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Students are users, too

A research library reaches out to the “undergraduate market” at Emory University

Just as there is a wind band embedded in every symphony orchestra, there is a *college* library embedded in every university research library. Until they declare a major, undergraduates are not aligned with a particular discipline or department; their needs and purposes are qualitatively different from those of graduate students, faculty, and other users of campus library resources. In 2001, the main library at Emory University established an Undergraduate Market Council (UMC), charged to describe and explore the embedded college library, from the perspective of both the library and the user community, with the aim of enhancing the undergraduate experience of the research library.

Organizational redesign

Market councils were introduced as part of a comprehensive multiyear organizational review and renewal effort, motivated by a desire to improve communication and decision making. In 2001, the library underwent a substantial team-based restructuring that realigned functional units around processes. The new organization chart incorporated lateral coordination of work flow and communication across the organization as a formal feature of the structure, addressing the balance between the library's vertical dimension (reporting lines, performance review, resource allocation) and horizontal activity (cross-functional teams, work groups, task forces).

Reorganizing vertically around *functions*, the library chose a *market* orientation for

its horizontal dimension, segmenting its user community by establishing councils for business, humanities, social sciences, science, international and area studies, and undergraduates. The market councils are responsible for ensuring that the library's functional units and processes are aligned with the needs of a particular subset of users, by paying attention to the relationship between the library and the user, and by promoting the services and resources of the library.

Library resources for undergraduates

The mission of the UMC is to integrate the library's services, collections, and staff into the texture of the campus to enrich the undergraduate educational experience. Like most of the councils, the UMC began work on questions around collection management and development, and marketing and publicity of resources and services. The UMC wondered if, in the course of developing research-level collections, library selectors had considered the needs of undergraduates. Lacking a current standard for the college library collection (*Books for College Libraries* was last published in 1988), the UMC consulted collection management staff to assess current collection

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development practices for undergraduates. We also ran a comparative search of our library's holdings against the holdings of the library at Emory's Oxford College campus, a two-year institution and that was inherently more focused on undergraduate needs.

The findings showed that generally our holdings were consistent with the holdings of the Oxford College Library. In addition, online resources available through GALILEO and other consortia and subscriptions provide Emory's undergraduates with a rich array of appropriate journals and databases. The UMC concluded that the library is doing a good job of developing collections in support of teaching and learning. As follow-up, a representative from the UMC attended a collection development planning meeting and discussed with departmental liaisons the importance of considering undergraduates when selecting material.

When the business school's career resource collection moved into the business library, the materials became available for general student use (the business library is housed in the Woodruff library building). The library's senior staff group suggested that the UMC take up issues of managing access beyond business students. The business school had also purchased a number of career-related electronic databases that were available exclusively to business students. The UMC initiated a dialog among library administration, the business library, and representatives from the campus career center to facilitate a pooling of funds to extend access to the business library's electronic resources to the entire Emory community. All parties agreed to expand access and maintain open lines of communication between the main library, the business library, and the career center.

Marketing and publicity

Even in an academic research library, reading can be fun. The UMC assembled horror and suspense titles from the library's collec-

tion and displayed them in the new book area for Halloween. Appropriate decorations such as cobwebs, skeletons, and tombstones called attention to this small collection, which was well browsed and appreciated by our users. The UMC also provided candy for users in a black cauldron at the security desk for trick or treat.

The UMC's first major publicity project came in the form of the *Student Library Guide*, a tabloid newsletter intended to provide information about the library to all students, especially freshmen. While the idea for this project arose in the UMC's very first brainstorming session, it took nearly two years to bring the project to fruition. Originally conceived as an insert in the student newspaper, the *Guide* grew to become a separate eight-page full-color publication, incorporating content gathered from teams, divisions, and offices across the library.

The *Guide* was available in the library's booth at the information fair during new student weekend. It was distributed during new student orientation tours at the beginning of fall semester and was available throughout the year at all public service points in the library. Some 3,000 copies were distributed over the course of the academic year, nearly half of those during new student week. The UMC plans annual updates, and a second edition is in preparation.

Lateral coordination through communication

Market councils are an innovative feature of the library's organizational structure and have brought user focus to the library's internal and external communication. Through the UMC, the library has put on a human face for one of our most important user groups.

Notes

1. Jay R. Galbraith, *Designing Organizations: An Executive Briefing on Strategy, Structure and Process*. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1995). *z*