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From the Dean’s desk...

At the conclusion of the 21st Century’s first decade academic libraries are very dynamic institutions, representing the rapidly changing conditions of knowledge content creation, application, acquisition, and access. Our libraries are prime representatives of this dynamism, typified by the Learning Commons, which has unified the University’s fullest measure of academic support for both faculty and students. Assessing the information and technology support needs of our many users, and their rate of satisfaction, informs our strategic planning for the future, as well as daily service delivery.

In Spring 2010 we conducted our second LibQUAL+ survey of user satisfaction (the first, in 2004). With approximately 1,000 responses from faculty and staff, graduate, and undergraduate students we have considerable evidence of recognized improvements in the three survey categories: service delivery, information resources, and facilities. Our respondents also commented on their expectations for continuing improvements in each category. Now that we have analyzed the 2010 survey data, library work groups will be meeting in Spring 2011 to consider responses to major areas of need. Among these are enhanced research and instruction guidance, improved usability of the Library’s website (to access both online services and resources), and accommodation of the increased need in our heavily used facilities for both library quiet study and group use.

We are listening to our users and preparing to respond to their feedback. Readers of this newsletter will see more about library planning in the months ahead.

Note: LibQUAL+® provides a survey instrument that libraries use to solicit, track, understand and act upon users’ opinions of service quality.

Peter Deekle, Dean of University Library Services

BIRSS AND FOUNDERS DAY EXHIBITS ON DISPLAY

The University Library has hosted ten years of exhibitions associated with the annual Professor John Howard Birss, Jr. Memorial lectures. The first decade of these exhibits is featured in a retrospective display at the Library’s exit gates. Notes and images from the public programs and the selected works of literature are included in the colorful display.

The University’s observance of Founders Day (February 14, 1956) is represented by an exhibit in the Library’s Mary Tefft White Cultural Center. The table-top display case contains a miniature copy of the Arthur Heintzelman (1936) portrait of Roger Williams. The case also includes a facsimile of the institution’s February 14, 1956 Articles of Association and a photograph of the trustees on the night the institution split from the YMCA. The exhibit has 1956 Commencement photographs and a 1957 photo of the institution’s first female graduate. Founding president, Harold Schaughency and his secretary are featured, along with the first Bulletin of Roger Williams Junior College (1956-1957). A gold commemorative medal from the junior college years is included, as well.

We ♥ You RWU
Not too long ago the video collection in the library was made up entirely of VHS tapes purchased for educational use. Today some of those VHS tapes are still on the shelf but they are being quickly replaced by streaming video. Along with electronic books the digital video is the medium that users are turning to.

The database FILMS ON DEMAND is one of our current streaming video collections. Familiar producers such as Films for the Humanities & Sciences, BBC, PBS, National Film Board of Canada, NBC and ABC News have made old and new titles available by subscription. They are currently accessible from the library homepage http://library.rwu.edu. Just type in FILMS ON DEMAND in the search box and it will take you to our portal for thousands of titles and segments. Watch the five minute tutorial to learn about special features.

The collections give students and faculty unlimited access to curriculum-focused video grouped into subject specific categories: Humanities & Sciences; Business & Economics; Science & Mathematics; Health & Medicine. Also available are Archival films and Newsreels. New titles are added every month. The database FILMS ON DEMAND provides features that allow users to find, play, manage, and share video content. Keyword searching allows you to browse through the collections by course area or specialization. You can view video in a window or full screen using Adobe Flash Player or Windows Media formats. Citations are provided for all videos in MLA7 and Chicago styles.

Each film or segment has its own URL which can be copied to your course management system. This is a perfect way to send film to distance learners. Access is available to any RWU user who holds a valid library ID number. On-campus access is automatic. Off campus access requires a sign-in with the library barcode and user name.

Other features include the “Create Playlists” that include only the content you need — segments from a single video or segments from many videos or entire full length programs. You can post these lists on your Blackboard or Bridges management system, or distance learning courseware for viewing anytime, anywhere. There are also tutorials, quick-start guides, FAQs and user manuals. You can also call the Library x3375 or contact Veronica Maher, Media Resources Librarian x3114 for additional information or to purchase new videos.

Some titles included in the collection: Margaret Mead's Coming of Age, Bill Moyers Journals: Do You Speak Americans?, America Beyond the Color Line; Ken Burns' Civil War, Frank Lloyd Wright and Lewis and Clark. Titles are constantly being updated to include current issues such as The Madoff Affair; From Micro to Nano; The Noble Peace Prize Documentary 2008: With Dignity for All and many others.

Other streaming video collection subscriptions include the Alexander Street Press series: Theater in Video (including Shakespeare), Dance in Video, American History in Video, Ethnography in Video, Counseling and Therapy in Video and coming soon Education in Video. To learn more about streaming media check out our LibGuide on Streaming Media at http://rwu.libraryguides.com/StreamingVideos. Please contact Veronica Maher, Media Resources Librarian x3114 or vmaher@rwu.edu if you would like more information about FILMS ON DEMAND.

GREAT ISSUES SERIES

Two Spring 2011 programs will conclude the 2010-2011 Great Issues series, originally inspired by University alumna and benefactor, Mary Tefft (Happy) White.

On February 8 at 5:30 PM, Barnaby Evans, internationally recognized artist and creator of WaterFire, will present a multimedia program entitled “The Artist and Civic Engagement.”

On April 12 at 5:30 PM, Kitty Felde, journalist and playwright, will discuss The Artist and Civic Engagement. Ms. Felde’s play, A Patch of Earth, will also be performed that week at the University. Professor Robin Stone will direct the production.

The University Library is pleased to support a Spring 2011 internship for Danielle Zoller, RWU Class of 2010, and a graduate student at Simmons College earning her Master’s degree in Library Science. The internship will introduce Danielle to normative surveys in libraries, specifically LibQUAL, and their relationship to other higher education surveys conducted by the university. Danielle will complete a project responding to specific user concerns identified in the Library's Spring 2010 LibQUAL survey.

For example: Usability of the Library Web Site – Can users find what they need in a virtual environment? To evaluate and respond to this concern this internship will be involved in usability testing of the Library's web site design.