

## Draft Document

April 27, 2004

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# **Reviewing Service Goals for Undergraduates: A Public Services Council Working Document**

## **Introduction**

Public Services Council's (PSC) goals for the 2003-2004 academic year reflect a user-centered context, with a focus specifically on the undergraduate user. Between August 2003 and February 2004 Public Services Council engaged in wide ranging examination and discussion of undergraduate service issues, including how to bring an undergraduate focus to the library's website, information resources, and services. This report brings together numerous documents that were reviewed by the members of the Council. It is intended to be used as a working document to continue efforts to improve existing services and design new services specifically targeted to undergraduate students.

### I. National Standards, Studies, and Surveys on Undergraduate Use of Libraries

- ACRL Statements

PSC members reviewed ACRL's model statement on *The Mission of a University Undergraduate Library*:

<http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlstandards/missionuniversity.htm>

as well as ACRL's *Guidelines for University Undergraduate Libraries*:

<http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlstandards/guidelinesuniversity.htm>

These national documents underscore the importance of one-on-one communication with undergraduates, as well as the role librarians play in undergraduate socialization, in helping students learn how to navigate large and complex libraries and universities. PSC explored issues relating to the personal information needs of Rutgers undergraduates through course integrated or credit based library instruction programs, developing collections that focus on the reading assignments of undergraduates as well as access issues such as portals, facilities and hours.

- Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR) Statistics

J. Boyle and S. Beck reviewed the extensive report

*Dimensions and Use of the Scholarly Information Environment*, see the following urls for further information:

<http://www.clir.org/pubs/abstract/pub110abst.html>

[http://www.clir.org/activities/details/dimensions\\_docs.html](http://www.clir.org/activities/details/dimensions_docs.html)

PSC examined results tables of interest, including "What services would you like your institution's library to offer (Table 63)" and the "Major Problem Summary Table" (Table 26).

- Horizon Scanning

S. Beck shared an extensive compilation of information regarding the information seeking behavior of undergraduates gleaned from the work of Carol Tenopir and others. Highlights of the information S. Beck shared included but were not limited to:

- User behavior differs based on status
- Undergraduates are most comfortable using a wide variety of search engines, and have extraordinary faith in them
- Undergraduate searching increases when access to full-text resources is provided
- Undergraduates will take recommendations from teachers, librarians, and friends
- Undergraduates are confused over the quality and variety of electronic resources
- Undergraduates see the library as a place to study, socialize, and sleep more than as a place to get information
- A sizable **minority** of undergraduates have not received library training

## II. University Data on Rutgers Undergraduates

PSC members also examined two University documents that offer demographic profiles of Rutgers undergraduates and the results of surveys in which Rutgers undergraduates participated.

- First, the *Rutgers Fact Book* at <http://oirap.rutgers.edu/instchar/factbook.html> facilitated a discussion of University demographics. In brief, the most significant feature of the current student population at Rutgers is its diversity, especially in Newark and New Brunswick. The age of the average undergraduate student remains between 18 and 24. While full-time students have increased, part-time students at Rutgers have decreased.
- The second document entitled *Rutgers Rising to the Challenge: The Undergraduate Experience*, offers the results of a survey which was conducted in 1997 and published in 1998. Overall, this survey demonstrates that undergraduates viewed the Libraries in a highly positive light.
- Additionally, M. Kesselman shared the results of his survey of the Douglass community done in Fall 2002. In response to a question asking where people did their research, the results were evenly split in thirds between the library, the computer lab, and home. The survey also found that those students who use the library regularly are those most familiar with the Libraries' website.

## III. Computing Center (RUCS) Initiatives for Undergraduates

- At its October meeting, PSC also examined the new myRutgers University portal initiative ([my.rutgers.edu](http://my.rutgers.edu)) that is being developed by RUCS. Members of the Council discussed with the RUCS staff where the Libraries' should appear in this portal. PSC also examined how the Libraries are presented on University webpages

(including the pages maintained by the Admissions, Housing, and Institutional Research and Academic Planning departments).

#### IV. Review of Current Library Policies and Services for Undergraduates

- PSC members also reexamined its own *Public Services Policy Memos 1, 2, 3, 4, & 6* with an eye to undergraduate services and resources:  
[http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/rul/about/pub\\_ser\\_policies.shtml](http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/rul/about/pub_ser_policies.shtml)  
Council members also reviewed a document entitled *User-Centered Qualities of Rutgers University Libraries*.

#### **PSC Discussion and Suggestions**

PSC members affirmed that the Libraries need to be a part of the first year undergraduate experience. It is believed that faculty-librarian partnerships are key, including enhancing faculty knowledge of the Libraries, and reaching out to teaching assistants and others who have extended contact with undergraduates.

It was noted that the reference interview and other virtual and non-virtual communications with undergraduates remain crucial. PSC must continue to consider if there are techniques and behaviors that need to be reinforced or modified, or if any data exists that would suggest that we need to consider modifying specific services, actions, or behaviors. Similarly, the Libraries' brochures and other written communications must be continually reviewed to ensure that the information, language, and organization are appropriate for communicating with our undergraduate users. (It should be noted that the upcoming communications audit is likely to provide information in this regard.)

Current and longstanding problems involving undergraduate students were identified. One problematic issue that affects the Libraries' services is the lack of student advising within the undergraduate colleges at Rutgers. The results of a University Senate study confirm that this a problem.

Suggestions for future services included:

- Development of a Virtual Library tour that could be put on a CD and distributed to incoming students, perhaps at orientation.
- Develop an information brochure (or website) specifically for incoming first-year students that could be included with the Admissions mailing,
- Develop an information brochure specifically for incoming transfer students.
- Work toward a closer collaboration with the Learning Resource Centers. This would bring library services directly to students who need additional instruction.
- Develop and maintain close working relationships with undergraduate colleges (through assistant and associate deans offices) to identify 'students at risk' or other target audiences such as honor students, commuter students, transfer students, etc.
- Establish library liaisons with undergraduate colleges; and/or identify where these relationships already exist and where programs can be strengthened.
- Purchase/construct resources specifically for undergraduates, including:

Wilson databases, e-books, public domain material in Net Library, and an online reference collection for undergraduates to include four basic works: a dictionary, encyclopedia, thesaurus, and an almanac.

### **Concluding Statement**

This report highlights PSC's undergraduate services review and discussion that took place between August 2003 and February 2004. Relevant documents that guided the deliberations of the Council were listed above for further reference. Further amplification on this discussion can be obtained by reading the minutes of PSC meetings following the path: [www.libraries.rutgers.edu](http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu)

Staff Resources

Public Services

Committees and Task Forces

Public Services Council Minutes

It is important to underscore that by its very nature, a review of Libraries' undergraduate services intersects with other Libraries' initiatives, such as information literacy, and necessitates ongoing examination. Some suggestions are immediately actionable items and some suggestions will take time and long term development and investment. The Council must continuously monitor the changing demographics of the undergraduate population and the changing patterns of learning, and determine whether the current services reflect those changes. It must also endeavor to identify those barriers that prevent undergraduate students from making full use of library resources and attempt to reduce any barriers that might hinder their access. In the coming years, the Council must explore the methodologies and conceptual frameworks that will make the Rutgers undergraduate library experience unique and rewarding.