

Alfred University
All Library Staff Meeting
October 12th, 2011
Meeting Opened at 2:07pm

In attendance: Sara Arrasmith, Rosalie Mulhollen, Ellen Bahr, Verna Mullen, Leigh Wright, Linda Sootheran, Mark Smith, Brett Arno, Laurie McFadden, John Hosford, Brian Sullivan, Lois Foxwell, Amanda Criss, Erinnae Baker, Dave Snyder, Bev Crowell, Jane Brown, Sandra Jones, Fang Wan

Mark noted that he was chairing the meeting on behalf of Steve. He commented on the layout of the agenda and his additions including the Scholes Strategic Update item and the AU Libraries: Integration w/Autonomy – Open Discussion item.

Branding Homework – Laurie McFadden

Laurie began her discussion of the ongoing AU Libraries branding process by discussing the “Next Steps” checklist that originated from Todd Butler. The recommendations of the checklist were to (after the branding workshop):

- Identify groups needing brand identification (staff, faculty, etc.)
- Develop presentations appropriate to the needs
- Reorient staff members that were not present at the workshop
- Complete the customer touchpoint exercises
- Examine any strategic plan reviews that are in place to see that such plans are working toward the brand
- Prioritize strategic planning agenda items that were discovered in the plan evaluation and touchpoint exercises in order to create a manageable workflow
- Have these brand qualities in mind when considering candidates for hire
- Incorporate these brand qualities at staff orientation

Laurie reminded the staff that the brand is the message that the AU Libraries are trying to give to users, so it has to be taken into account and incorporated into staff evaluations, program decisions, and marketing. A communications audit was recommended which would look at the instances of communication with target audiences to ensure that those communications convey the brand.

She informed Scholes that Herrick was in the process of doing the customer touchpoints homework. Mark had a question regarding whether or not there is a set series of exercises that would walk the library through the above checklist. Laurie noted that it's a huge list that could not be completed at once, so it is ideal to incorporate it into current processes first, rather than do something new like create an ad hoc committee to start something new.

Laurie then gave a better description of what the customer touchpoint exercises are. She informed Scholes that Herrick had participated in a two-day workshop in which the library determined nearly 60 specific interactions that the library has with patrons. These were grouped into categories, each category was assigned to a group of 4-5 staff, then each group would record the touchpoint being discussed and fill in categories for each touchpoint including:

- Who is involved (who is in charge of that touchpoint or is the person to interact with the patron for that touchpoint)
- The ideal experience
- The elements of the brand that should characterize the interaction (Example: a question at the desk should be friendly and service-oriented, but not necessarily innovative)
- The current experience (what the description of the experiences and atmosphere of current interactions is)
- A rating: 1-3 (1 being less than ideal, 2 being good but room for improvement, and 3 being similar to the ideal experience)

There was discussion on the fact that this touchpoint evaluation is not so much about evaluating the individuals and criticizing an item for which that individual is responsible, but more about how the staff can do better work in each touchpoint. She noted that to take on the list of recommendations would be an overwhelming task, but that Todd will give the libraries a matrix to prioritize the things that the libraries need to work on, based on importance.

Mark requested clarification on the meaning of the brand, in that he wondered if the brand was the same thing that was defined in the AU libraries brand retreat, to which Laurie responded that it was and outlined the parts of the brand that the libraries had decided on. She reminded the staff that while the brand covers both libraries, each library can implement it differently, and that these are internal elements for benchmarking purposes. Those pieces of the brand are what the libraries want patrons to say about us when the staff is not present or what a tour might say about us.

Mark wondered if the touchpoint homework had revealed new things about the way that things work within the library or if there have been brilliant ideas or changes that have been found through this process. Sara noted that there have been some of these in her group, and thinks that the staff will be able to hone that when all of the touchpoint work is consolidated. The homework is not just spinning our wheels.

Mark thought that it sounded like good progress was being made, and wondered if there was any sensitivity when a staff member's area of responsibility was being evaluated. He noted that it's apparent that there needs to be trust going into improvement, and that the process seems to be more about finding breakdowns in the system. It is not really about the people. Ellen agreed that it is a very objective type of measure. When holding something against the brand, it either fits or it does not. It's not personal. Laurie added that it's understandable that it's going to feel personal,

but that everyone is taking part in the process and that all of the staff have the same goal in mind which is that they want to have a great environment, make it a good place to work, and to have people that are willing to support you. She noted that it is good that the libraries have an environment of people that are willing to take suggestions. It's also good to have a fresh set of eyes, so that things can be evaluated that one might not see. Linda agreed that it's not about you, it's about the job and looking at the job to find out what needs improvement.

Scholes Library's Determination of Identity

Mark noted that the Scholes staff has been spending a lot more time together than they ever have. He mentioned that this helps to create objectivity and co-workers may be able to see things that one might not notice anymore. He discussed the fact that some things needed immediate attention at Scholes once the brand had been determined. The Scholes staff are still getting to know each other and he noted that it is important for their strategic initiatives be based around discovering who Scholes Library is and trying to put that in action. They wanted to work on rediscovering the meaning of "special" in "special library." They want to be able to better convey that they are a different sort of library. He explained that so far they had found that the significance of the difference is that they are specialized towards engineering and art. World-wide researchers may visit Scholes for some of their one-of-a-kind items. They took part in a retreat with Susan Curry, a strategic institutional researcher, who helped them to realize that Scholes is the meeting place of art and engineering. Scholes has a unique environment since it's where engineering and science are meeting art. He was concerned that this wasn't manifesting itself. If some of the energy of the collaboration between scientists and artists was released, Scholes is where that would take place. He feels that their efforts have been haphazard, but fruitful.

Discussion ensued regarding the fact that a lot of engineering patrons do not set foot in the library because they have been trained to be self-sufficient or they do many transactions via the phone or email. There is little personal interaction with engineering students and faculty. This is different with the art students, as Bev (especially) has many interactions with them since many have special needs, so one-on-one interactions are more appropriate. Overall, technology has changed the way we interact with many patrons. Laurie noted that we're making it easy for patrons to use the library without visiting the building. Thus, each interaction had with a patron must make the patron want to continue using the library. Sandra noted that often the things the libraries do as a service to patrons enables them to circumvent visiting the library, but it's service oriented. Ellen, however, noted that patron interaction with online materials is still like the patron is sort of in the library. Mark then asked how the libraries can better make the campus (especially administrators) aware of these unidentified capabilities. There is a lot that goes into making these distance transactions possible. Laurie gave the example about IP recognition to access full text. Professors do not realize that this functionality is on campus until they try to access an article at home. It was noted that there is much underlying fear regarding job loss if the campus is not aware of the work that goes into these services, and that many will not realize the

importance of these features until funding has been cut and the features removed. Ellen noted that some of the web-available elements cannot be branded. There was discussion about the balance of invisibility on the part of the libraries versus publicizing the value of the libraries. Laurie noted that the libraries need to be kept relevant.

AU Libraries Collaboration – Digitization Location, Shared Teaching

Mark is proud of where the libraries have identified where they can work together and address the needs of different constituent groups. He speculated as to how much the libraries should be more of the same library, or if the libraries should keep maintaining individuality.

Laurie brought up the issue of whether or not it would be beneficial to have a central location for digitization of materials for the institutional repository. She mentioned that all of the documents are going to the same place with the same process and workflow. She noted that while each library's patrons have different needs, there still needs to be some autonomy. Mark also wondered if possibly some of the visual literacy instruction of Scholes could be incorporated into Herrick's literacy programs. He wondered if Scholes could "piggy-back" on some of Herrick's teaching, since Herrick does more teaching than Scholes.

Art Books Move

Mark noted that the art books move is another instance of sharing and cooperation. He noted that it was good that users only have to come one place in order to use the libraries' art books. Verna noted that the art book move is coming along well and that the project is being complete as time allows. Linda explained that she doesn't take a cart of books out of the catalog until Scholes is ready for them. Bev reminded the staff that the project was slowed down this summer because of the reference move. They had also redone their oversize collection over the summer. She said that they still have room in periodicals, and that spacing in the oversize collection would not be an issue. Verna also told the staff that they are implementing bookplates that say "Part of the Herrick Collection at Scholes." Laurie thinks this is excellent because the staff will not have to worry about a donor being upset about a book donated to Herrick being at Scholes. Verna also noted that none of the gift information is lost, as the donor information will remain on the books. Ellen wondered how the catalog is working with this process. She wondered if it is easy to see in which library an art book is located. Verna clarified that whatever is waiting to be added to the Scholes collection is not in the catalog at Scholes yet, and the item would have already been withdrawn at Herrick, so there are no books that are in the Scholes catalog that are unavailable to Scholes patrons. It was noted that those books had not yet been sought after, but Bev noted that if a class needed those books put on reserve, the processing could be sped up. Ellen said that perhaps Herrick needs to post a sign in the N's so that patrons who are used to using the N books will know where the books have gone.

There was some discussion on how often staff are asked why libraries are even useful anymore.

Technology Updates

Mark moved the conversation to Technology updates. He noted that there have been many trials this semester. Ellen noted that the two libraries are comparing notes on these problems behind the scenes. Some of the difficulty arises because there are problems that are similar between the two libraries and some that are different. She and Fang have been meeting with ITS separately, and Ellen has been meeting with them weekly. Progress was slow with ITS at the beginning of the semester due to the fact that it was difficult to help ITS to realize the scale of the problems that the libraries were having in order to help ITS take the problems seriously. She noted that progress has been made, and the problems aren't quite to where they need to be, but that she knows the problems for the most part. She let the staff know to tell her if any new problems arise, and she'll keep reporting them to ITS. Fang noted that at the beginning of the semester, a big portion of the problems was connection with the thin clients. She does, however, have fewer and fewer students complaining about the connection. Currently, however, there are printing problems. Ellen feels that perhaps this can be avoided in the future by making fewer changes at one time. The libraries acquired PaperCut and new printers, and ITS updated Thin Clients all at once. She feels that the libraries need to try to avoid that type of situation in the future.

Mark wondered if they were meeting the needs of the patrons well enough, and he wondered how the patrons were handling the changes. He found that the students were ok, that the students are good at understanding. The Scholes staff posted little signs to inform patrons that they understand the issue, and that ITS is taking care of it. He likes proactive prevention of blowups. Mark wondered if, perhaps, there is an issue that a patron has had with a library that will appear on some sort of evaluation and he wants to make sure that the library is not being held responsible for a bad rating when the item was not their issue in the first place. He noted that the libraries do not get acknowledged for extending their services, but that they may take slack for what appears to be a library issue. However, it was decided that it's fairly clear that the libraries are sympathetic, apologetic, and willing to do what it takes. Everyone on the library staff takes every opportunity to go above and beyond. It was noted that this does help to mitigate the grumpy mindset.

Mark asked Dave to share his observations regarding technology issues. Dave commented that it's frustrating, overall. He is frustrated that one cannot sit down at thin client and have it work the first time. He noted that it does seem that patrons are aware of the empathy on the part of the desk staff. He feels that it helps that the library staff are willing to go above and beyond.

Ellen wondered if Scholes has a way to refund with PaperCut. Bev informed the staff that they do, and Ellen mentioned that she's also been generous with refunds. Bev does, however, make a point to show patrons the print preview and keeps a log of refunds to avoid abuses to the system. Ellen also said that since PaperCut is new, she prefers to give the patron a freebie and lesson at the same time.

John sparked discussion about what can be done to avoid this in the future. He would like to see ideas implemented earlier, with plenty of time before classes start. He feels like the current system puts all of the frustration of dealing with patrons that don't understand the difference on the libraries. Mark clarified that the libraries do not have very much control. He explained that the libraries simply need to be aware of these things ahead of time, and to beware of scheduling of these major changes. He noted that the libraries have no power over when ITS decides to work on certain issues, since ITS has certain people with certain skills that are only available at certain times, which creates a tricky planning situation. Jane brought up the issue of how this may negatively affect student retention if it keeps going on. The students may feel as though they were sold a bill of goods when choosing Alfred University, and that they got here and were stymied constantly. She hopes that this will not cause a mass exodus. She noted that this maybe be a tool to help stress the importance of fixing these things for student retention. Ellen explained that it would be helpful if systems were tested before implementation. ITS does not currently test things adequately. They try to get things up and running and generally do not think ahead for problems that could arise. It will be a change in mindset for ITS that they should not simply start something, but rather they need to plan and test the system first. Dave noted that the libraries just were not ready to handle the changes. They had not received any training or documentation. Ellen said that it was not for lack of requests on the part of the libraries for orientation and training. Mark suggested having a summit with ITS with good timing to discuss the lack of preparation, training ahead of time, and the timing of things. He did mention that it might not necessarily be constructive now as opposed to when the problems are solved. He will eventually bring these things up with ITS at the summit. He did clarify that ITS has been proactive recently about solving the problems, just not proactive about implementing the systems. Ellen explained that she feels that it's not for lack of caring on ITS's part, they're just simply overwhelmed. She feels that through discussion, the libraries and ITS can come to a more common understanding of how to work together better, and what the balance between doing something quickly and doing it right is. The libraries would rather wait a little longer until things are ready, than to have them implemented quickly. The libraries hope to have an open conversation about how it can be done better next time. Bev also noted that when the Toshiba contract is renewed, ITS needs to be involved. She mentioned that there are disparities between the knowledge of the Toshiba salesmen and the ITS staff, and that they need to collaborate to be sure that the functionalities advertised do, in fact, exist.

Thumbdrives

Mark noted the acquisition of their new high speed scanner that has many excellent features. He noted that this was the reason for the purchase of the thumbdrives, as the user can scan and save their work directly to a thumbdrive. He noted that Scholes plans to sell them, but Herrick will be giving them to student workers. Scholes would like to retrieve some of the cost. Rosalie has been working with the business office since there's so much involved with the sale of the drives due to taxes and such. She's hoping to have them ready for sale by Monday.

Coffee Sales

Mark informed Herrick that they're just about ready to start selling coffee. They'll be charging \$1, with tax included, and Rosalie will be doing the accounting and making sure that the tax goes to the right place. She feels that charging tax upon sale will be easier in the long run, especially if there was to ever be an audit. Scholes will also be charging tax within the \$5 for the thumdrives, so she felt that it would be easiest to have both sales deal with tax, rather than one with and one without. Scholes already has their coffee machines and will be placing it in the vending machine area, since cleanup will be easier on tile, and it's within view of the desk so ensure that students do not attempt to, for example, make soup with the machines.

Dave gave an update on Herrick's progress with acquiring a coffee machine. He's not in a rush, and was waiting to look at the machine that Scholes purchased. He noted that the machine should not use village water since it would destroy the machine. He's still in the process of choosing a coffee machine. Rosalie informed the staff that if Herrick acquired their machine through Eaton, they would get future coffee for free, so long as all coffee was purchased through them. The coffee is cheaper that way, too. Dave noted that Herrick will not be charging tax. He also said that he is hoping for organizations to have fundraisers in the café area such as Donuts for Donations or Donuts for Dollars.

Institutional Repository Update

Laurie gave an update on the institutional repository. She, Fang, Rosalie, Erin Crandall (working part time for practical experience) and Brett are working on it. Brett has been having conversations with ITS since February. They will be using D-Space, which is an open source platform used by hundreds and hundreds of institutions. She is happy with it overall. Laurie explained that the system is being tested and they have been adding documents to it. This will be a service to the whole University since it is for University-wide documents including faculty research, student theses, etc. It is also external, too, since it can be harvested by Google. John and Elizabeth will be testing the system in depth. They will go through the instructions to see what problems arise. Laurie has some campus offices lined up that will be the next layer of testing. The system will be rolled out in stages and will be an on-going project. She's in the processes of doing minor revisions and tweaking. She's very excited about it. She thinks the institutional repository will be rolling out in the next month. She noted that there is material in the system so users can see what the system will look like. She commended Brett for his technical go-arounds and his graciousness. She thanked Fang who has been helpful because of her past experience with repositories, and Rosalie for her never-failing enthusiasm.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:33pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Erinnae Baker, Secretary at Herrick Library