 LibGuides which received 41,764 views in FY16, with ten guides receiving over 1,000 views. An unknown number of these views likely result from the revision work that RIS GAs conducted, however.

Also, Nicole was instrumental in working with the RIS GAs to convert over 500 entries in the RIS-

managed Reference Rolodex into 105 entries in the new LibAnswers platform. The content in LibAnswers is the user-facing content from the Rolodex, while the staff-facing Rolodex content was moved into our RIS and Hub wikis to provide a clear distinction between audiences for the content.

#### 5. Progress Made on Unit Annual Goals for FY16

- *FY16 Goal: Our primary goal will be to realign existing staff responsibilities to cover core service commitments and hire and recruit excellent staff for all open positions.* In FY16, existing staff responsibilities were realigned, however across a smaller-than-expected staff base remaining in RIS after multiple departures. With the hiring of Sara Holder and David Morris in FY16 and their imminent arrivals in September 2016, RIS is well on its way to filling its open positions with excellent staff, with more to be recruited in FY17 and FY18.
- *FY16 Goal: Better integrate insights gleaned from our broad and deep level of interactions with our diverse users into IT systems and web development by becoming a trusted advocate for the needs of the scholarly community as a whole.”* RIS made substantial contributions to the conversion of University Library webpages and online resources, to better address the needs of the scholarly communities we serve.
- *FY16 Goal: Continue to focus on developing innovative approaches to reference and research support services that benefit the entire community of scholars who rely on the Library’s world-class collections and services.* With the continuing decline of reference interactions at the Main/UGL Hub, a more dramatic change in the staffing configuration was planned in Summer 2016, for implementation in the upcoming Fall 2016 semester. All formerly four-person shifts will become three-person shifts, and all workers will be collocated at the Info Desk, with no work occurring in the “VR corner.” It is expected that the reduction in staffing will provide better experiences for the workers as more incoming questions will be available for each person, and that collocation will encourage collaboration and mentoring.
- *FY16 Goal: Finish the 200 lighting project by working with Facilities to purchase table top lamps in keeping with the grandeur of the reading room.* With the transfer of the Reading Room to the Literatures and Languages Library beginning February 2016, this goal was no longer RIS’s.

#### 6. Unit Annual Goals for FY17

- Integrate new RIS members, realigning core unit operations as needed, while recruiting permanent members for all temporary or open positions.
- Evaluate RIS’s service portfolio in conjunction with the arrival of new RIS members and concurrent discussions about a first-floor reference service point in the Main Library.
- Analyze the Stacks Reference holdings to identify more appropriate holding locations for materials, as applicable, and pursue redesign of the area near Stacks Reference to accommodate usage of the reference collection.

#### 7. The Number of GAs (FTE and Head Count) Employed during FY16

RIS was approved for 3.73 GA FTEs in FY16; however, with a reduction in one GA’s appointment early in the Fall 2015 semester, RIS employed 3.69 GA FTEs, with a headcount of 11.

Alex Deeke	.45 FTE	August 2015-May 2016
Winn Wasson	.45 FTE (reduced to .35 in October)	August 2015-May 2016 + summer hourly
Jody Ford	.385 FTE	August 2015-May 2016 + summer hourly
Kimberly Foster	.385 FTE	August 2015-May 2016
Monique Lassere	.385 FTE	August 2015-May 2016 + summer hourly

Clara Volker	.385 FTE	August 2015-May 2016 + summer hourly
Emily Hardesty	.35 FTE	August 2015-May 2016 + summer hourly
Jacob Bowen	.25 FTE (paired with UGL)	August 2015-May 2016 + summer hourly
Jessica Colbert	.25 FTE (paired with Gov Info)	August 2015-May 2016 + summer hourly
Leah Dudak	.25 FTE (paired with MPAL)	August 2015-May 2016 + summer hourly
Jaena Manson	.25 FTE (paired with LIS)	August 2015-May 2016 + summer hourly

In addition, RIS employed graduate hourly workers through the academic year as supplemental staffing for Main/UGL Hub shifts. The maximum combined graduate hourly time in the Fall semester was 12.5 in a single week, while in Spring it was 8.5 hours; the average in both semesters was 6 hours per week of graduate hourly time all combined.

#### 8. The Funding Source(s) for the RIS GAs

All of the RIS pre-professional graduate students are funded with State of Illinois funds. Graduate hourly students are funded with a combination of State of Illinois funds and endowment funds.

#### 9. Major Responsibilities Assigned to the RIS GAs

The major responsibilities assigned to GAs in RIS are support for the Main/UGL Reference Hub throughout the year; instruction in Savvy Researcher workshops and graduate-level ESL classes; development and maintenance of training manuals and the Compass training site for Hub training sessions; projects in support of Library collections and outreach; and development and maintenance of LibGuides and Library webpages.

RIS GAs spend up to 40% of their time on projects and their contributions are essential for supporting several key service areas. A few of the major initiatives are outlined below:

<b>Category</b>	<b>Examples of Specific Projects</b>	<b>Hours (est.)</b>
ESL	Teaching ESL classes and other workshops as requested for related groups and topics. Updating workshop scripts, designing online materials for instruction including LibGuides, writing and updating lesson plans.	165
Savvy Research	Teaching Savvy Researcher workshops and other workshops as requested for related groups and topics. Updating workshop scripts, designing online materials for instruction including LibGuides; writing and updating lesson plans. Other contributions to Scholarly Commons activities and services including Illini Spaces.	400
Tours	Leading general tours of the Library and special tours on request	120
Staff training	Compass training modules; assisting with Hub training sessions	45
Collection development	Research on Room 200 materials for disposition, including e-reference comparison and analysis	100
Web work	Updating LEARN website and RIS website, conversion and consolidation of LEARN pages to LibGuides	140
Other projects	Administration of GA meetings, Rolodex FAQ updating and conversion to LibAnswers; support for library-wide activities	40

## II. STATISTICAL PROFILE

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### 1. Facilities

*User seating counts* July 1, 2015 through mid-June 2016, when Room 200 became the Literatures and Languages Library. Going forward, RIS's seating is reflected in the Room 204 numbers only.

- At tables = 336
  - At long tables: 38 tables (Room 200) and 2 tables (Room 204) x 8 seats each = 320
  - At round tables: 4 tables (Room 204) x 4 seats each = 16
- At public workstations (including scanning and print release stations): 34 (13 in Room 200; 21 in Room 204)
- Informal/other (soft seating): 22 (16 in Room 200; 6 in Room 204)

*Number of hours open to the public per week* (RIS is represented as "Main Library" in Library hours lists)

- Summer II 2015: total 55.5 (47.5 on weekdays, 8 on weekends)
- Summer Intersession: total 42.5 (all on weekdays)
- Fall 2015: total 76.5 (63.5 on weekdays, 13 on weekends)
- Winter Break: total 42.5 (all on weekdays)
- Spring 2016: total 76.5 (63.5 on weekdays, 13 on weekends)
- Summer I 2016: total 55.5 (47.5 on weekdays, 8 on weekends)
- Summer II 2016: total 55.5 (47.5 on weekdays, 8 on weekends)

### 2. Personnel, July 1, 2015-June 30, 2016

*Staff:*

Name (listed by tenure with RIS)	Position	FTE
Jennifer Emanuel Taylor	Faculty; (departed UIUC August 3, 2015)	(1)
Mark Wardecker	Visiting Faculty (departed UIUC July 24, 2015)	(.5)
JoAnn Jacoby	Faculty; Head, RIS (departed RIS October 4, 2015)	(1)
Wendy Gregory	Staff	1
Sarah Christensen	Academic Professional	1
Jessica Moyer	Visiting Faculty; joined RIS June 16, 2015	1
Carissa Phillips	Faculty; joined RIS July 1, 2015; Interim Head, RIS, October 5 -	1
Nicole Helregel	Academic Hourly (joined RIS August 5; departed July 15, 2016. Position filled by Jody Ford starting July 18, 2016.)	1
[vacant October 4, 2015 - ]	Head, RIS (Sara Holder to join September 16, 2016)	1
[vacant July 24, 2015 - ]	Classics and Research and Information Services Librarian (David Morris to join half-time September 16, 2016)	.5

*Graduate Assistants:*

Listed above in Section I.7.

*FY16 Student Assistant wage budget and Student Assistant FTE:*

RIS was allocated \$5,221 in FY16 for student assistant (SA) wages, which RIS expected to apply to two student assistant positions for a total of 12-16 hours per week (.30-.40 FTE). RIS began the Fall 2015 semester with two returning SAs. However, with the resignation of one SA at the beginning of September, and the significant curtailing of hours by the remaining SA, RIS struggled to secure adequate help for the upkeep of the Reading Room and Info Desk and VR Desk areas. Between mid-September

and the end of Fall 2015, RIS received only 48 hours of SA help, when under ideal circumstances we would have had at least 168. The remaining SA tendered her resignation at the end of the Fall semester.

Two new SAs were hired in January and began working in February, and together they were able to catch up on the deficits from the prior semester. One of these SAs departed at the end of Spring semester, but the other continued to work for RIS through the Summer, averaging seven hours per week. With the conversion of the Reading Room to the Literatures and Languages Library, RIS will no longer need to support the upkeep of Room 200, so going forward less SA time will be needed to maintain Room 204 and the Info Desk area as well as the Suite 300 offices and Room 314.

### 3. User Services

*Gate Count:* 699,954 (opening gate on June 30, 2016) less 449,856 (opening gate on July 1, 2015) = 250,098 / 2 (to account for entry and exit) = 125,049. This is a 16.8% decrease from FY15. Peak usage in the Reading Room was 208 people on December 10, 2015 at 3:30 PM, compared to 194 in FY15.

*Reference Interactions:* (See tables in the Appendix)

In FY16, 22,439 reference interactions were recorded for the Main/UGL Hub; this is an 11.0% decline versus FY15. Fall was the busiest semester as in the past, with Fall 2015 representing 43.6% of the questions received in the entire fiscal year. Fall 2015 was also where we saw the largest decline from the prior year in recorded interactions, 1,789, which is 64.3% of all the declines in FY16. Our largest user population remains undergraduate students, representing 36.7% of all interactions in FY16; graduate students, at 23.9%, are the second-largest group. Slightly more chat interactions were recorded in FY 16 than in-person interactions, representing 42.6% and 40.6% of all interactions received, respectively. Questions resolved in under 5 minutes continue to represent our largest interaction duration, at 57.2% of all questions received in FY16.

Despite the declining numbers, the questions that remain indicate a continuance of recent years' trend toward more substantive questions. There was a steep decline in questions lasting less than 5 minutes (1,756 or 12.0%) and in questions lasting between 5 and 15 minutes (957 or 11.6%), but modest increases over FY15 in the number of questions received in all longer interaction times. Of particular note, 80 questions lasting over one hour were recorded in FY16, up from only six questions in FY15. The types of questions received saw declines in areas where such declines are welcome: there were 1,202 (20.8%) fewer directional/hours questions; almost that number (1,181 or 18.5%) fewer questions about finding specific materials; and 455 (27.2%) fewer questions about technical issues in FY16 than in FY15. At the same time, research assistance questions went up by 213 (7.4%) from FY15 to FY16, a welcome finding since this signals more intensive questions requiring greater expertise.

*Presentations:*

- Number of presentations to groups: 158
- Number of participants in group presentations: 1,631