Library Partnering with CSCU Libraries for New Shared Library System

By Patricia S. Banach, Director of Library Services

Eastern’s library has been using the current version of the CONSULS library system in collaboration with the other Connecticut State University Libraries and the Connecticut State Library for well over ten years. It predates my arrival at Eastern in 2003. This is a “lifetime” in terms of software! And it has served us well. However, circumstances are such that it is time to consider our options for the future. One compelling circumstance is the announcement by the system vendor, Innovative Interfaces Inc., of Emeryville CA that the current software version will not be supported past the 4th quarter of 2016. Whether or not this date is modified as the time grows nearer is unknown, but it is clear that the system is aging. Another circumstance that is causing us to consider our options is the creation of the Board of Regents system which includes the 12 community colleges and Charter Oak College. The community colleges also have aging software from a different library system vendor, ExLibris. Although there is no end date on the ExLibris software, it too is over ten years old in the version that is being run by the community colleges.

A third circumstance is the evolution of library resources from the print format to electronic formats and the complexity of managing electronic resources. While we still acquire several thousand print books per year, the majority of the collections budget is devoted to electronic databases and electronic journals, with a much smaller amount devoted to electronic books. Unlike print, where you buy a book, you own it, and you can do what you want with it (loan it, copy portions for personal use, give it away), electronic resources come with licenses which govern how you can use them. They are also almost all based on a subscription model where you pay annually to access the resources. Electronic content can and does change frequently as titles in databases are added and dropped at the discretion of the vendor and the publishers. All of these aspects described above require a modern library system that can handle more than books well and seamlessly. In our current library system, we have a patchwork of products and procedures to keep track of both print and electronic resources, and the result is not optimal.

Sharing a library system with the community colleges is not a project that was initiated by the Board of Regents. Libraries have a long history and tradition of sharing resources as no one library (not even the largest and best funded) can own everything. Yes, we do provide materials to Harvard and Yale occasionally via interlibrary loan! But more relevant, we provide and receive materials regularly to and from the community colleges. All of the CSUs have significant numbers of community college transfer students attending and graduating from our Universities. And sometimes, students from the Universities transfer to a community college for a variety of reasons, usually financial. Having a single shared library system has the potential to be good for all of our students. There will be less of a learning curve as they move among the institutions and it will provide a platform for both improved resource management as well as additional collaboration.

To this end, the Council of Library Directors of the Connecticut Board of Regents system has established a working group to write an RFP for a new shared system. The working group is comprised of library staff from both the Universities and the Community Colleges as well as the State Library. The goal is to acquire a new state of the art library system that will serve the needs of all of the constituent libraries, provide easy and seamless access to all formats of library resources, and to have it funded by the Board of Regents. The libraries are enthusiastic about this project which we think will be for the greater good of our collective students, and will also meet the research needs of the faculty. Of course, this is a big, complex undertaking requiring communication and goodwill. The CSCU Library Directors have been meeting regularly as a group from the very inception of the CSCU system and hope to build on the collaborative spirit that infuses the group.
2014 marked the 20-year anniversary of the J. Eugene Smith Library’s official designation as a Federal Depository Library. “The Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) was established by Congress to ensure that the American public has access to its government’s information. Since 1813, depository libraries have safeguarded the public’s right to know by collecting, organizing, maintaining, preserving, and assisting users with information from the federal government.” http://www.fdlp.gov/

We are one of 17 selective Federal Depository libraries within the state. Throughout the nation approximately 1,200 libraries participate in this program. In addition to depository library collections, the Government Publishing Office provides free online access to authentic government information through the FDsys website (www.fdsys.gov).

Although they are housed within the many libraries, all materials remain the property of the United States Government. With the designation of selective library, we are required to receive and maintain a core collection of government documents, but additional materials are voluntarily chosen. We select approximately 28% of available items with the emphasis placed upon the areas that complement the needs of our academic departments. The GPO recent name change from Government Printing Office to Government Publishing Office reflects the directional modification made to accommodate the public’s preference for readily-accessible materials available in online rather than print formats.

J. Eugene Smith Library Celebrated 20 Years as a Federal Depository Library • 1994-2014
by Janice Wilson, Associate Librarian

J. Eugene Smith Library 2015 Undergraduate Student Library Research Award
by Janice Wilson, Associate Librarian

Our students do amazing research, and the library will again offer recognition of their hard work by giving $350 prizes to one freshman or sophomore student and to one junior or senior student. 2015 is the fifth anniversary of the library’s Undergraduate Student Research Award.

The deadline is Friday, April 10, 2015. Please encourage students to apply. Details, applications, and names of past award winners can be found at the award site: http://easternct.libguides.com/content.php?pid=62741
Faculty & Staff
Present a Workshop Highlighting Your Writing
by Carol Reichardt, Associate Librarian

Would you like to share one of your recent written works (Article, Book, Poem, etc.) with the Eastern community? We would like to offer a space in the library highlight the work of a faculty member or staff. This would be a chance to share your work in an informal, small group setting. We will advertise your appearance and the focus of your work. The workshop will include your selected readings and a chance for a few questions. Approximately ½ hour or more will be reserved at a date and time of your convenience.

Points of interest might be the motivation and process used to complete your work. Students, staff and faculty can benefit from your accomplishments. Light refreshments will be served.

Please email Carol Reichardt at reichardtc@easternct.edu if you are able to present your creative and/or scholarly writing in the library this spring 2015.

New Look for Library Student Employees
By Patricia S. Banach, Director of Library Services

The Library employs many students who are critical to providing service at our several service desks. They can often be found away from the service desks when they are doing book re-shelving, or helping to load paper into the printers, or assisting another student in finding a book in the stacks. But once away from the service desk, they blend in with their fellow students. Now they have new library student employee t-shirts to help other students identify them as a resource for help. The t-shirt was the brainchild of Tracy Sutherland, Access Services Librarian.
PLEASE CONSIDER BEING A FRIEND OF THE LIBRARY

By designating your tax deductible contribution in one of the categories below, you will be supporting the collections and services of the J. Eugene Smith Library at Eastern Connecticut State University.

_____ Friends of Eastern $50-99  _____ F. R. Nobel Associates $1,000-4,999
_____ The Century Club $100-299  _____ Tower Society $5,000 and above
_____ The President’s Circle $300-499  _____ Other contribution amount
_____ The 1889 Society $500-999

Total amount enclosed: _______________________________  Today’s date: ______________________________________

I would like to make this donation in honor of: ______________________________________________________________

I would like to make this donation in memory of: ______________________________________________________________

The library will gift plate a book in your name, or in honor or memory of someone you designate, for a donation of $50 or more.

Name: _______________________________________________________________________________________________
Phone: (optional): ____________________________________________________________________________________
Address: _____________________________________________________________________________________________
E-mail (optional): _____________________________________________________________________________________
City: ________________________________________________________________________________________________  State: __________  Zip: _______________

Please make checks payable to the: ECSU Foundation, Inc.
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