Cornell University Library Instruction Program Overview (Jan. 2012)

Instruction Mission Statement:

The library's instruction mission is to enhance learning and integrate information competency into the curriculum. Library staff partner with faculty and other instructors to help all members of the academic community to find their way into collections, and to master research techniques and methods. In a rapidly changing information and education environment, we help them learn the skills needed to find, read, evaluate, and use complex resources from the Cornell University Library and beyond, in a confident, efficient, and ethical fashion.

Learning Outcomes:

- Students will develop an understanding of how scholarly information is formally and informally produced, organized and disseminated in order to select appropriate research tools and resources relevant to their field of inquiry.
- Students will find and use relevant information available from the Library collections, the internet, and other sources in order to confidently access needed information effectively and efficiently.
- Students will be able to evaluate information sources critically according to selected criteria (such as authority, currency, bias, etc) in order to select appropriate sources to inform their research.
- Students will analyze and synthesize the information they find in order to accomplish a specific purpose (a paper, presentation, movie, etc.).
- Students will develop an understanding of the ethical and legal issues surrounding the use of information in order to use, cite, and acknowledge information sources appropriately

 Program at-a-glance

- Cornell Library has 18 unit libraries.
- Many units (though not all) have a dedicated instruction coordinator to assist with scheduling instruction request for faculty.
- The Public Services Executive Committee (PSEC) instruction committee is a standing committee designed to address the professional development needs of librarians and teaching staff. The committee has rotating membership in two-year appointments. There are currently 9 librarians serving on the committee.
- From 2005-2010, course instruction provided by Cornell University Librarians has seen a 35% increase.
- In 2009-2010, librarians conducted over 1500 instruction sessions, reaching over 21,000 people. Many of these sessions were "course-related" instruction, whereby a librarian-faculty partnership is established in order to create a custom research session for the class.
- Research sessions are designed with the input of the faculty, and the experience can range from a one-time visit to the classroom to discuss databases, to a few weeks of intense research assistance for a project, to a for-credit research course taught by librarians.

- Instruction and access to students is greatly improved through the use of web tools and technology; for example, since 2008, librarians have created over 1000 web guides for courses that are easily integrated into Blackboard.

Strategic Priorities

- In concert with Cornell University's outcomes for student learning, the Library's Strategic Plan "Towards 2015," has as one of its ten priorities that information literacy programs will be in place to achieve college learning outcomes
- A strategic planning group for Information Literacy was convened in Fall 2011
- A major goal towards achieving information literacy is to partner with faculty to embed components of information literacy– the ability to find, use and evaluate information – directly into research assignments, rather than an ancillary, add-on component to a class.

Some of our Current Activities

- We are seeking faculty-librarian pilots with a few departments to develop cohesive, sequential programs throughout freshman-junior classes. This activity is building on the work of the Information Competency Institute, which brought faculty-librarians together for course redesign.
- Build awareness of our goal to incorporate Information Literacy through our work with college curricula committees
- Assessing the scope of our instruction efforts in order to produce a University-wide curricula map
- Developing the pedagogical expertise of our librarians through a nationally-celebrated "Immersion" program in May 2012
- Partnering with Academic Technologies and Center for Teaching Excellence to participate in their January faculty forums