

**A STUDY OF FOUR SMALL COLLEGE LIBRARIES
AND THEIR APPROACH TO PUBLIC SERVICES**

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This study was conducted to find out what small academic libraries are doing in response to the increased use of library services by the public. The directors of four small academic libraries in North Carolina were interviewed by telephone. They were asked questions pertaining to their policies and practices for serving the local non-academic user.

The findings of this study indicate that for the most part, services offered to the public are not particularly different from the services offered to the academic user. Findings also indicate that, because of their locations, some academic libraries offer the only access to information for some public users.

The four academic libraries studied are attentive to the needs for public access to information and resources. The implications are that these libraries will continue to offer their services as long as they have the staff and facilities to do so.

Headings:

College and university libraries –Reference services

Reference services – North Carolina

Information needs

Introduction

Today, colleges and universities are faced with many challenges. Among them is the question of whether or not the institution should provide library services to the community outside its walls. This is also of concerns to many of the smaller academic institutions, where resources and services are typically limited by funding and personnel.

An institution's decision to serve or not to serve the general public has to be based on many factors. Some of those factors will involve the ability of the institution to handle the demand, the volume of material on hand, the cost of providing the services and the needs of the general public. Library directors must ask themselves if it is financially feasible for them to offer services to the general public. Small private colleges and universities usually have limited funds and they must consider such choices as whether to charge fees for services or restrict use completely.

Another factor to consider in choosing whether or not to serve the general public involves the kinds of materials in the small academic institution's collections. If the institution has, for example, rare materials in its collection, there may be the fear of damages done to the materials or even theft. A final factor to be considered is the location of the institution in relation to public libraries and other universities and whether there is cooperation or collaboration between the small academic institution and its larger counterparts or area public libraries.

The subjects of this study are four small academic institutions with student populations of between 2000 and 4500. The focus of this study is their policies

toward the general public and its use of the institutional library facilities. These four academic institutions are located in various parts of the state of North Carolina.

They are:

University of North Carolina at Asheville

University of North Carolina at Pembroke

North Carolina Wesleyan College in Rocky Mount

Elon College in Elon, NC

The locations of the institutions and their proximity to nearby cities and towns will have a bearing on results of the study.

One of the points that will be discussed is how each participant view their library's position in the community as it relates to their academic responsibilities and the extent to which they are willing to offer the public access to information in their institutions.

- University of North Carolina at Asheville, a public institution (student population 3100+) is located in the city of Asheville, which has a population of over 68,000. The city's Asheville Buncombe County Library system has ten branch libraries.
- University of North Carolina at Pembroke a public institution (student population approx. 3400), is located in the town of Pembroke in Robeson County the town's population is approximately 3000. Robeson County is rural and consists of about thirteen small towns and its total population is about 114,000 residents with over 40% being Native-American. Robeson County Public Library is located in Lumberton, NC, which has a population

of 20,000 and is the largest town in Robeson County. Another source for information in Lumberton is Robeson Community College, which has a library of approximately 33,000 volumes.

- North Carolina Wesleyan College, a private institution (student population about 2100) is located in Rocky Mount, which has a population of approximately 57,000. NC Wesleyan offers adult education with evening programs at sites in Rocky Mount, Raleigh, Durham and Goldsboro. The city of Rocky Mount has one library facility, the Braswell Memorial Library, serving the city and surrounding Nash and Edgecombe Counties.
- Another private institution, Elon College, which has a student population of just over 4100, is located in the community of Elon College and it is adjacent to the town of Burlington, which has a population of approximately 45,000 residents. Burlington is in Alamance County, which has the Central North Carolina Regional Library system consisting of seven branches serving both Alamance and Chatham Counties.

The primary question of this study is “What is the level of public access to scholarly resources at small college libraries in North Carolina”?

The results of this study will be useful in establishing what approach, if any, small academic libraries are putting into practice to provide the general public with access to library services.

Review of the Literature

Customer Service

Arnold Hirshon, in his article “Running with the Red Queen: Breaking New Habits to Survive in the Virtual World”, summarizes the minimal standards necessary for customer services and technology for reference services in an academic library today. This article provides information for establishing the groundwork to providing effective customer services. The standards discussed in Arnold Hirshon’s article, although not necessarily attainable by all academic libraries could provide a basis by which small academic libraries could aspire to when developing their services to meet the public’s need (**Hirshon, 1996**).

Cultural Diversity

Ayala-Schueneman and Pitts discuss the attributes the librarian should bring to an encounter with a patron seeking information. They add that academic librarians must be ready to face the issues of cultural awareness and diversity such as those of a public community. The authors use as an example the Jernigan Library at Texas A&M University-Kingsville (TAMUK) because two distinct cultures exist in South Texas and the differences must be dealt with. This reading addresses the diversity of population at TAMUK in South Texas. It discusses the need for cultural diversity in the library staff as well as in the library’s collections. This article could be used as a guide to help academic librarians adapt their public services to the diversity of population in their communities (**Ayala-Schueneman and Pitts, 1996**).

Service, Restrictions and Fees

“Community Services in Louisiana Academic Libraries” by Cinderella W. Hayes and Hal Mendelsohn deals with the issues of restrictions and fees as ways some universities limit the use of their academic libraries by students and the public. This article also addresses a survey in which academic library respondents were asked whether proximity to a public library is a factor where borrowing privileges are concerned. The results suggest that, in this case, distance was not a determining factor (**Hayes and Mendelsohn, 1998**).

Metta Nicewarner and Matthew Simon wrote an article about one university’s solution to providing services to the general public. This article is interesting because, like so many other colleges and universities, the university mentioned in this article was trying to be all things to all people. Nicewarner and Simon state that “...academic libraries, especially those in small or rapidly-developing communities are often the only source of specialized or scholarly materials available in the area”. This article could serve as a model for academic institutions that find themselves in the position of being the only major source of information in an area (**Nicewarner and Simon, 1996**).

Community Accessibility and Technology

“Using the World Wide Web for Community Outreach: Enriching Library Service to the Community” by Louise G. Glogoff and Stuart Glogoff is an article about how librarians at the University of Arizona (U.A.) and the Pima Community

College are using the Web as a vehicle for a heightened sense of community. Materials that was once inaccessible is now only a mouse click away by way of personal computers located in homes, schools and businesses. Academic libraries are encouraged to use the Web as a tool to attract the general public to its collections (**Glogoff and Glogoff 1998**).

Joanna Burkhardt's article, *The Smallest Academic Libraries in the United States and Electronic Technology*, is a study to determine the types and extent of electronic technology available in the small libraries. Burkhardt's results indicate that most of the smallest academic libraries are providing electronic technology in a variety of formats. The author's study also suggests that electronic tools are timesaving for library users and almost always available to them. Electronic technology gives the public the ability to learn how to use the research tools, to locate items in the library and to access information (**Burkhardt, 1997**).

Promoting the Academic library

In Gary Thompson's article, "The Reference Service Encounter: What Can Patrons and Librarians Expect", he discusses customer relations, customer service and quality control. Thompson adds that libraries are service organizations in competition with other organizations now marketing information products. Good customer relations and customer satisfaction are the goals of most academic libraries that offer public services. Marketing or promoting themselves as competent and caring information providers is a means by which these goals can be

accomplished. This article encourages librarians, both public and academic, to promote their services to the general public (**Thompson, 1996**).

Methodology

Four small colleges were randomly picked with the only restrictions being that they have a student population of between 2000 and 4500. An added advantage is that the four institutions are located quite some distance from each other. This “unintentional” criterion may allow for differing results based on variations in regions and populations.

Each location was contacted and its library director was interviewed by telephone. The interview was conducted based on a list of ten questions the interviewer provided. The same questions were asked of each librarian at each location so that answers could be compared and contrasted. The interview was tape recorded to make sure that accuracy could be maintained when the final results were gathered.

The four candidates for the study were initially contacted approximately one month prior to the actual interview to determine if they would be willing to participate, at that time they were given information explaining the context of the study. They were not sent the questions ahead of time. The candidates seemed very enthusiastic and readily agreed to participate. The questions were constructed to be open-ended so that the responses would require more than a “yes” or “no” answer. This allowed for the respondents to elaborate on their answers and to offer additional information as they saw fit.

The following is a list of the questions exactly as the interviewer asked them.

- 1.....In your opinion, what role does this college/university library play in this community?
- 2.....Is that role all that you would like it to be? Why?
- 3.....How does proximity to neighboring universities affect this university library?
- 4.....What kind of relationship does this library have with the local public library?
- 5.....What is your policy toward library users not affiliated with this institution? Do you also have an Internet policy for the public?
- 6.....How are those policies different from your policies toward the campus community?
- 7.....Have you encountered problems while offering your services to the public? If so, what kind?
- 8.....What kinds of public use restrictions would you consider if you found it to be necessary? How would you expand public access if it were necessary?
- 9.....Although this is a small institution, how, if at all, do the demographics of this area affect the services you offer the public?
- 10.....Would you consider promoting, or have you promoted this library for public use? How?

During the interviews, the participants were friendly, cooperative and courteous. They appeared to give their responses careful consideration. The respondents expressed an interest in the results of the study and requested that they be sent a copy of the study for their libraries. Some respondents suggested that the results might offer solutions that could be helpful in improving their services to the public.

The results of the questions were compiled and conclusions were drawn based on those results. The results of these interviews revealed several observations. The four targeted small academic institutions are actively involved in providing the public with library services. They are, in some cases, the only source of information available in some communities. And, although some are faced with staffing and space shortages, they seem to feel an obligation to serve not only their immediate academic communities but the surrounding community as well.

The results of this paper may offer a framework that small academic institutions could consider when faced with the decision of whether and to what degree to extend their library services to the general public.

Results and Discussion

The results of this study, which describes the practices and policies used by the participating academic libraries, reveal that much of the approach that these college and university libraries take in their service to the public is controlled by their proximity to the nearest local city or town. The results also reveal that, because the participating colleges/universities are not near enough to other academic libraries, their off-campus library users find the libraries studied to be most convenient. The results also show that, of the four academic libraries studied, two have established some sort of relationship with the local public library system.

The policies put in place by the participating academic libraries show no real aversion to serving the public; in fact, at most of the institutions, their public policies are the same as their policies for on-campus patrons. However, understandably, these libraries all reserve the right to give preference to their own students, faculty and staff.

Problems encountered from the public seem at a minimum at all of the institutions studied. As far as restriction of use by the public, informants feel that there is not much they would restrict except use of the computers. Most expressed a desire to do more for the public and the community; for example, one informant said that if they had additional staff and resources they could provide organized programs that would bring in reading groups.

The diversity of the population surrounding these institutions has varied affects on library services. Because the locations of the study institutions are so varied economically, the demands by the public are somewhat different. However, for the

most part, the same basic user needs occur at all of the institutions and that is the need for information. Those needs range from the high school student seeking ready reference materials to complete a term paper to the academic researcher in need of access to scholarly journals to complete his/her research to the public user in need of access to government documents to get information on government services.

Finally, the study has revealed that most of the academic institutions' libraries have made some effort to promote themselves to the public, some to a greater degree than others.

Community Role

The University of North Carolina at Pembroke's (UNCP) Sampson-Livermore Library serves as a regional information center for its area. According to its director, the library contributes heavily to the support of area public and private school education. It also serves as a means of lifelong education for people no longer enrolled in school.

Elon College's Belk Library also serves as a reference point for its community because there is no public library nearby. Elon's library director says that Elon serves as an intellectual and social focus for the community as well as the college. In fact, the community was built around the college.

The University of North Carolina at Asheville's (UNCA) D. Hiden Ramsey Library serves a supportive role to the public library in Asheville and to the high schools, particularly the private schools and several of the private colleges in the

area. The mission of the library, according to the library director, is to serve the broader interest of the community.

While the three previously mentioned institutions are major intellectual reference resources for their communities and appear to be making a concerted effort toward community outreach, the North Carolina Wesleyan College (NCWC) Pearsall Library does not focus on community outreach. NCWC is located on the edge of the city of Rocky Mount and, according to its library director, is not a part of the lives of many in town and it is not very accessible. Even though the Pearsall library does not actively promote outreach to the surrounding community, academic libraries like Pearsall are often the only source of specialized or scholarly materials available in the area according to Nicewarner and Simon (1996).

Pearsall is open to all who wish to use its resources and the library gets a range of users from women's reading groups to high school students working on school projects. They get the occasional graduate student who does not want to drive to East Carolina University, which is approximately one hour away. The library director says that Pearsall library would like to work more with the public in some way but they have limited staff and limited space. C. W. Hayes and H. Mendelsohn (1998), in their article "Community Service in Louisiana Academic Libraries" suggest that remoteness and lack of connection to the community could jeopardize financial and political support. But that is not necessarily the case as indicated by the support given Pearsall Library by the business community. The director points out that the business community recognizes that Wesleyan brings income to the

Rocky Mount area. And as a result those businesses are very willing to go out every year to collect funds from the people of Rocky Mount to help support the college.

Hayes and Mendelsohn (1998) also mention the long and successful record academic universities have in serving the business community. The service results in mutual benefit, because businesses receive in depth research investigations, which require substantial time commitments by librarians and access to resources. Libraries receive financial and political support from the business community.

User Population

In this study, the diversity of population has had a varied effect on the kind of services the study participants offer.

Elon College is surrounded by suburban homes. The closest city to their location is Burlington, which is not within walking distance, and there is no public transportation. The user population of the Belk library comes mainly from its academic community and the surrounding suburban community. The library director feels that for better or worse they do not get the kind of homeless people or wanderers looking for someplace to hang out that they would if Elon was located in an urban area. Elon is in a relatively safe suburban area, according to the director, and it allows them not to have to put a lot of rules in place.

UNCA's Ramsey Library director says that everything they have done in terms of services, collections, electronic resources and technology is driven by the student and faculty population. The library makes those services available to others in the community to whatever extent it may match their needs. The UNCA library is also

collaborating with the public library and the Asheville Art Museum to do digitization of photographs and archival materials that relates to the African-American community in the Asheville and mountain areas. Ramsey Library hopes to do more of the same with archival materials related to local history and to Native-Americans.

L.G. Glogoff and S. Glogoff's article "Using the World Wide Web for Community Outreach: Enriching Library Service to the Community"(1998) addresses libraries giving the community access to the Web. Like the academic institution mentioned in the article, Ramsey library is providing a way to identify and preserve rare historical photographs and providing the opportunity to record, preserve and deliver histories in a digital framework. In this way Ramsey library is creating "a highly visible presence in the community, showing libraries working directly with individuals and community organizations to build new partnerships" (Glogoff and Glogoff, 1998).

UNCA also has a College for Seniors where they encourage retirees to continue to be mentally and physically fit. The members of the College for Seniors are given UNCA library privileges and the use of other campus resources.

According to Nicewarner and Simon (1996), "since diverse needs derive from a diverse population, the general public frequently requests services and information which are different from those demanded by a university population". Nowhere in this study is that more evident than at UNC-Pembroke. Most of the residents of Pembroke are Native American. The campus of UNC-Pembroke has the most diverse student population of any campus in the University of North Carolina

system. The diversity of cultures in the area serves to promote and improve human relations and creativity.

UNCP's library director thinks that part of the reason they offer as much as they do to the general public is because the area around UNCP is rather scarcely populated. There aren't a lot of choices for the public besides the public library and they do not have much in the way of reference materials or computing equipment as does UNCP. UNCP feels that they fill the need to share state resources probably more so than a wealthier or more heavily populated area would.

The location of NC Wesleyan is not a well-to-do area, and their patrons, in most cases, can not get to other colleges to use their services. Getting to NCWC is difficult in itself because the school is situated three to four miles outside of town. Even so, coming to Wesleyan is less difficult than trying to get to another university that is located even further away. People come to Pearsall library also, because they can find information about grants and public assistance or they are sometimes trying to do some basic legal research. The following is a list of just a few of the Government Documents links public users can access online at Pearsall library:

- Code to Federal Regulations
- Public Laws of The United States
- Government Periodicals
- University of North Carolina link to Federal Government Documents
- Supreme Court Decisions
- Health and Human Services
- Housing and Urban Development materials and regulations.

Relationship with other academic institutions and /or public libraries

Most of the small academic institutions in this study are not located particularly close to any other major academic institutions. However, two of the academic libraries studied, Elon's Belk Library and the UNCA's Ramsey Library, are members of either consortiums or networks that allow them to share materials with other members of those groups. Those materials, in turn, are made available to the public.

The Carol Grotnes Belk Library at Elon College belongs to a consortium of five small colleges. Students from each of the schools can check out books and materials from the other. But there is no additional interaction between Elon and any other college. No formal relationship exists between Elon's library and the local public library except for the occasional referral of people to each other's facility.

UNCA's D. Hiden Ramsey Library is a member of the Western North Carolina Network (WNCLN), which includes two other western North Carolina universities. According to the library director, the network was set up fifteen years ago so that the library could afford to buy an integrated library system at the time. The network also allows for complete collection sharing and 48-hour document delivery. Members of the network have access to approximately 1.5 million volumes from the combined campus libraries. Although this network is for the use of the students, faculty and staff of the member schools, it has had a huge impact on the University of North Carolina at Asheville. Area community colleges and several private schools in the area rely heavily on UNCA's collection for access to materials and

electronic resources they don't have. The public can use the materials but can not take them out of the library.

The relationship between UNCA and the local public library is almost non-existent, according to the UNCA library director. The only relationship between them, other than referral of patrons, has been to collaborate on the application for Federal and state grants to digitize archival images.

Both NC Wesleyan and UNC-Pembroke are significant distances away from other major academic institutions. And neither of the institutions' libraries have any kind of relationship with other institutions' libraries. Neither of the library directors believes that their remoteness is a hindrance to use.

The director of the Pearsall library says that, rather than go approximately an hour away to a larger university, people find NCWC more convenient and there are no parking problems. The director feels that people in the area find it easier to use the resources at Pearsall library. The people coming to Pearsall library are mainly part-time students, graduate students and people looking for general information. They use it because it is smaller and less intimidating than the larger East Carolina University libraries in Greenville and a shorter distance to drive.

The director of the Sampson-Livermore library at University of North Carolina at Pembroke says that they have no formal relationships with any other universities and feels that there is no danger of the public going to another university because they like the convenience of having Sampson-Livermore nearby.

Hayes and Mendelsohn (1998) discuss the benefits of academic libraries serving the community. They point out that community use is an effective

recruitment tool. Individuals who visit the library are potential sources of new students for the academic institution. They add, “a positive library experience can reinforce positive opinions about the entire institution.”

Apparently, the intimacy and convenience of the smaller library serves as a positive experience for the academic users as well as the public users of these libraries. And, although these academic institutions may be remote, they promote an air of familiarity that draws patrons to them and as a result, will draw future patrons.

NC Wesleyan’s library has a good relationship with community colleges in nearby Edgecomb and Nash Counties and with the public library in the city of Rocky Mount and the public libraries in the towns of Tarboro and Nashville. The directors of each facility meet regularly and keep each other informed through a listserv. They discuss questions or problems and go to one another for materials and /or equipment before they go elsewhere. The director of NCWC’s Pearsall library says that they are glad to get reference questions from the public library, to work with them and sometimes go the extra mile. The director reinforces the fact that they are a small institution and library but that they work to provide quick service and go a step or two beyond what is routinely expected.

UNCP’s library director of Sampson-Livermore says that they communicate with the public library about common interests and on occasion have provided the public library with books that UNCP has received but did not need. The public library provides passwords and UNCP provides proxy service to NC-Live (a

database that offers access to newspapers, magazines and journals) resources for their users.

User Policies

Academic libraries constantly attempt to find a way to balance the needs of the public with the needs of their own clientele, according to Nicewarner and Simon (1996). Hayes and Medelsohn describe a study in which nearly all the academic libraries surveyed allowed access to their libraries and allowed materials to circulate to non-primary patrons.

At UNCP, Sampson-Livermore Library uses a community borrower's policy in which individuals over 18 years of age can check out materials by first purchasing a \$10 membership through Friends of the Library. The rules for the on-campus users are no different from the public users with memberships as far as circulation of materials is concerned. According to the director, anyone can use the materials they have but occasionally the librarians will explain their policies to their patrons. Sampson-Livermore has a policy that states that they do not police the use of their computers; computers are available to everyone, including community users.

Elon's library director says that anyone who walks in the door can use their resources within the building but people outside the consortium must join their Friends of the Library to check materials out. Students, who belong to any of the consortia schools, have full privileges and anyone, including the public, can use their computers unimpeded. Elon has a policy that says students and faculty has precedent over non-campus patrons for computer use.

The director also mentioned that there was some resentment from the public that the library does not allow them to borrow from the video collection but adds Elon's faculty likes to have the videos at their fingertips for classroom use.

At UNC-Asheville, the director says that anyone can use anything in the building; no distinctions are made between UNCA users and the public. Any North Carolina resident can join the Friends of the Library for \$18 a year along with which they receive a borrower's card which entitles them to check out as many as 10 books at one time for a three week period. The membership, however, does not allow the user to check out videos and it does not allow them to have interlibrary loan privileges. UNCA has unrestricted access to the Web; they do not monitor users of their computers. They do have signs on the computers in their public areas that state that preference is to be given to UNCA users. UNCA-Ramsey Library provides remote access to the UNCA community through a proxy server, which prohibits access to non-UNCA patrons.

NC Wesleyan's Pearsall library policy is that anyone may come in and use the library and the staff lets them know that they will be glad to help them find resources. Pearsall has a computer lab and very fast Internet access, according to the library director. Public users can get help using NC-Live and any other resources while they are in the library. If public users wish to check out books, they must purchase a borrower's card and for most of the public there is a fee of \$25 for one year. The public has a limit of 5 books that they can check out at one time but they have the same circulation time as students. The director adds that currently, alumni who live in the area can get a free borrower's card. There are also free borrower's

cards for area Methodist ministers. In the past, high school students were offered a reduced rate for borrower's cards but there were problems with significant overdue materials, major fines were not being paid and books were not being returned, so that practice was discontinued. NCWC students can check out unlimited numbers of books but one drawback is that students are charged a fee to print materials while the public can print materials for free.

NC Wesleyan stresses its willingness to help patrons who come into the library. Wesleyan is a selected depository for both State and Federal Government Documents and for that reason the director feels it is important for them to provide computer access because there are many government documents that are accessible and staff can help users find out how to get the information they need. Public users usually can not take advantage of interlibrary loans; however, if some users with public borrower cards are allowed to use interlibrary loan then they are charged a fee. Students are not charged for interlibrary loans.

User Problems - Restrictions versus Expansion of Service

Problems encountered by North Carolina Wesleyan College have been minimal. One incident occurred involving a student and a public user that almost developed into a fight but it was handled quickly by security. On the rare occasions when assistance was needed due to some disturbance, campus security was able to take care of the situation. When public users have stayed too long at computers they have been asked to leave, but no trouble has resulted. The director says that public borrowers are very appreciative of the reference services offered and the materials

that the library provides and are generally willing to relinquish the computers. Restrictions are few and consist only of (1) limits put on the number of books the public can check out and (2) not being allowed the use of the computers indefinitely. The library director sees nothing that the library is doing that could be expanded upon. The director feels that they have made almost everything available to the public and there is not much more to offer except that the library might like to get more involved with projects in conjunction with the local public library.

UNC-Pembroke has had a few incidents with the public coming into the library and causing problems but campus security has been able to handle the problems. Most of the time the librarians are able to take care of the situation themselves. The director does not think any more restrictions are necessary, but says that if things really got out of hand they might consider asking people to show their identification before they would be allowed to use the equipment. However the director doubts if that will be necessary.

The only thing UNCP would expand on would be to consider providing interlibrary loan service, but for the present time their staffing situation does not allow for that to happen.

UNC-Asheville's Ramsey Library has had only minor problem incidents. They feel that because they are not close to the downtown area the incidents will remain minor. They have, on occasion, had problems from people coming in on the weekends and causing disturbance but they too have been minor. There is the occasional problem with the Friends of the Library borrower who has borrowed but not returned materials and the community user who doesn't want to give up the

computer. The public library has a restrictive use policy and filters on their computers, but UNCA does not have filters, therefore people come to Ramsey Library for unrestricted free Web access.

Ramsey's director does not think that there should be more restrictions put into place but feels that the one thing they could do is to put a kind of visor over computer screens so that only the person viewing the computer screen could see it. The only expansion of services for UNCA would be to add interlibrary loan privileges for an increased membership fee.

Elon College's Belk Library has had only minor user problems also. The occasional unsupervised teenager or someone using the computer inappropriately is the kind of problems they have encountered. In each situation, a reminder has been all that was necessary to alleviate the problem. The director says that their public use policies are rather straightforward and that if they were to consider any type of restrictions, it would consist of putting in place a written Internet policy. The policy would express the appropriate and inappropriate use of the Internet and would not only be for the community but for everyone who uses the computers.

The Elon library director says that they just expanded their policies to allow the public to check out all kinds of audiovisual materials except videos. They have also recently expanded their free access to include teachers who are participating with Elon's student-teachers and they might expand services to include free use (no need to join Friends of the Library) to certain special groups that support Elon in various ways in the community.

Library Public Relations and Self-Promotion

The Elon College Belk library conducted their most recent promotion in the spring of 2000, when they opened their new library. They sent invitations to community groups inviting them to attend open house events and they made the public aware that, among other improvements and offerings, they had meeting spaces available. Through that promotion, many people joined the Friends of the Library. But, there are no regular or annual promotional events put on by the library. Their operating hours are listed in the telephone book and in the public library. Elon's library director says that parking is so difficult at Elon most of the time that they would rather not promote events. Their concern is mainly aimed at the elderly and the difficulties they would encounter from trying to walk to the events. So, according to the director, their self-promotion is haphazard.

The University of North Carolina promotes itself by placing ads in the local Asheville newspaper and, periodically, those ads contain statements about Ramsey library and invite the public to use their resources.

University of North Carolina at Pembroke has an event called Pembroke Day and all of the community is invited to come and eat. During this event, the services of the university are promoted and Sampson-Livermore library sets up a display to let the community know what they have to offer. Also, occasionally the library has events that the public is invited to, especially programs sponsored by the Friends of the Library and those programs are always open to the public.

The Pearsall library of North Carolina Wesleyan College once had a functioning Friends of the Library organization that would conduct events on behalf

of the library but it is now almost defunct. The only project conducted now is the occasional book sales that occur about once a year. Pearsall does not actively promote itself, its director says that if they had the staffing and resources they would consider doing something to make the public aware of what they have to offer. The director adds that the only advertising they get is included in the university's public relation efforts. When university representatives are asked what the university does for the community the library is often cited.

Conclusions

The conclusions that can be drawn from this study are that the smaller academic libraries are making the effort to serve the public, but in some cases their efforts are limited by lack of funds, staff shortages and limited space. Although this study involved the libraries of only four small academic institutions, some similarities can be found in the policies and practices they use to get services to the public. And they are accomplishing this in a variety of ways such as:

- making their presence known to the community,
- joining consortia and networks to bring more resources to their clientele,
- allowing the public free access to their electronic resources,
- offering unrestricted use of computers,
- offering access to the Internet and the World Wide Web,
- allowing patron borrowing privileges, and in some instances
- offering to spend more time with a patron if the need presents itself and the staff is available.

J. M. Burkhardt (1997) found that:

Academic libraries vary greatly in size, in specialization of collections, and in budget allocations. In the past, small academic libraries have had difficulty offering holdings and services that parallel those found in larger libraries. However, an outcome of the budget cuts in recent years has been a shift in the philosophy of collection development in many libraries from ownership to access. Economic necessity has promoted the development of electronic tools needed to offer access, which has revolutionized the delivery of information. The affordability of new electronic services offers new options. Small academic libraries can now offer access to information on a scale to rival large academic libraries.

Burkhardt's article about small academic institutions and the efforts to get access to information to the public is similar to the kinds of efforts made by some of the academic libraries in this study. Their desire to offer the best access to information that is feasible for them is evident in the services they make available to the public and in other efforts they use to draw the public to them.

Recommendations

A. Hirshon's article, "Running with the Red Queen" (1996), offers a list of what he considers "minimum standards for customer services and technology for reference services in an academic library today". He adds that these standards reflect current mainstream thinking and that academic libraries not yet at this level are in danger of being left behind.

Those standards include replacing the traditional reference desk with paraprofessionals to provide basic information services. Have reference librarians "roving" to seek customers in need of assistance and place a consultation office staffed by librarians near the reference desk. The list of standards also suggest that all library staff wear name tags to make them identifiable to the public, that there be

regular and formal mechanisms to receive customer feedback and that the library provide clear, concise and attractive printed and online user guides. Also signs must be readily apparent to locate appropriate service and incorporate the principle of good visual design.

For technology services the standards list suggest having high-performance microcomputers and have the workstations provide one-stop shopping, with all electronic information services accessible at the same station. The library should have a wide range of online indexes and databases, services requests should be performed electronically and by telephone and all electronic services are to be available with graphic user interfaces from high-speed connections at remote locations.

It is obvious that not every academic library can meet all of these criteria, but these standards could serve as a goal toward which they could strive. For example, an academic library short on staff could make sure that legible signs are placed in strategic areas. This should cut back on the number of times staff is asked directional questions that clear, concise signs could handle.

Public use of academic libraries is increasing and the libraries should engage in more collaborative efforts so that they are able to offer more through partnerships than they would if they remained alone.

Academic libraries located in diverse communities should make an effort to incorporate resources and services that reflect that diversity. M.J. Ayala-Schueneman and R. Pitts (1996) say that developing collections that meet the needs

of culturally diverse populations is a concern. Culturally diverse materials are available and librarians should make an effort to add them to their collections.

A library staff that understands diversity is better equipped to fulfill the information needs of the university's diverse community through instruction and collection as well as reference (Ayala-Schueneman & Pitts, 1996). This holds true not only for the university community but the community outside of the university as well.

As a library director seeking to establish a meaningful relationship with the public user, I would pursue methods such as:

- Getting an understanding of the needs and expectations of the population; this can be done through surveys, questionnaires and discussions with community members.
- Building a relationship with the local public libraries by letting them know what my institution has to offer. The public library collections could serve as a complement to the academic collections.
- Establishing liaisons with local businesses by encouraging them to send their employees to do research at the academic library. Their influence could prove helpful during fund-raisers.
- Hiring qualified multicultural staff. This should encourage visits by new users who would not normally come to the library.
- Developing a relationship with the local public and private school systems, thereby establishing a base for future academic users.

The academic libraries in this study should increase their effort towards public relations and self-promotion. Although some of them are promoting themselves through advertisements and special events, according to G. B. Thompson (1996), they must market themselves as capable, competent and caring information providers. They must show themselves as expert information consultants to all who ask.

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