

Chapter 8

University of South Carolina Aiken

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The University of South Carolina Aiken is a four-year regional, public, baccalaureate institution of approximately 3,200 students in rural South Carolina, established in 1961. Independent library services began in 1975, and the library now offers 40,000 square feet of materials, computing areas, office, and instruction space, supported by a faculty and staff of thirteen. The library uses a combined team of seven librarians to provide both instruction and reference services. These services are led by independent coordinators who are responsible for managing their respective programs but do not have supervisory responsibilities. The shared resources of the two teams lead to a number of synergies, including shared instruction materials, greater responsiveness, greater insight to reference questions, proactive resolution of common reference issues, and insightful collection development. However, this arrangement also leads to challenges due to limited financial resources, personnel resources, development opportunities, and balancing workloads between the two services throughout the semester. A new course was also added to general education requirements in the fall of 2011 that made information literacy a key component of educational outcomes early in a student's college career. To address future development, the reference and instruction teams are expanding the online educational resources available to students and faculty, reconsidering the availability and delivery of reference services, and exploring new modes of teaching and outreach.

OBJECTIVES OF THE CHAPTER

- The reader will understand the interaction of reference and instruction services at a small, four-year, public university.
- The reader will identify the reference and instruction duties in a library environment
- with coordinators for both reference and instruction.
- The reader will recognize successful programming initiatives that combine reference and instruction services.
- The reader will identify possibilities for the future of reference and instruction services at a small academic library with limited staffing.

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ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND

The University of South Carolina Aiken is a four-year public university offering baccalaureate and three master's degree programs. It was founded in 1961 primarily to meet the higher education needs of students in a five county regional area on the western side of South Carolina along the Central Savannah River Valley. The Aiken location was envisioned by the Aiken County Commission for Higher Education, which petitioned the University of South Carolina administration at the main campus in Columbia for a satellite location to address both higher education and community education needs (Aiken County, 2012). Originally, the campus was housed in a historic mansion located in downtown Aiken, and it was moved to the current campus location in 1972 (Board of Trustees, 2009). Initially, the campus offered only two-year associates degree programs, but grew over time to include numerous four-year accredited degrees beginning in 1977 (Board of Trustees, 2009).

Though the current campus location started with only one building to provide classroom space, administration and library services, it soon became apparent that the library collection needed a separate space. Soon afterward, with \$400,000 in gifts from the Gregg-Graniteville and Swint Foundations, the second building on campus, a new library, was started. The monetary gift was the largest to an institutional library in South Carolina at the time. Construction was finished on the aptly named Gregg-Graniteville Library in 1975, and the library remains in the same location today (Mission & history, 2011).

The original library building afforded 20,000 square feet of space, but quickly became too small as the campus infrastructure grew. This problem proved particularly acute when the campus transitioned from a two-year to four-year institution. As the enrollment, infrastructure, and faculty numbers grew, it became necessary to increase the size of the library to accommodate the new programs

and faculty research interests. Consequently, an additional 20,000 square feet were added to the library in a renovation completed in 1984 (Mission & history, 2011). This expansion also helped support the library's special services, as it is a selective federal depository, a state government documents depository, and the home of a United States Department of Energy Reading Room (USCA library government documents, 2012).

After the addition in 1984, the physical library space remained largely the same for twenty years until an internal remodel was proposed to allow more collaborative and instruction space, as well as expanding available offices to meet the demands of increased staffing. The remodels took place from 2004-2007 and also allowed more public computing space throughout the library to meet patron needs (Mission & history, 2011).

Today, the university is home to over 3200 undergraduate students and a limited graduate enrollment of approximately seventy students. The campus has expanded from the original building to numerous classroom buildings, a student activities center, and three dormitories that accommodate roughly a quarter of the undergraduate student population. The university is still engaged with the Aiken County Commission for Higher Education, which owns the property on which the university currently sits, and provides continuing education classes to the community in addition to fulfilling the primary role of providing higher education opportunities to individuals in the surrounding areas. The dual roles of serving the academic and local communities are reflected in the library's mission statement, "The Gregg-Graniteville Library of the University of South Carolina Aiken strives to provide the academic community with the information required for intellectual, professional, and personal development. The Library also strives to serve as an information resource for the University's geographical service area" (Mission & history, 2011).

The information literacy and reference programs have developed in much the same way as

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