

Roger Williams University

DOCS@RWU

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Connections, Spring, 2009; Issue Thirteen

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IN MEMORIAM



Mary Tefft White, for whom the University Library's Mary Tefft White Cultural Center is named, died on April 9, 2009. Known as Happy White to all who knew her, she was a dedicated supporter of the arts and education in Rhode Island and an accomplished watercolor artist. Together, she and her late husband John Hazen White, Sr. established the John and Happy White Foundation. Mrs. White served on the Board of Trustees at St. Andrew's School in Barrington, and later was named chairman. She created the Happy White Gallery and donated it to the school. She was also a founder of the Barrington Preservation Society and served on the Board of

Trustees for the Rhode Island School of Design Museum and the Rhode Island Philharmonic. She established the Happy White Children's Concert Series.

White's involvement with Roger Williams University began over thirty years ago. In 1976, at the age of 60, she received a B.A. degree in Fine Arts from Roger Williams. Later she was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Humanitarian Service. In February 2004, Happy made a \$500,000 gift to her alma mater to create the Mary Tefft White Cultural Center in the University's Main Library, fund the Great Issue Lecture Series, and establish a home for the Socrates Café programs.

Green Initiatives in the Library

Sensors are being installed on the lights in the book stacks. These sensors will activate the lighting when motion is detected and turn the lights off when the stacks are not in use. The University will realize increased savings and more importantly help the environment.



ROGER WILLIAMS UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES SPRING 2009 ISSUE THIRTEEN CONNECTIONS

From the Dean's desk...

What do our students want?

Despite much uncertainty today in the world around us, one thing here at RWU is definite—the Library continues to draw more and more students each semester. Recently, the library staff began to ask one another, why? Are students attracted to our Learning Commons environment with the increased number of computers? Is the faculty requiring more research? Are the dorms so crowded that the students need a quiet space to study? Could the library be the new hot social spot on campus? And more importantly than why they are here, what are we doing for them and what could we do better?

The library staff became increasingly more curious after our first major assessment survey, LibQual+, was completed in 2004, and, this year, decided to begin some "qualitative" assessment studies to find out how we can improve services. We first created a marketing plan in an effort to

identify ways to extend our information services beyond the physical library. We then made ourselves available on Facebook to respond to requests and gather feedback about the library. Though response has been slow (and we're not at all sure they want to find us there), we have had some good questions and feedback. Next, we placed flip charts with markers around the building for students to comment when they had a free moment. We asked questions such as:

- How can the Library/Learning Commons serve you better?
- What's missing from this space?
- What are your ideas for a "Dream" library?
- What can we do better?

Some responses were anticipated, such as a café, extended hours, and group study space; others humorous—a Zen room, the Jedi Archive, and more attractive employees! But many

responses were thoughtful and practical, and will be considered as potential improvements, dependent upon space and funding. These included more printing stations (especially for those with laptops), more Macs, books to support each course, more quiet space, and hours open 24/7, at least during finals.

Additionally, the Library will be doing focus groups during the fall semester, with both students and faculty. Anyone interested in participating should contact any of the librarians or the interim Dean. We will again offer the LibQual+ survey in the fall, and the data will allow us to compare our library with the libraries of our peer institutions. We ask for your help in completing the survey so that we can consider the ideas of the entire campus community. Our students' dream library has much to do with coffee, comfort and technology. And yours?

Betsy Peck Learned, *Interim Dean*

CELEBRATE RWU AUTHORS!

By Christine S. Fagan, *Collection Development/Acquisitions Librarian*

ROGER WILLIAMS UNIVERSITY AUTHORS COLLECTION EXHIBITION



March 25, 2009 was a day of celebration at the RWU Library! On this day the Library recognized RWU authors by hosting a luncheon in their honor. The Library mounted an exhibition of books and media authored, edited or produced by members of the RWU community. The books and media included in the display are from the newly formed RWU Authors Collection which is housed in the Library Archives. A poster display was developed to represent the bibliography of RWU authors' works in all formats, including journal articles, book chapters and conference presentations many of which are represented in DOCS@RWU on the Library website.

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Celebration cont.

At the luncheon Peter Deekle, Interim Assistant Provost, and Betsy Learned, Interim Dean of Libraries, acknowledged the extensive scholarship produced by faculty and administrators at RWU and the importance of formally recognizing their achievements. The leadership role assumed by the Library in promoting recognition of RWU scholarship through the RWU Authors Collection and DOCS@RWU was also noted. The members of the library task force responsible for this initiative were recognized: Christine Fagan, Chair, Mary Wu, John Schlinke, Veronica Maher and Heidi Benedict. Gratitude was expressed to the Friends of the Library for their financial support in building the RWU Authors Collection. The Roger

LEARNING COMMONS COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS – FOCUS ON FACULTY WRITING TUTOR

In addition to offering traditional library services and resources, the Learning Commons seeks to develop collaborative partnerships that provide a continuum of research, technology, scholarship, and curriculum support to faculty and students. Since its inception in the Fall of 2007, the Learning Commons has been building new partnerships with academic computing, academic development, and instructional design.

Although the Center for Academic Development has long been located on the Library's second floor, we have been working more collaboratively to make sure students take full advantage of the services available to them. Barbara VonVillas, adjunct faculty and Writing Center tutor, feels that her desk located on the first and most active floor of the Learning Commons offers an excellent location for connecting with students about their writing assignments. Hours are posted prominently so that students can either schedule an appointment or just drop by.

While Barbara still provides traditional editing advice in preparation of final drafts, she has found that students are increasingly asking for help in processing ideas. Students sometimes feel overwhelmed because they don't know where to begin. The most effective approach may be to ask them interview-type questions, enabling them to express their knowledge and opinions about a topic. This technique can help them in the formation of their thesis statements.

Williams University Faculty Association was acknowledged for their generous contribution to fully fund the cost of the luncheon.

The RWU Authors Collection is developed under the direction of Collection Development/Acquisitions Librarian, Christine Fagan (cfagan@rwu.edu or x3029). DOCS@RWU is the newly created digital repository spearheaded by Catalog/Database Management Librarian, Mary Wu (mwu@rwu.edu or x3053). The Library continues to seek increased participation within the RWU community for submissions to these collections. We look forward to future celebrations of RWU Authors in the coming years.

Organization is another area of need. Students may have identified a thesis statement but find themselves unable to sort all the relevant information into a workable guideline. Again, asking focused questions helps students to identify the most important points of their paper and organize their thoughts.

Students in writing courses are the most frequent visitors, particularly international students who may be challenged by the nuances of the English language. Recently, however, there has been an increased interest from students in other disciplines, which offers a learning experience for both

...students are beginning to regard the student and the tutor. Clarity is a particular goal for upper class students enrolled in advanced courses.
writing assistance as a natural service component of the Learning Commons.

The tutoring area is conveniently located in a corner of the Learning Commons with easy access for students yet some semblance of privacy. The set-up allows for across the table dialogue or side-by-side editing of papers. A sign-up sheet is available for students wanting to guarantee time with the tutor, but walk-ups are encouraged as well. Because of the fairly consistent presence of writing help in this location, students are beginning to regard writing assistance as a natural service component of the Learning Commons. Frequent interaction between Barbara and the Library staff facilitates the message that writing services are an important element of the overall support for students, something that has been reflected in the increase in patronage.

MORE IMAGES, MUCH EASIER

By: Chris Strasbaugh, *Visual Resources Curator*



Daniel Libeskind
Denver Art Museum; Frederic C. Hamilton Building
2003-2006; Denver, Colorado
Data and image from: Archivision, Inc.

“...for any projects, great or small,
the Visual Resources Center can help you
find what you truly looking for.”

Jean Bullant II
Château de Chenonceau
1515-1589; Chenonceaux, France
Data and image from: Archivision, Inc.

There continues to be many changes in the Visual Resources Center this year. Over the last year we added over 6000 images to our digital image collection bringing the total to over 31,000 images. In addition to this, we also added another 6,000 image to our Archivision collection that resides on ARTstor. This brings the number of images that can be searched to around one million. So for any projects, great or small, the Visual Resources Center can help you find what you truly looking for.

In addition to providing a large quantity of quality images, the VRC is also working to make using these resources even easier. We are in the midst of updating our website that contains useful links and information to help make any project a little easier. As always, if you ever have any questions, just stop in to the VRC and we would be happy to help.



NEH FUNDS RHODE ISLAND UNION DATABASE OF EAD FINDING AIDS

By Heidi Benedict, *Archives Specialist*

The Brown University Library in partnership with the John Carter Brown Library, Providence College, Rhode Island Historical Society, Rhode Island School of Design, Rhode Island State Archives, Roger Williams University, Salve Regina University, University of Rhode Island, and Westerly Public Library, has received a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to create a statewide union database of finding aids, entitled the Rhode Island Archival and Manuscript Collections Online (RIAMCO). Through the application of Encoded Archival Description (EAD) finding aids, RIAMCO will collocate more than 300 dispersed but overlapping collections about the history of Rhode Island. The material documented in RIAMCO represents the history of Rhode Island from the colonial

period to the present day and provides valuable insight into a range of topics including business, the Civil War, slavery, literature, church history, politics, diplomatic history, art and architecture, military history, labor, health and medicine, state and local government, higher education, and Native Americans. By pulling together disparate collections housed at various institutions, this two-year project will improve access to archival and manuscript collections throughout Rhode Island. Researchers will be able to find collections through one comprehensive site regardless of their physical location. The RIAMCO project has been designated by NEH as a “We the People Project” for “promoting knowledge and understanding of American history and culture.”