Chapter 9
Utah State University

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Utah State University is rapidly expanding its distance education program, bringing changing reference and instruction needs. The rise of distance education classes and classes at the regional campuses has contributed to changes within reference and instruction, and a closer integration between the two services and between the work with on-campus students and students at a distance. The Coordinator of Regional Campus and Distance Education Library Services and the subject librarians work closely to bring reference and instruction services to students at the main campus, at the regional campuses, and via distance education.

OBJECTIVES OF THE CHAPTER

- The reader will understand the role of distance education services within the reference and instruction role of the library.
- The reader will recognize the subject librarian model at the Merrill-Cazier Library and the integration of reference, instruction, and collection development.
- The reader will identify the services within reference and instruction designed for distance education students.

ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND

Academic libraries have continually adapted collections, services, and instruction to the changing needs of students and faculty. The growth of distance education within colleges and universities is the latest impetus for adapting and revising services for the changing needs of students. The *Standards for Distance Learning Library Services* specify that all students, whether located on a main campus or studying at a regional campus or through distance education are equally entitled to

library services and access to assistance (Distance Library Services Guidelines Committee, 2008). This is a goal that many libraries serving distance students endeavor to fulfill (Tang, 2009).

Utah State University (USU), like many institutions of higher learning, is rapidly expanding its distance education initiatives, and the library is continually adapting and creating services and policies to reach distance students. USU is the land grant institution in the state of Utah and has a robust and growing system of regional campuses and distance education programs. Currently, 14,646 undergraduate students are enrolled at the main campus in Logan and 9,987 undergraduate students take classes at regional campuses and centers and through distance education programs ("Utah State University Enrollment Comparison," 2010). Some of these numbers are duplicate, however, as students at the main campus can also take online classes. At the graduate level, 1,826 students are pursuing degrees at the main campus and 2,122 students are pursuing graduate degrees through the regional campuses and distance education. The growing numbers of students taking classes away from the main campus is a catalyst for changes to the library's collections and for the services provided to students, especially within reference and instruction.

USU has three regional campuses in addition to several centers, all of which are home to USU faculty members and instructors. USU also recently merged with a two-year college, the College of Eastern Utah, which will likely change library dynamics in the future. Classes are held at the regional campuses and also broadcast to sites throughout the state, in addition to online courses that are available to students without regard to geographic location. There are an increasing number of full degree programs and upper-division and graduate courses offered through the regional campuses and distance education. Distance students can choose from twenty-six undergraduate degrees and eighteen graduate degree programs, including a doctorate of Education (EdD). The number of full degree programs available online or through broadcast also means an increasing number of online and interactive broadcast classed offered by departments at the main campus.

There are no physical library facilities or library staff at any of the regional campuses or centers; therefore, students and faculty rely on the main campus library. Currently, the main library has a collection of 1.6 million print volumes and approximately 500,000 electronic books. The electronic books subscriptions have been substantially increased in the past few years with the rise of off-campus students. All of the library's 250 plus databases and the majority of the library's journal subscriptions are available electronically. The library, with funding support from the university provost and president, has made a concerted effort to purchase electronic journals in all disciplines, and especially the physical sciences, in the past few years. This trend toward electronic materials is in accordance with reports from other universities. An average of 51% of funds spent on collection development by member institutions of the Association of Research Libraries are devoted to electronic materials (Kyrillidou & Bland, 2009).

The core group of librarians performing instruction and reference activities is housed in the Reference and Instruction Department. Seven full-time and one part-time librarian as well as a library staff member comprise the department, which is one of ten departments in the library. The librarians work with English composition and general education courses, teach information literacy for subject areas, and take shifts at the reference desk, along with librarians and library staff from other departments. Librarians in other departments also carry out information literacy instruction for classes in their subject specialties.

SETTING THE STAGE: REFERENCE

The Reference and Instruction Department houses the library's core instruction group, who also hold multiple shifts each week at the reference desk and cover the evening and weekend reference shifts. In

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