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## December 1999: Public Services; Library Facelift; Book Sale

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# Focus

DACUS LIBRARY / WINTHROP UNIVERSITY / DECEMBER 1999 / NO. 37

## Public Services: First contact

### *What do public services librarians do?*

Technical Services librarian William Benemann once said that public services librarians “are, in most ways, normal human beings, and they can hardly be blamed if the chief requirement for their job is a Pepsodent smile and the hide of a rhino. Even so, I think of public services as the Vanna Whites of this profession: attractive, amiable, and ultimately unnecessary.”

He’s two-thirds right. In this issue we’ll explore what *do* public services librarians actually do.

In Dacus Library public services includes two areas which deal directly with the public—Reference and Circulation. We will look at both of these areas in this issue of *Dacus Focus*.

Technology has had a tremendous impact on the services libraries offer. From online catalogs to Internet sites to electronic databases, the public services librarian assists patrons with identifying appropriate databases, finding relevant material, accessing the information, and then evaluating the material received.

Furthermore, public services librarians in an academic environment make a distinction between *providing* the answer for the students and *instructing* them on the procedures needed to find answers.

This may conflict with the expectations of the students who often have little interest in learning how the library works, how it is organized, or how to find the answer. They simply want to be given the answer.

### *How do you measure the quality of service?*

How then do you measure quality of service?

The College of Charleston has just completed an in-depth study to assess the quality of their service. They identified seven categories which best reflected the range of service expectations library users have. These categories are helpful in understanding the role and responsibilities of the public services librarians at Winthrop as well.

*Reliability* involves delivery of the promised service dependably and accurately.

*Responsiveness* concerns staff readiness to provide service.

*Assurance* refers to the knowledge and courtesy of the staff and their ability to convey confidence.

*Access* means that there are sufficient staff, equipment and hours of operation.

*Communication* means keeping the customers informed in language they

can understand and listening to them.

*Security* is the freedom from danger, risk or doubt.

*Tangibles* include the maintenance of the physical facilities and serviceability of the equipment.

What does the future hold for public services librarians, or are they necessary as the 21<sup>st</sup> century approaches?

Carol Kuhlthau, at Rutgers University, has researched information-seeking behavior. She concluded the initial stages of research are marked by confusion, anxiety and diminished confidence. With the advent of technology overload, she noted that the “proliferation of vast databases accessible to the user often intensifies the sense of confusion and uncertainty.”

Thus, the need for public services librarians grows stronger than ever.

Even Mr. Benemann was forced to concede that public services librarians are necessary. “Obviously, what we need...at the front desk is a user-friendly, interactive, intelligent, compassionate, perceptive, and reliable mind reader. And come to think of it, we have a couple of those out there already.”

**Susan Silverman**  
Head of Public Services

## The Revolution in reference service

If the library is the heart of the university, then reference is its brain. The services provided by the reference area enable students and faculty to find the information they need for their educational and research purposes.

Whether it's staffing the reference desk seven days a week to assist patrons in using library resources, providing an interlibrary loan service to borrow materials not owned by Dacus, teaching over 200 classes annually so that students better understand the research process, or maintaining a vast array of electronic and print resources, the reference area is an integral and essential part of the educational mission of the university.

The advent of powerful computers and the Internet has had a profound effect on the way we access information. Libraries have been in the forefront of this revolution.

A mere two years ago, Dacus Library introduced its first Internet-accessible terminal to the public. At that time patrons had only two options: they could use the terminal to search the Dacus Online Catalog (DOC) to find books and journals owned by the library or they could perform a general search of the Internet. In the intervening two years, Dacus has added over 30 terminals that access nearly 100 indexes and full-text databases in addition to DOC and the Internet.

These services were further enhanced two months ago when Dacus Library purchased the software to allow Winthrop students and faculty to use these online resources off-site. Now members of the Winthrop community can search *InfoTrac*, *Academic Universe*, *FirstSearch*, and the other databases from their home or office computers.

Step-by-step instructions for setting up your personal computer to use all of the resources available on Dacus Library Online (DLO) are found at <http://www.winthrop.edu/dacus/>

An exciting new addition to Dacus Library is reference service via the Internet. To send a short, factual reference question to one of our reference librarians, click on

"About the Library" on the DLO main menu screen and select "Reference Collections." Simply select "Ask a Question" to send us your query. We will respond with a brief answer or information on where to go to find the answer.

As you will see from the articles in this issue of *Dacus Focus*, Reference is committed to finding new and better ways of serving the Winthrop community. We encourage you to make full use of all of the services provided for you and invite your suggestions for improving and expanding what we do.

Please do not hesitate to contact me (gormanr@winthrop.edu, 323-2259) if I can be of further assistance.

**Bob Gorman**  
Head of Reference

## Library Instruction: Lifelong learning skills

A business class must learn the number of outstanding shares available for a company. Another class must find an article related to some aspect of speech and language. A graduate class must locate specific texts for a proposal. A local high school needs to bring its International Baccalaureate class for orientation.

The main objective of the Library Instruction program is to familiarize patrons with the basic resources available to meet their information needs. We do this by providing instruction on the organization and classification of knowledge, acquainting students with the print and electronic resources in

the library, providing hands-on instruction in *identifying*, *assessing*, *locating* and *using* resources, and assisting students in developing good research strategies and skills.

A secondary aim is to acquaint patrons with the physical layout of the building. All new students are encouraged to take the audio tape tour to acquaint them with the facilities and service points in the library. After a thorough orientation program, patrons know how to locate and use microfilm, print to the laser print station, use the photocopiers, e-mail materials, and save what they find on a

disk—which they may obtain free at the reference desk.

Many wonderful and exciting changes take place in the library every semester, and good instruction helps our patrons keep pace with changing technology and new print resources. Our program helps develop critical research skills and fosters lifelong learning and library usage. Orientation also lessens anxiety about using library technology and helps patrons feel comfortable in coming to the reference desk or calling for assistance.

Professional librarians share the responsibility for teaching classes, and all are

available to help patrons locate what they need.

Professors are encouraged to schedule library sessions for *all introductory major classes* so students learn early the core print and online materials in their fields of study. To schedule a class, please call at least *one week* in advance, and send one or more topics that the librarian may use for the library lecture/demonstration. Informal library instruction is also available. Students, faculty, and staff can call 323-4501 or 323-2195 to make appointments. We await your call.

**Rose Parkman Davis**  
Library Instruction Coordinator

## Focus

# Behind the Scenes in Interlibrary Loan

Ever wonder exactly what happens with those interlibrary loan request cards after you turn them in at the Reference Desk?

Dacus Library is connected to more than 30,000 libraries throughout the world by a computer system called OCLC. Once we receive your request card, we search the OCLC database to find a match. Since there can be many items with similar titles, we need as much information as possible about the item you're requesting. Accuracy is also important when filling out the request cards. One wrong word in the title can drastically slow the process.

After we find a match, we fill out an electronic order form for the item. The database tells us which libraries own the item, and we request it from up to five libraries.

After the request is sent, it is the potential lending library's responsibility to answer "yes" or "no" to our request. A delay can occur if the first library does not respond at all. In this case, the request waits in their message file for four days and then is automati-

cally forwarded to the next lender. Each time a "no" response is given, the request is sent to the next lender.

Whether a library will lend a particular item is completely up to it, and we receive no explanation of why it responded "no." Once a library agrees to send the item, it sends a "yes" response. Depending on what the item is (a book or a journal article), the shipment method will vary. Most libraries use the U.S. Postal Service for a book. Since all books are shipped library rate, it generally takes longer for a book to arrive than a journal article.

Journal articles are either shipped first class through the mail or transmitted electronically via Ariel, a computer program that transmits scanned documents over the Internet as graphics files. By sending and receiving articles via Ariel, we not only save postage fees but receive the articles faster.

When the material arrives, we notify the patron that the book or journal article is ready to be picked up.

Books have the due date on a yellow card, and we ask that you return books on time. If you need them longer we can request a renewal, but we need to know at least three days before the book is due. This time is necessary because we have to send a renewal request to the lending library.

The other side of interlibrary loan is lending. Each day we receive about 20 requests from other libraries. We fill as many of these as possible, but we do have rules. We will not lend material from the reference collection, microfilm, bound journals, or books that have been published within the last two years. Most other libraries have similar rules, so remember if you request one of the types of materials mentioned above, we may not be able to borrow it.

I hope this has given you a better understanding of what is involved in obtaining the materials you request. If you would like more information about interlibrary loan, call me at extension 323-2322.

**David Weeks**  
Interlibrary Loan Librarian

## Circulation Services: Present and Future

Do you want to learn more about Dacus Library by taking the tape tour? Are you having problems locating library materials? Are you interested in using your Winthrop I.D. card as a copy card for the copiers, microform reader-printers and the computer print station? Where to go? What to do? Who can help you?

For answers to these type of questions, come to the Circulation Desk. It is located on the main floor across from the Reference Desk. Circulation maintains records of the status of all library materials, loans, and patron account transactions through the library's automated circulation system. We are responsible for maintenance of the library's general collection, including shelving and inventory. We also oversee reserve materials, copiers, Winthrop I.D./debit

copy card system, and collect fines and lost book charges.

Books, cassettes and cd-roms may be borrowed for two weeks and may be renewed as often as necessary unless requested by another patron. Each item taken from the library must be checked out using a current Winthrop I.D. card. Reserve materials are located at the Circulation Desk and may be checked out for two-hour periods. Some materials are available for overnight or seven-day checkout.

An exciting development is our pilot program to provide e-reserves (electronic reserves), which can be accessed at any time from any computer. Although the program is in the early stages, some e-reserves at Dacus Library already provide instant, 24-hour access to reserve materials without having to wait for the article to

be returned or a copier to become available. For more information about e-reserves, call 323-4205.

And remember, the staff at Circulation is here to help you.

**Geri Gaskill**  
Head of Circulation

### Dacus Focus

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Focus

# Dacus eagerly awaits facelift

Of course these days it's all the rage: that late sixties/early seventies retro look. You see those wild colors on cars and clothes everywhere. Who would have guessed five years ago that lime green (other less euphemistic descriptions abound) would not only be a legitimate color, but also *the* color of choice! Alas, *de gustibus non est disputandum*, as they say: there can be no disputing of taste. To be charitable, one could say that Dacus decor is all the rage. It's "with it," as the vernacular goes. When you walk in and see the teal-colored signage, matching teal columns and

peach trim, you can't help but say, "Yeaaaah, baaay-beeee!" Austin Powers would be so proud.

From another perspective, however, Dacus does look a bit anachronistic. There can be no doubt that the colors chosen in 1969 were the rage. As a new building back then, Dacus stood as the top-of-the-line, state-of-the-art facility. Thirty years can do a lot to a building. If you have doubts, look at what it did to all those Baby Boomers who have become the Establishment we so hated! To entering Freshpersons of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, however, Dacus may have that look

that is somewhere between Austin Powers and ... Tyrone Power. Dacus is showing its age. What three decades can do to facial lines it has done—and more—to Dacus Library.

Because of that, it pleases us all the more to be able to announce that a facelift is in the works! Over the Christmas holidays, Dacus will get a make-over and the outcome will be Hamletesque: 'Sith neither our interior nor our exterior will resemble that which it was.' Over the holiday break, workers will descend on us in a swarm, with paint cans and carpet rolls. Before it's all over, Dacus will have

a new paint job, carpeting throughout the building, new signage, and several new safety features, including outdoor lighting and a security phone near the parking lot. This continues the excellent grooming that began this summer. Our hats are off to the administration for undertaking so many projects requiring immediate attention.

After the holiday break, come see our new make-over. We feel confident that you'll love the changes as much as we will! You may even hear yourself whisper (no shouting, please), "Right on!"

**Mark Y. Herring**  
Dean of Library Services

# You threw the book(s) at us—Thanks!

After dozens of months of preparation and scores of e-mails publicizing the event, the Dacus book sale is a memory, and a pleasant one at that. The sale grossed nearly \$1,650, just shy of last year's mark. This is an impressive showing indeed since last year's books were "fire sale" discounted the last day of the event. Given

the miserable weather on opening day this year, workers and participants alike may share in a firm and congratulatory pat on the back.

All of you—both donors and buyers—deserve a great deal of the credit. Without your help the sale would not have been possible. We offer you our heartfelt thanks.

You are truly very good Friends! (And speaking of which, if you have not joined...)

We would be greatly remiss if we did not offer special thanks to Antje Mays, Sandy Pakozdy, and Jannifer Tucker. These three did yeoman's work, slaving over the setup, breakdown and selling of the books.

All three put in very long hours. Jannifer, especially, deserves dozens of kudos for overseeing the start-to-finish design and execution of the sale. Without her trenchant eyes and firm hand, the sale might not have passed so smoothly. If you see Antje, Sandy or Jannifer, say thanks for a job well done!

**Mark Y. Herring**  
Dean of Library Services

**Dacus**

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