

University of South Carolina Union

Act 629 - Summary Reports on Institutional Effectiveness
Fiscal Year 2004 - 2005

Assessment of Library Resources and Services

DEFINITION

The USC Union library's responsibility is to serve the scholarly reading, reference, and research needs of the students, faculty, and staff of the campus, as well as the general public. To fulfill this responsibility, the library strives to support all areas of the curriculum offered at Union and Laurens by supplying books, journals, audio/visual media and equipment, and access to the Internet and other electronic databases as appropriate and monetarily feasible. The library also is responsible for teaching all patrons basic library skills and research methods, in a classroom setting or one-on-one, so that they are able to take full advantage of the information available toward lifelong learning.

INDICATORS

1. Quality of facility, staff, and hours of operation
2. Size and quality of collection
3. Access to associated collections
4. Collection Development
5. Quality of other services
6. Usage
7. Student satisfaction
8. Alumni satisfaction
9. Faculty satisfaction
10. Community satisfaction

ASSESSMENT METHODS

1. Comparisons of appropriate local statistics to national small college standards
2. Usage rates
3. Patron surveys

ASSESSMENT RESULTS

The USC Union library has been located on the ground floor of the Central Building since its renovation in 1981. According to accepted standards for colleges enrolling fewer than 200 FTE students, our library space meets basic standards. A standard inventory of audiovisual equipment is available in the library in the Main Building at the Union campus and at the Laurens Higher Education Center for faculty who teach in these locations. The library is responsible for the maintenance of the audiovisual equipment, and has funds budgeted for that purpose. The library does not have a microfilm printer, but does circulate the film on a one-hour checkout basis so that students can get copies at the public library three blocks away.

The Union campus provides high-speed access to the Internet. The USC-Union Library provides three computers available to students for Internet access and word processing, in addition to two online catalog computers located in the front of the library. The Laurens County Higher Education Center opened in April 2002 and with it came the Learning Resource Center. This

center serves as a modern library for USC-Union students and provides access to a total of 14 computers with high-speed access to the Internet. In both Union and Laurens, students can gain access to USCAN and electronic databases available through the USC Union Library webpage <http://uscunion.sc.edu/library/library.html>.

The library is staffed by one professional librarian, who filled the position in 2004 and by one full-time Library Technical Assistant III, who has been on staff since 2003. These two permanent staff members are assisted by a varying number of student assistants. The USC Union librarian holds the master of library and information science degree from the University of South Carolina, earned in 2002. The American Library Association considers the MLIS the terminal degree for the field, as noted on their web page (<http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlstandards/statementterminal.htm>).

According to the ACRL standards, staffing requirements should meet the minimum of three technicians for an FTE range of 1,000-2,999 students. The USC Union library employs one full-time library technical assistant whose primary responsibilities include circulation, interlibrary loan, helping supervise the work/study students, and providing reference help when the librarian is not available.

The Union library ensures that it is available to all faculty members and enrolled students by operating 49 hours per week (current as of Fall 2002) at the Union campus. The Union Library hours are 8:30am-7pm, Monday through Thursday, 8:30am-12pm on Friday, and 1:30pm-5pm on Sunday. The Laurens Learning Resource Center is open Monday through Thursday, generally between 8am until 8pm., and Friday from 8am until 12:00 p.m. The staff secretary has been trained by the librarian to check out books, make photocopies from reference materials, and to search the various electronic databases, and also the USCAN online catalog. The USC Union librarian also makes periodic trips during the semester for onsite reference consultation and assistance; a calendar is posted for information. An 800-telephone number is available for out-of-town students to contact the librarian or other library staff in Union, and electronic mail addresses are posted on the USC Union web page, <http://uscunion.sc.edu/library/library.html>, for contact through the Internet.

The library houses 32,000 books, subscriptions to 30 periodicals and standing orders, and 8,000 pieces of audio/visual media and microfilm, and provides full access to the Internet and electronic databases. These learning resources are adequate to the purpose of the institution. The ACRL standards recommend that for an FTE student population of 1,000 to 2,999, a minimum collection of 40,000 volumes is required. The USC Union library currently has approximately 32,000 volumes which meet the criterion for its average FTE population of 200. Approximately 2,000 volumes are available at the Laurens Learning Resource Center for use of students there.

In analyzing our holdings in specific areas, we find considerable strength in the liberal arts, in literature, history, psychology, sociology, basic sciences, and in foreign languages. We find weaknesses in the hard sciences, computer science, business, and in education. These are disciplines that especially require currency of information. For instance, we have randomly sampled from our collection and find the median age of holdings in biology to be 1968, in business to be 1970, in chemistry to be 1957, in education to be 1975, in government/law to be 1922, and in sociology to be 1944.

USC Union provides access to a collection of basic reference resources both in Union and Laurens that meets standard bibliographies. This collection is planned to serve primarily the first two years of baccalaureate course work, but subject coverage is augmented by evaluation of circulation statistics, interlibrary loan requests, and faculty input. The library also provides access

to more specialized resources on the main campus via electronic mail reference requests and interlibrary loan.

Beyond books and periodicals, the Union collection also includes most standard formats, including audio/visual media and equipment, microfilm, journals, state documents, and newspapers. Educational films and videos are available for the use of local professors from the Film Library on the Columbia campus, and they can be identified and received within a very few days using the Internet and email. The Laurens Learning Resource Center collection concentrates on book materials that directly reflect the courses offered there each semester, along with a small reference collection as well as reserve materials. Holdings from the Union library are relocated to the Laurens site on a semester basis upon request from local instructors.

The interlibrary loan service is available for students, faculty, and staff to obtain materials that are not available at Union or Laurens, and students are taught in the library orientation sessions how to expand the online catalog to locate additional material if they cannot find enough information in Union. Generally, if an item is located within USC, it can arrive within a few days; if it must be obtained outside USC, it can take a few weeks.

The USC Union library also meets the ACRL standards in the provision of basic LRC services and activities. By these standards, a minimum of 16 basic library services are required for an institution our size, and 28 ranks as excellent. USC Union provides 31 services, including acquisition and processing of print, non-print, and microform materials; audiovisual equipment services; audiovisual equipment distribution, maintenance, and repair; an automated online catalog with public access; bibliographic instruction; circulation of print and nonprint materials; interlibrary borrowing and lending; inventory of audiovisual equipment; listening services; microcomputers for student use; microform print service; reference services; reserve book service and video recording. In the provision of additional services above the basic level, the library is open to the general public on a regular basis, and is responsible for providing the student identification card service and campus mail service.

The USC Union library provides ongoing orientation programs at both the Union and Laurens sites. These programs include live lectures and demonstrations, bibliographies, handouts, and library tours. In University 101 an exercise introduces students to the library by "walking" them through searching for information on a topic, generally something timely or popular. Brief instructions on library use are included in the "Student Privileges at the University of South Carolina Union Library" brochure, which is handed out at orientation sessions. More complete library information pamphlets have been devised for Union and Laurens students, which include basic information about the types of materials available, how to access this information via USCAN or the electronic databases in the library or from home, and how to obtain information via the Internet or interlibrary loan. USCAN guides and interlibrary loan forms and pamphlets are available next to the public computers. Library orientations to subject-specific reference materials, such as for sociology and biology, and more in-depth USCAN and electronic database searching are made available upon request of the professor.

Collection development is shared by the librarian and the faculty. All teaching faculty recommend materials in their area, and these requests are honored to the extent of available funding. The librarian is responsible for developing the reference collection, as well as for covering gaps in the collection not covered by the resident faculty. Trade publications, book reviews in journals, titles available in the University System, and faculty resources are utilized for the collection development process. A collection development policy is in place, and can be found in the library's public services manual. A total of 579 books were added during the 2003-2004 fiscal year. Our electronic database collection continues to grow primarily through consortium

purchases of the University of South Carolina. In January, the Partnership Among South Carolina Academic Libraries (PASCAL), of which USC Union is a part of, made a group database purchase that added an additional twelve databases to our collection. This collection is known as Collegiate Discus and adds 12,000 full text titles. Accepted standards suggest that at least 6% of the campus budget be used for the library. This figure has varied between 5.3% and 6.1% over the last eight years, with an average of 5.7%

A variety of surveys are periodically administered to students, alumni, faculty, and staff, and data collected from 2001 to 2005 were considered for this report. In both the responses to individual items and in written comments taken from the surveys, we see that patrons are making a successful transition from print media to electronic sources of information. Students are making more use and are more satisfied with electronic data bases (academic year 2004 – 2005 responses of 70% of students using the databases with 71% responding above average or excellent satisfaction versus 62% using the book collection with 53% responding above average or excellent satisfaction). With electronic databases becoming more popular with students and professors and their, the adoption of such databases has been pursued aggressively at the local and University level.

Patrons perceive the library staff to be helpful and courteous, and this perception has declined somewhat since 2000 (academic year 2004 – 2005 response 76% above average or excellent), with probable cause being a turnover in the position of librarian (3 different librarians and a new Library Technical Assistant III) leading to periods of several months where there was not a librarian. The library is regarded as a comfortable facility (academic year 2004 – 2005 responses 63% above average or excellent), a decrease from 2000 mainly due to continuing problems with humidity and the HVAC system in the Central Building library.

Like the students, the faculty feels there are weaknesses in the print collections but are making many more assignments based upon electronic access. They recognize the quality of the reference collection (100% satisfactory) and appreciate the organization of the library and its services, and the caring attitude of the staff (100% positive).

USE OF ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

The size of the library is adequate for our current enrollment. If we continue to grow at the rate we have during academic year 2004 – 2005, we will have to provide a larger library, and our current, 5-year strategic plan (<http://uscunion.sc.edu/about/2004plans.htm>) considers this need. We will be studying the possibility of constructing a new classroom/library building.

The library is expecting the implementation of a new integrated library system in the Fall of 2005. The new system will replace USCAN, which has been in use since 1988. The new software has high expectations as a powerful research tool with greater search capabilities and more integration of the library's print and online collections. The new catalog is easier to use and offers more obvious search options and easier ways to limit searches to find specific materials. The new system will also provide an update to circulation and cataloguing systems. The implementation of this system will be a great improvement for library staff and students. The Interlibrary Loan system will remain the same, through the "ILL Express" program. Interlibrary loans are handled electronically and full text articles are distributed via the web. The librarian is responsible for the campus webpage and uses the web editor FrontPage to update it with current information. The librarian also keeps the electronic databases up-to-date from information sent from USC Columbia. Customized links enable tracking and generate usage reports for certain databases that enable the librarian to evaluate the effectiveness of database choices made.

The LTA has assumed more technical duties in the library, taking over the ordering end of the acquisitions process from the librarian, as well as learning the Web-based interlibrary loan system and new integrated library system. Shifting more of the technical processes from the librarian will enable her to concentrate more on the public aspects of the Union library services, including developing the library Web page, an online library orientation, and more systematic collection development.

The Partnership Among South Carolina Academic Libraries (PASCAL) has launched initiatives to greatly expand access to resources to students and faculty throughout the state. The initiatives are the foundation for the South Carolina Academic Virtual Library. The Collegiate Discus databases provided through PASCAL became available in January and include the following databases.

- Academic Search Premier- provides full text for more than 4650 publications.
- Business Source Premier- full text for nearly 8350 scholarly business journals.
- Regional Business News- coverage of 75 business journals, newspapers, and newswires from all metropolitan and rural areas within the US.
- CINAHL- provides indexing for 1835 journals from the fields of nursing and allied health.
- Pre-CINAHL- provides a rotating file of limited bibliographic information.
- MEDLINE-provides abstracts from over 4800 current biomedical journals.
- ERIC- contains 2200 digests along with references for additional information and citations and abstracts from over 980 educational and education-related journals.
- MLA Directory of Periodicals- Offers detailed information on over 7100 journals.
- Health Source: Nursing/Academic Edition- provides more than 550 scholarly full text journals focusing on many medical disciplines.
- Clinical Pharmacology- Provides access to up-to-date information on all US prescription drugs, herbal and nutritional supplements, over-the counter products and new and investigational drugs.
- Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection- Coverage of more than 550 full text journals.
- Primary Search- provides full text for more than 60 popular magazines for elementary school research.
- Funk & Wagnall's New World Encyclopedia- provides over 25000 entries on a variety of subject areas.
- EBSCO Animals- Provides information on a variety of topics relating to animals.
- MAS-Ultra- School Edition- Provides full text to more than 650 popular publications, as well as access to pamphlets, reference books, biographies, primary source documents, and an image collection.
- Military and Government Collection- Offers current news relevant to all branches of the military and government. Full text for 400 journals and indexing/abstracts for more than 500 titles.
- Computer Source- Offers full text for more than 300 publications on the latest trends in technology.

In addition to the Collegiate Discus purchase, the USC Union library has acquired several other core databases through consortium deals that USC Columbia negotiated. Criminal Justice Abstracts was added in the Fall of 2004 and includes comprehensive coverage of topics such as crime trends, drugs, prevention projects, and juvenile delinquency. The Religion Case Reporter is another addition that offers a variety of topics addressing the interaction between law and religion. The Merck Index was also added, which contains over 10,000 monographs on a wide variety of drugs, pharmaceuticals, and lab compounds. During the summer, access was gained to College Source, which is a virtual library of over 29,000 college catalogs and the Chronicle of Higher Education, a premier source of news for the academic world. A final addition to the

database collection was Leibert Online, a collection of peer-reviewed journals in the areas of biotechnology, biomedical research/life sciences, clinical medicine, surgery, and law. Needless to say, the USC Union library online collection has greatly expanded and benefited from the consortium purchases.

Although we do participate in the USCAN library network, and our students do have relatively easy access to the state-wide library resources described above, we realize that our library holdings still are smaller and older than ideally they should be. They must be strengthened, including books, periodicals, and DVDs. A DVD player was purchased in Fall 2003. Two additional VCRs were donated during the summer to serve as reserves in each building.

During the past year, we worked to strengthen our sociology and business collections. We also replaced missing books and added other resources in response to student and faculty needs. A few of the new titles are listed below.

American literature: the essential glossary, concise explanations of events, figures, works, and literary terms from Colonial times to the present.

Teens under the influence, evaluates immediate dangers that threaten kids and explores effects of drug addiction, as well as gives advice to parent to combat the growing epidemic.

Ethics in practice, a selection of readings on contemporary moral debates.

South Carolina then & now, published by the South Carolina Department of Archives and History, provides an historic and modern day perspective of our state.

Charleston: crossroads of history, offers a taste of history of one of the nation's finest and most beautiful cities.

Woman's voice, woman's place, chronicles the personal life and struggles of Lucy Stone during the woman's rights movement.

Karaoke capitalism: daring to be different in a copycat world, embraces the concept that it is possible to have a profitable business and also care about the well-being of customers, communities, and society.

The dirty dozen: toxic chemicals and the earth's future, examines the history, industrial uses, and harmful effects of commonly used organochloride chemicals.

Hands-on Information Literacy Activities, a collection of interactive learning activities for high school and college students to assist with the development of information literacy skills.

Effective teaching with technology in higher education, explains the integration of technology into teaching in higher education

During the Spring semester of 2005 students in all Union campus English 101 and 102 classes attended a hands-on orientation given by the USCU librarian and held in the campus computer lab. Nine sessions were presented to each English class. The orientation included hands-on practice for the students in how to access the USCAN online catalog for book and reference materials, as well as periodical articles and abstracts through the electronic databases on the Web. Search strategies, including author, title, subject, and keyword searches, were

demonstrated in both USCAN and various popular electronic databases. Students were then required to complete a library skills exercise to demonstrate comprehension and competency. The librarian also worked with a business professor during the spring semester to give students instruction on MLA documentation for research papers.

More and more, the USC Union faculty is incorporating an Internet searching element into students' assignments, and the library staff has spent time working with web sites, search strategies and engines in anticipation of students' questions and concerns.

Union and Laurens students are also instructed how to access these materials and online databases in their homes via remote access through the Internet. This service was upgraded during the Spring semester of 2005 to make remote access much easier. The USC Union librarian worked with the systems director in Columbia to change the URLs of databases to allow for easier and more instant access. The proxy server configuration was phased out, and a new method was implemented that requires students to only enter their social security number and last name to gain access to electronic databases from home

The USC Union Library has made great progress in the past years of becoming a modern information center. Our students have access to a vast collection of print and electronic resources. We are confident of finding needed materials that we do not have through our network of interlibrary loan libraries. The librarian works closely with the Columbia campus to ensure that the Union campus is up-to-date with the latest resources and has access to the most diverse collection possible. The USC Union library strives to meet the needs of faculty and students not only through the acquisition of resources, but also through instruction sessions and one-on-one assistance. We are committed to continually evaluating, assessing, and responding to the needs of our campus community.