

## Fine Arts Library Facility Final Report

### Introduction

The purpose of this assessment was to determine how current patrons use the Fine Arts Library (FAL), to determine the needs of the students, faculty and staff in the College of Fine Arts and to develop ideas for improving the FAL facility, equipment, and services.

The study included the following components:

- Observation: systematic counts of patrons in various areas of the library at regular intervals for two weeks. (see attached documents)
- Focus groups: undergraduate, graduate, and staff.
- Survey: of current patrons to document who is using the FAL, how they use it and to obtain feedback on potential new uses. (see attached documents for chart summary)
- Survey: of faculty survey to document how they currently use FAL and to obtain feedback on potential new uses.
- Class projects: Junior level Design students and graduate students in Design and Engineering.

### Summary of Overall Findings and Action Plan

The data gathered was extremely useful and we are acting on many of the suggestions made by our users. I wanted to subtitle this report "A Balancing Act" because the needs of our users are so diverse and in several ways contradictory.

- Physical items (print and media) or electronic access via more computers.
- Laptop checkout and computer access or electrical outlets for personal computers.
- Mac users and PC users.
- Continue existing services and add new services.
- Quiet independent study spaces and collaborative and group study spaces.
- Open views and places to hide.

### Observational Data

During the weeks of February 7 through February 13 and April 4 through April 10, 2005 the Head of Circulation and shift supervisors surveyed the entire FAL at regular intervals to determine which spaces were being used at what times. For complete results please see attached document.

Busiest areas overall: computer terminals. Specifically, on Thursday (2/10/05) at 2pm there were 18 people using the computer terminals. During week 1, 135 people and during week 2, 134 people were using the computer terminals. The next busiest places were the Fine Arts Microcomputer Lab (FAML), and the tables on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor and the tables on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor next to the windows.

Busiest time: early afternoon.

Lowest use areas overall: Microfilm readers (week 1: 2 people; week 2: 3 people), study carrels on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor (week 1: 4 people; week 2: 3 people), audiovisual carrels (week 1: 22 people; week 2: 10 people), and graduate carrels on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor (week 1: 17 people; week 2: 10 people).

### Undergraduate and Graduate Focus groups Summary

On February 22, the Laura Schwartz and Beth Kerr conducted a focus group of 17 undergraduate students. On February 25, we conducted a focus group of graduate students. This group included five PhD candidates: two art history, two musicology, and one theatre. This focus group data was used to inform the two surveys conducted. The following ideas were generated at these meetings:

### **Possible to achieve**

- Internet access on 4 and 5\*
- Better customer service (every staff member has since attended customer service training)
- Better signage to the library and in the library\*
- More intro classes marketing the library, possibly a brochure or class visits\*\*
- Move two copiers, one to 4 and one to 5\*\*
- Better table in copier room\*
- Staplers next to copiers\*
- Equipment for dubbing analog to digital/CD burning\*
- Method of locking laptop to desk
- Software: Photoshop, Illustrator\*
- Laptop checkout (possibly overnight)\*
- More electrical outlets\*
- Physical suggestion box
- Screening room (that seats 20 – a typical TA section)/viewing times for student groups\*
- Better equipment: keyboards, scanners\*
- Fix lights
- Library use only material and other library materials in carrels (like BLAC)\*\*
- Video editing; DVD burning\*
- Someone to help out with DVD cueing
- Signs outlining food and drink policies\*
- ArtSTOR\*
- Make it easier to know what headphones for which machines\*\*
- Post list of new books\*\*
- Better handout displays\*
- Break the MLs in a better place\*
- Graduate student questionnaire every semester asking for feedback\*\*
- Study spaces: quiet, private, collaborative, group study rooms, room to spread out at tables with computers, food and drink in study room, more quiet office space, larger carrel spaces, moveable furniture, allocating and naming space “group study”\*\*
- Social gathering spot, closed off lounge (like outside library couches)
- Extended hours: earlier on weekends; later during the week\*
- Interiors: color scheme/interiors/reorganizing space including periodicals and reference, comfortable seating, better furniture\*
- Writing center\*\*

### **Unlikely to be able to adopt**

- Late fee reminders, overdue reminders
- Paging materials from other libraries
- Better OPAC/Google-like with spell correction
- Reminder 2 days before a book is due
- Improve Eres software
- Improve Endnote
- Coin-fed photocopiers
- Change machine
- Separate desks for separate functions (reserves, av, regular checkout)

- Digitize all cds
- Drive-up book and media drops
- Library copying of microfilms and LPs

### **Staff Focus Group Summary**

On April 21, 17 members of the Fine Arts Library staff met to discuss the future of the Fine Arts Library. The same questions were posed to the staff as were posed to the two other focus groups. Staff comments have been grouped into categories

#### **Possible to achieve**

- Internet access on computers on 4 & 5\*
- Carpet/furniture updating/new window treatments/lights\*
- Reorganize 5 – confusing for patrons
- Seminar room furniture too klunky; hard to set up laptop/projector, etc.\*\*
- Move bulletin boards\*
- Get the periodicals off the tall shelving; use light wood, lower shelving; in a circle around the room or around some comfortable seating\*
- Electrical outlets\*
- Wayfinding: laminated maps and List call numbers by subject, ex. sculpture books are in the NBs, materials by format and where to get them, list of technology we offer in library\*
- All region DVD player.\*
- Digitizing LPs
- Identify U-matics in catalog, replace with DVD if possible\*\*
- Better microform equipment – scanner/zip or burn to CD\*\*
- Marketing: Advertise CDs and DVDs to public, volunteer as a group to do KLRU fund raising\*\*
- Group studies/group study spaces; places to sequester on 4 and 5
- Display new CD and DVD arrivals/popular stuff/employee's picks\*\*
- Color/Show student art/student gallery space\*\*
- Replace the art outside 5.104/move the portrait\*\*
- Exposed wires\*
- Bad smell in lockers\*\*

#### **Ideas/concepts to consider**

- 3<sup>rd</sup> floor: allow staff to re-envision the space by using board and game pieces (done).
- Use of space: claustrophobic, disorganized feel; need more workspace around computers; close feel in stacks; unused carrel space; openness created just from removing the curtains.
- Needs to be a relaxing study space rather than anxiety-causing.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> floor: provide a panoramic view of what is there and what is possible to do/people don't have any visual cues as to what is available/possible - esp. viewing stations and current periodicals; tallest stuff needs to be to the sides. BUT some people like to hide.

#### **Other comments**

- Decide priorities/need a philosophy – emphasize what is important to students/users OR the scholastic elements (ref, index tables, etc.)
- Video lists still needed
- People just don't know how to use the library
- 5<sup>th</sup> floor sleep inducing/too hot or too cold/too quiet
- Carrels sides need to be shorter
- Replace unused carrels on level 5 with shelving

## General User Survey Summary

From March 23 until April 1, 2005 the Fine Arts Library surveyed 480 users. Below are the highlights of the survey.

The following questions were posed and the results are indicated.

- How often do you use the Fine Arts Library? A few times a week (142 respondents) was the most popular response with a few times a month (139) being a close second.
- How much time do you spend in the FAL per visit? Most of our respondents (175) said they come in for less than one hour, 167 said they come in for 1 to 2 hours.
- What equipment do you use if FAL? The most heavily used equipment is computers (323) and photocopiers (191). CD players (82) and DVD (53) players are moderately used in comparison. The rest of the equipment had less than 50 respondents.
- Computer preference? 230 are PC users, 120 are Mac users, 111 use either.
- How do you use the computers? 361 said they search databases, 315 said they access the internet, 269 use email, 149 use Microsoft office applications
- Do you use your own computer to access electronic reserves? 193 said yes, 262 said no.
- How do you use the FAL?
  - Over 200 individuals said the following:
    - FAL computers (284)
    - As a quiet study space (268), only 47 said they came to study in a group
    - FAL materials for course related study (252)
    - To read FAL books (246)
  - Over 100 said the following:
    - Read current journals and magazines (159)
    - Listen to compact discs (132)
    - FAL sets of musical works (112)
  - Over 50 said the following:
    - Attended class sessions (75)
    - Relaxed/slept (82)
- What changes would you like to see at FAL?
  - Over 200 individuals said the following:
    - Increase hours of operation (238)\*
    - Internet access on floors 4 & 5 (200)\*
  - Over 100 said the following:
    - Add a film screening room (178)\*
    - More computers (177)\*
    - Copiers on floors 4 & 5 (173)\*\*
    - More comfortable furniture (163)\*
    - More quiet study spaces (102)\*\*
  - Over 50 said the following:
    - Larger work areas around the computer (92)\*
    - Add a writing center (84)\*\*
    - Group study spaces (51)\*\*
- What additional equipment would you like to use at FAL?
  - Over 200 individuals said the following:
    - Digital camera checkout (217)\*\*
  - Over 100 said the following:
    - DVD burning (171)\*
    - Laptop checkout (168)\*
    - Digital video (156)\*
    - Analog to digital dubbing (132)\*

- Audio editing (122)\*
- iPod checkout (121)\*\*
- What is your classification? 157 graduate students; 99 seniors; 60 juniors; 57 sophomores; 52 freshmen; 33 staff; 15 general public; 7 other
- What is your College? 284 respondents were from Fine Arts including 138 art & art history; 96 music; 49 theatre & dance; 70 liberal arts; 132 other
- What is your age? What is your sex?

What follows is a list of the most common comments received by those surveyed:

- Longer hours of operation, especially over the weekend. Two non-Fine Arts majors stated that Fine Arts is the closest library to the bus stops, so it is important to have this library open longer hours.\*
- Better lighting. Complaints about buzzing and color.
- Laptop stations. Requests for more power outlets.\*
- Color printing.\*
- Requests for LPs to be made available in digital format.
- More student art exhibited.\*\*
- More pianos with headphones.
- Better carrels. Better lockers for carrels, bigger carrels, lockable carrels, etc.
- Longer loan periods for journals.\*\*
- Allow drinks (and food).\*\*
- Color copiers, feeder copiers.

### **Faculty survey summary**

The Fine Arts Library surveyed the faculty from April 13 until April 20, 2005. We received 38 responses from a total of approximately 200 faculty. Faculty were asked about how they currently use the FAL and how they and their students could be served better in the future. They were told that their responses to the questions would be used in the planning process, but would be kept anonymous.

#### *1. How do faculty use the Fine Arts Library?*

Faculty continue to use the library in rather traditional ways. Most respondents use the library:

- For their own research.
- To check out specific materials including books, scores, and audiovisual materials but do not use the library as a study space.
- For the reserves or electronic reserves services.
- To consult reference materials and periodicals.
- To use instruction/orientation services for students.

More unique responses included:

- Open studio, a quiet place for reading, thinking and discovering.
- Encourage student use.
- A place for class preparation.
- Research assistance.
- Copy machines, computer lab.

#### *2. How often do faculty use the Fine Arts Library?*

Faculty use the library as little as once in a semester and as often as everyday with most faculty saying that they come in weekly (15). Many expressed that if they had more time, they would visit more often.

#### *3. How can we encourage faculty to use the library more often?*

Many faculty said that we are doing a great job and that they need no further encouragement. But some did have insightful suggestions:

- Abolish special permission for faculty\*\*
- Longer loan periods for audiovisual materials\*\*
- Better spaces, more friendly areas (some thought our spaces were just fine)\*
- Create a space for classes to work on research projects, a research room

Anticipated responses included:

- Expanding the collections
- Difficulty with finding materials (need training and workshops for finding information)
- Better cataloging, better access
- Notifications of new acquisitions (should be solved with a new ILS)
- Non-circulating collection
- Quicker reshelving
- They have their own collections and do not need to use ours

4. *What changes would the faculty like to see at the Fine Arts Library?*

Again, several faculty said no changes. Insightful suggestions included:

- Art on the walls, posters, ephemera, visual culture\*\*
- Cozy areas for reading journals and new books\*
- More bookstore-like, so that what is available is more visible immediately\*
- Longer hours on Friday afternoons
- Clustered seating areas\*
- Better facilities for viewing and listening\*
- Don't get rid of the books (we won't)
- Filling gaps in the collection and accounting for missing items\*\*
- Better dubbing equipment\*
- Assistance scanning materials for electronic reserves (we already do)

Predictable suggestions were:

- More computer terminals\*
- Reserves cabinet
- Thematic rooms
- More books and journals; more cds
- Non-circulating collection
- Reduce loan periods for hot items
- Less awkward reserves system; reserves collaboration
- Remote return (which we already have)
- Transfer video collection to DVD; have copies for reserve and copies for lending
- Non-circulating to undergraduates
- Better photocopiers
- Acquisition notifications
- Easier access to recordings and scores
- Electronic circulation notification
- No cell phones, no staff music
- The Library Catalog should not revert to a title search

5. *What equipment or resources would faculty like their students to have access to?*

- Eres audio files compatible with i-Tunes
- More DVD players and VCRs
- Better ILS; better access
- More computers\*
- Audio equipment
- European format DVD player\*

#### 6. *Additional comments or suggestions of value*

- One or two specialized listening/viewing rooms\*
- Foreground the new journals and new books better – right in the faces of anyone coming in and the terminals tucked away in the northwest corner of the main floor\*
- Iconic, textual, and visual cues for how things are organized\*

#### **Design student projects summary**

During the Spring semester, two class projects were dedicated to Fine Arts Library design.

- The Junior level Design class and David Shields, Assistant Professor of Design, focused on a wayfinding and signage project for the Fine Arts Library space. Six groups came up with six separate solutions for wayfinding and signage for the FAL. One project was then selected by the UT Design Center to be implemented.
- A graduate level Design and Engineering Class that met together lead by Miodrag Mitrasinovic, Assistant Professor of Design and Matt Campbell, Assistant Professor of Mechanical Engineering redesigned the Fine Arts Library space. Two groups came up with two separate proposals. While neither project was selected for implementation, many good ideas were generated from the project.

#### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

While the assessment project that the Fine Arts Library conducted was multifaceted and brought to light suggestions and recommendations from our constituents, very little of the data gathered was a surprise. In fact, most of the suggestions had already been discussed by staff. The assessment project verified our desires and assumptions.

Many of the suggestions and recommendations will be implemented over the next academic year and others will be explored for viability. Several recommendations cannot be acted upon due to constraints of a fiscal, legal, or environmental nature that lie beyond the control of the Fine Arts Library or the UT Library administration.

I conclude this document with a statement from the faculty survey, on that sums up the goal of the Fine Arts Library staff and the motivation for undertaking this assessment project. We wish to make informed decisions about this public space that is so highly valued by the arts community at UT and in Central Texas.

*I think that we need to rethink the role of the library (as a space, not as a service) to bring it back into the lives of the students and faculty. A meeting place, a lecture place, and place for discussion and exchange of ideas. The quiet library may be an image of the past.*