

Spring 2012

Portland State Library Update: News for Supporters and Friends; Spring 2012

Portland State University Library

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Meredith Farkas

from Lynn Chmelir, Interim University Librarian

During my long career in academic libraries the information landscape has constantly changed, but never has there been a time when the pace was as rapid as it is right now. We have reached a point when journal articles are expected to be delivered to users online; we will see the printed journal disappear entirely in the very near future. Scholarly books are still with us and will likely be around longer than printed journals, but they too are increasingly available as e-books. Fully 80% of the Portland State University Library budget for information resources is now spent on information in electronic format and the percentage grows each year.

The economics of purchasing electronic texts is different than for printed books and journals. Libraries no longer own the texts and keep them in-house to lend to users. They now negotiate complex licenses that provide access to electronic texts leased from publishers who host the master files on their own servers for our users to download. Academic journal publishers have begun to bundle many titles into collections that libraries lease as packages. Journal package subscriptions are expensive and price increases every year make it increasingly difficult to stretch limited funds to cover the vast information needs of a comprehensive university that supports undergraduate learning, graduate programs, and faculty teaching and research.

The worldwide scholarly community is mobilizing to change the scholarly communication process to make access to the journal literature more affordable for libraries and users. Faculty who publish the results of their research and provide the peer review so necessary to scholarship are not paid for their articles. When they submit a manuscript to the for-profit journal publishers, they traditionally have given away their

copyrights. The costs that publishers incur to make their research available have decreased since they no longer must print and mail paper journals, yet they are still making large profits selling online journals. Increasingly, researchers are negotiating publishing contracts that allow them to retain their copyright and deposit the results of their work in an open access repository.

Many universities have established online repositories for the scholarly work produced by their faculty. PSU is no exception; *PDX Scholar* is the new name of PSU's digital repository (<http://dr.archives.pdx.edu/>). It already houses hundreds of PSU student theses and dissertations and is now collecting faculty articles and other scholarly work produced at PSU. Access to *PDX Scholar* is freely available to everyone on the web. *PDX Scholar* is an exciting new direction for Portland State's University

information—that connect students with the best resources to complete assignments (<http://guides.library.pdx.edu/home>). Online links to library guides and other relevant library content are embedded in online courses being developed for PSU students, so using the library from the desktop is easier for students in online classes. Our reference librarians also respond to questions from students and faculty using online chat and text services. Through a statewide cooperative, we are able to offer chat reference 24/7, so the reference desk stays open electronically when Millar Library closes its doors for the night.

Almost all of our students carry mobile devices of one kind or another—cell phones or tablet computers—and now they can use them to connect to a mobile-friendly version of the library website for information about library hours, news, the library catalog, and



Stay in touch with the University Library through Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/PortlandStateLibrary> and follow our news @PSULibrary and our historic PSU pictures from the Archives @PSULibArchives on Twitter.



Library that is helping to make scholarly information freely available and to stem rising costs. Just as library collections have migrated to the online environment, so are library services. Currently all the library faculty subject liaisons to academic departments are preparing online library research guides—electronic portals to disciplinary research

some of the databases that support mobile devices (<http://library.pdx.edu/m>).

With so much going on, this is an exciting time for academic libraries. We thank our many donors for their ongoing generosity; you help to make the PSU library collection possible and to fund our progress.

The Portland State Library *News Update* is published bi-annually to promote the services, collections, and programs of the Portland State University Library.

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Focus on Student Success: Head of Instructional Services Meredith Farkas

While the University Library is committed to building and stewarding collections to meet the changing needs of our users, we are equally committed to our educational mission. The Library's instruction program works to ensure that students and faculty have the skills necessary to find, evaluate, and effectively use information resources in their academic work and daily lives. Having so much information available at one's fingertips is both a blessing and a curse, as it has made the act of finding credible information more difficult. Being able to quickly and easily find authoritative information is a critical skill in a world where the shelf-life of all knowledge is shrinking.

At PSU, the library faculty teaches hundreds of class sessions annually to tens of thousands of undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty members. While we do offer workshops and for-credit research skills classes through the library, the majority of our teaching is embedded in other discipline-specific courses, making our instruction much more relevant to the research students will conduct in other classes. Our instructional collaboration with disciplinary faculty can take place in a single class or can be woven into the course at logical points. Librarians have a long-standing teaching presence in the University Studies Freshman Inquiry (FRINQ) program, working to contribute to retention by providing additional academic support to students at the start of their academic careers.

Beyond freshman year, students often receive library instruction in the core courses in their major, ensuring that students know how to use key research sources in their discipline. We have a strong liaison program where every instruction librarian has one or more areas of subject specialty in which they teach. In addition to providing group instruction, liaisons also offer individual consultations with students and faculty where they can work one-on-one on specific research issues.

As the number of students taking online classes grows, librarians have moved the instruction program online. This year, we began offering live online workshops in order to make instruction available to students and faculty wherever they happen to be. We also began offering online research guides (<http://guides.library.pdx.edu/>). Librarians often create course guides to supplement the face-to-face teaching happening in a specific class. Librarians have also worked to create a module in the University's online learning management system that enables students to see a customized library presence with links to relevant subject or course guides in their classrooms.

The Library instruction program is constantly evolving as we work to meet the changing needs of the students, faculty, and staff at Portland State University, but the one thing that never changes is our mission to support student success and faculty research.

Breaking Ground

For the last month and a half, students have begun gathering in Millar Library's newly constructed Learning Ground to study, collaborate on projects, and utilize the space's technology suite. Assistant University Librarian for Administrative Services & Planning Tom Bielavitz has witnessed the project from its inception to its opening as the newest student resource on campus. He remembers when the Learning Ground began as a concept for an accessible technology space with plans to include an updated computer lab, ample study space, and an experimental area called simply, the Sandbox. The early vision of many campus partners has now become the most advanced technology and student study space on campus.

The concept of a creative collaboration space has been a hot topic in higher education for the last few years. Millar Library is one of the first university libraries to make this idea a reality. A term originating in design, a "sandbox" is what Tom describes as a "space for physically brainstorming with concepts." The idea behind the Sandbox is to provide students with a semi-controlled space where they can collaborate with fellow students and faculty, all while using and incorporating new technologies—from wall-embedded LCD displays to touch-screen computers.

This is much more than a study room. The University Library has big plans for the Learning Ground. As the school year continues, staff and faculty will continue



assessing the space and making changes to ensure this student "think tank" remains a vital part of the Library. "We don't want it to be stagnate," Tom explains. "We want it to evolve, to be more than just a place for technology."

In conjunction with the Learning Ground's opening, the Learning Center—a place where students can seek academic support services—has completed its move to Millar Library. Previously located in the Smith Memorial Student Union, the Learning Center's move marks the Library's dedication to providing seamless access to student services. As Tom explains, "The student experience can be improved by centralizing services—they can study, access resources, and be tutored all in one location."

To read more about the Learning Ground, visit: http://library.pdx.edu/support/about/learning_ground.html.

For more information on the Learning Center, check out: <http://www.pdx.edu/tutoring/>.

Written on the (Sandbox) Wall

We asked students to write their feelings about the Sandbox on its whiteboards. Here's what they had to say:

"This room is amazing! I'll use it all the time."

"Great for meetings."

"PSU will need to build more of these real soon."

"Awesome—love the writing space! Thank you!"

"This room is such an amazing opportunity & sparks the imagination!! Thank you."

"Fabulous! Yay collaboration, teaching, & learning together!"



Above, Left: Inside the Sandbox, PSU Library's experimental study space.



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Donor Spotlight: Robin and Robert Holmes



Access to art history text books—because of their color plates and high quality printing—can represent a significant obstacle for a college student with limited means. The cost may even be enough to deter some students from studying art at all.

For art lover Robin Holmes, that would be inconsistent with the concept of a broad university education. That's why she and her husband Robert gave \$6,000 to Portland State's University Library to purchase art texts that students can borrow rather than buy. She hopes the gift will not only help art history majors, but especially non-majors who want to branch out into new interests.

"You could be studying to be an engineer, but it's also important to experience art for its own sake," said Robin, who earned her master's degree in English from PSU in 1973 and has

currently been taking art history classes at PSU.

Robin and Robert have given in other ways too. They've contributed to flexible endowments that support travel and training future educators of the fine arts.

"I believe the broader your education—and that includes an education in the arts—the more able you are to solve problems, whatever your profession," Robert explains.

The couple, whose vacation travels often take them to museums, ballets, and opera houses around the world, believes everyone should have art in their lives, and that Portland State is uniquely suited to help them.

"We're focusing on PSU because we believe in the concept of an urban university, and we believe in PSU's ability to provide education in a wide variety of fields," Robin said.

Portland State University is grateful for every donation, large and small. Your support makes a difference for our students, faculty, and staff every day.

To make a donation to the University Library, please contact Development Director Jennifer Wilkerson at jwilk@pdx.edu or 503.725.4509.

We invite you to visit our full donor honor roll online:
http://library.pdx.edu/support/donors/honor_roll.html



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Focus on Philanthropy: Donor Makes Possible *The Gift of the Word*

Spring Exhibit April 2–June 20, 2012

Special Collections looks forward to its spring exhibit and how it has brought together faculty and students through a generous donation from the A. Gordon Hunter Fund of the Oregon Community Foundation. Before his passing in 2006, Mr. Hunter was a long-time supporter of the University Library. An avid book lover, Mr. Hunter worked as both a professor at Lewis-Clark State College and a bookseller and enjoyed community involvement through Friends of the Portland State Library. Mr. Hunter's donation allowed the University Library to acquire a group of materials, ranging from the 10th century to the 19th, that highlight humanity's connection to the written word.

The Gift of the Word focuses on six materials that challenge us to reconsider assumptions we might carry with us about the written word and our relationship to it. While the woman who owned the **Ethiopian Magic Scroll** likely could not read it, it was nevertheless a powerful emblem probably carried daily. In a similar way, the **Italian Book of Hours** and the **Armenian Prayer Scroll** were also worn as much as they were read—these texts were an intimate part of daily lives. **The Coptic Prayer**

Book and two **Qur'an** pages served in religious services and likewise testify to the power of words.

When adding to Special Collections, the Library seeks to both build on existing strengths in the holdings and prioritize unique or rare materials that our faculty will incorporate directly into their teaching and research. *The Gift of the Word* acquisitions are a perfect example of that goal fulfilled. Art History Professor Anne McClanan, Ph.D. utilized the materials to give her gifted undergraduate students the opportunity to research and develop this exhibit. The first phase of work on the new acquisitions was completed by her summer 2011 University Studies Medieval Portland Capstone students (www.medievalportland.pdx.edu). Professor McClanan's fall 2011 Art History Seminar students built upon this work, researching the provenance of each item, writing the entries for the exhibit catalog, and designing the exhibit. The result of this collaborative learning opportunity will be shared with the entire campus community, through the exhibit in Millar Library and through associated digital resources, also created by the students, which will remain available online.



Leaf from a Book of Hours in Latin



St. George, From the Coptic Prayer Book

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