Books and Beyond:  
A Progress Report

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Planning Process

During the last year, Fondren Library staff have been engaged in an extensive planning process. The internal phase of our process is now drawing to a close, and we are in the midst of drafting a final report that will establish a vision and implementation plan for future library collections and services for Rice University.

Many of you willingly gave of your time to complete an extensive survey. Your comments and opinions have been enormously helpful to us.

Data analysis for outside users and students has been completed. An overview of the results of the student survey appears elsewhere in this issue.

At the present time, data from the faculty/administrative staff survey are being analyzed. A full report covering the entire survey will be prepared and made available at a later time.

All of the task forces have completed their deliberations and Fondren Library’s planning group, composed of our key managers, is in the process of developing an overall final report. This phase will be completed by June.

Reserve Reading

Since first arriving on campus, one of the areas about which I have received significant comment from students and faculty alike is the Reserve Reading Room and the policies and procedures governing its use.

Last month a Reserve Reading Review Committee was formed to review our reserve policies and procedures. Areas that will be addressed are room arrangement, staffing, arrangement and location of materials, and procedures for placing materials on reserve.

While the committee is faced with a tight time schedule, we hope that their work will be completed early enough so that any proposed changes can be implemented by Fall Semester. If you have any comments, suggestions, or concerns you would like to express, please contact Sarah Bentley (Circulation, 4021), who is chairing the committee, or Ginny Martin, Head of Circulation.

Library Administrative Organization

In order to more effectively meet the needs of our users and to provide more effective oversight for our collection development and public services programs, changes in the administrative structure of the Fondren Library were implemented this spring, and a number of our staff have been assigned new responsibilities.

The Reader Services Division has been reorganized into two departments: 1) Reference Department, which consists of all persons currently working at the main reference desk; 2) Satellite Collections...
Internet: A World of Information at Your Fingertips

How can a physics professor at Rice University access the library catalog at Oxford University without ever leaving his office? Through Internet, of course! Internet is the name for a collection of interconnected computer networks that span the world. Faculty, students, and staff are no longer limited to searching the catalog at Fondren Library or other local libraries. The catalogs of over 100 libraries, most of which are located on university campuses, may be searched easily using the Internet. All you need is a computer, access to the Rice Network if you are on campus, or access to the ES/9000 mainframe or Owlnet if you are off campus.

A word of caution—researchers should review the University policy on use of external computing facilities before dialing into these libraries. While permission for off-campus access is included in the process of obtaining an Owlnet account, students using other systems should apply for permission for off-campus activity. (Contact 103 Mudd Lab.)

What libraries are accessible?

A complete listing of the library catalogs that may be searched using Internet is available at any of the public service points at Fondren Library or at the Computing Reference Area in the Mudd lab. Well known domestic institutions whose library catalogs may be searched include Dartmouth, Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Johns Hopkins, Stanford, Texas A & M, and the University of Texas at Austin. Our own holdings at the Fondren Library also are accessible through the network. For instructions on searching Fondren Library holdings using Internet connections, see the Winter 1992 issue of News From Fondren.

Foreign institutions on the list include Centro Informatico Cientifico de Andalucia, City of London Polytechnic, Eidgenoessische Technische Hochschule Zuerich, Curtin University of Technology, Rechenzentrum der Universitaet Zuerich, Strathclyde University, and University of Wales-College of Medicine. Though primarily consisting of academic libraries, other accessible research facilities include the New York Public Library, the Lunar and Planetary Institute at NASA, and the National Library of Wales.

What purpose will this serve?

Researchers with access to these catalogs will find their resources extended in several ways. Uncommon material not available at local libraries can be located via this method. Checking citations or references is another common use of library catalogs. Remotely "browsing" a library's collection in a given discipline or subject is also possible now because of this technology. Acquiring physical access to material usually then involves consulting the Interlibrary Loan Department.

Other resources

In addition to library catalog access, a number of databases covering a wide range of topics may be searched through an Internet connection. For example, in the biological sciences two databases produced by Johns Hopkins may be searched for genetic information: the Genome Database, covering human chromosome mapping, and the OMIM Data Base (Online Mendelian Inheritance in Man), covering inherited disorders and traits.

All aspects of marine studies are included in the OCEANIC database produced by the Ocean Network Information Center at the University of Delaware College of Marine Studies. The Geographic Name Server database provides researchers with specific data about known geographic locations. The Dartmouth Dante Project database contains the Divine Comedy and over 600 years of commentary (in the original languages).

The resources mentioned here represent only a small sample of those available through Internet. Printed guides that discuss the range of possibilities available through Internet include the User's Directory of Computer Networks and the New User's Guide to Useful and Unique Resources on the Internet, Version 2.0. These and other guides are available in the Computing Reference Area in the Mudd Lab.

Reference librarians at the Fondren Library also can provide additional assistance regarding available Internet resources. Call us at campus extension 5119, or send a message to reference at library@ricevm1.

Barbara Stewart
Government Publications/Reference Librarian
Library Survey

Students, Faculty, and Houston Community Users Surveyed

Over one thousand users of the Fondren Library accepted the Library’s invitation to express their opinion of its collections and services. The Fondren Library survey task force is now finishing the data analysis of one of the largest library surveys done at Rice University.

Exhaustive analysis of the faculty, student and community surveys is still in progress but some preliminary results of the student survey are available. We soon will have results from the faculty survey and will share those results as well.

Purpose for the Survey

The survey effort began last summer as a part of the overall planning process in the Fondren Library. Rather than develop programs and activities in a vacuum, library staff wanted a snapshot of current opinion on the Fondren Library’s collections and services. Planning groups provided topics of concern to the survey task force for possible inclusion in the survey.

Though the survey task force began with the idea of surveying only principal library users (Rice faculty, students, and staff), additional questions arose about use of Fondren Library by those not affiliated with the University. We were interested in finding out how and why they use Fondren Library. These questions led to the November survey of the Houston community users and of an upcoming survey of the Friends of Fondren.

Student Survey

Approximately sixty-one percent of students are satisfied with the library collections (four or five on a five-point scale), while an additional thirty-nine percent indicated that their general opinion of all library collections is less than satisfactory. (See Table 1.) Satisfaction levels among undergraduates was lower than for the graduate students surveyed. Dissatisfaction with the journal collection was expressed more strongly than for the book collection (forty-four percent versus thirty-four percent).

This opinion of Fondren Library was reflected in the comments received in the surveys. "Buy more books and journals" was a frequent statement, with some students requesting more leisure fiction and others stating that the library had very little in their major field. One student said "in general, Fondren has met my needs while at Rice," but went on to say "keep building the collections though."

Approximately seventy-five percent of the students surveyed indicated they were satisfied with our services, while twenty-five percent were not satisfied with services. (See Table 2.)

Comments regarding services addressed a range of topics, including the hours of some services and special collections and the number (or lack) of LIBRIS terminals. Many students want more listening stations in the Brown Fine Arts Library, and others suggested renovation of the study rooms. There were many comments on the noise level of the reserve area, and the copy machines were frequently mentioned.

The survey reveals a number of factors that may be relevant to faculty members planning for fall classes. Students expressed frustration with various aspects of the reserve process. Written comments addressed the number of copies, length of reserve loan periods, delays in accessing (cont'd p.4)
(Survey cont'd)

last minute reserve readings, fine rates, and tidiness of the reserve room. Overall, the student survey revealed a twenty-eight percent dissatisfaction rate among those using reserve readings.

Fondren Library has established a group to reexamine reserve room procedures. This group will attempt to work with faculty to develop more successful approaches to reserve readings.

A significant percentage of the students surveyed expressed a desire for additional instruction in library resources and research techniques. Forty-seven percent of students surveyed perceive a need to increase their knowledge of library resources and research techniques. For example, one respondent mentioned that he or she did not know Fondren Library had a video collection until reading the survey.

Students surveyed expressed the desire for additional training in using the LIBRIS catalog, rare books and archives, and CD-ROM indexes, as well as in general research techniques and research materials in the individual’s subject discipline. Most students do, however, feel skilled in using LIBRIS, Fondren Library’s online catalog.

Rice undergraduates’ introduction to Fondren Library currently is incorporated into a half-hour session during Freshman Week orientations. Library staff offer somewhat more extensive orientations to incoming graduate students, and classroom instruction is provided through a one-semester hour course sponsored by Jones College. Librarians are also happy to provide tailored classroom instruction when requested by faculty.

Fondren Library’s facilities also came under intense discussion. Thirty-eight percent of students were dissatisfied with temperature in the building (though some were hot and some cold). Twenty-one percent were dissatisfied with lighting. Most students like the newer furnishings on the first floor. Several students admitted to being lost in the building, with one student stating “you can’t get there from here.”

Approximately ten percent of survey respondents indicated concern for personal safety in Fondren Library during the last year and a half. Fondren Library will continue to face security issues given its central location in a major city and its nature as a public building. Library and University administrations are continuing to develop measures that will promote an environment in our building that is both safe and welcoming for all users.

(cont’d p.5)
(Survey cont'd)

Houston's community

Approximately 350 library users not affiliated with Rice University were surveyed in November. They are anxious to keep using our library. Comments recorded from members of the Houston community using Fondren Library were extremely positive. These outside users enjoy our “studies” atmosphere and ask to be allowed to continue using the facilities. The respondents included faculty and students from other institutions such as the University of Houston, Houston Community College, South Texas College of Law, and MIT.

Most outside users come to Fondren Library to use their own material. Surprisingly, forty percent of the outside users consider Fondren Library their primary library.

Methodology

The Fondren Library survey was really five survey instruments. Dr. Stephen Klineberg of the Sociology Department assisted the survey task force in developing all survey instruments. The task force appreciates the help Dr. Klineberg provided, even while he was involved with the eleventh year of the Houston Area Survey.

The non-affiliates survey form was distributed to everyone signing in at the front door of Fondren Library during the two weeks before Thanksgiving.

Rather than survey all students, a sample was created using information from the student records office. All freshmen and first-year graduate students were eliminated, as were all class III and staff students. Twenty percent of the remaining students were selected (every fifth name), resulting in a sample of 399 undergraduate and 191 graduate students.

From these, 225 undergraduates and 124 graduate students returned questionnaires, producing a response rate of sixty percent. As an incentive to return the student survey on time, Fondren Library offered a $50 gift certificate to the Rice Campus Store. Shaila Dewan of Baker College won the drawing.

Finally, two forms of a longer survey were sent recently to the faculty and administrators of the University. A special survey will be sent to the Friends of Fondren (alumni and members of the Houston community who provide financial support to Fondren Library) in the next month.

Information gathering continuing

Although the formal survey time is past, the survey task force would be happy to receive any surveys that were not turned in earlier. The data will be included as part of the formal analysis and have impact on Fondren Library's plans for the future. Anyone who did not receive a survey but who would like to comment is welcome to stop by, drop a note in a suggestion box, or send us an e-mail message.

The full survey report, including samples of all five questionnaires and the full analysis, will be made available once data analysis has been completed. The survey task force would like to thank all students, faculty, and staff who took the time to share their thoughts about Fondren Library.

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Did You Know...

There are more libraries than there are McDonalds?

- Academic: 3,438
- Public: 8,968
- School: 92,538
- Special: 11,275

More than 14.2 million students, faculty and community members use college and university libraries each week.

Over 400,000 people entered Fondren Library's building last year.

Academic librarians answer more than 666 questions every minute.

College and university libraries circulate more than 154 million books and other items each year.

Fondren Library circulated over 175 thousand books last year, with 85% going to the Rice University community.

Nationally, libraries borrow approximately 4 million books and periodical articles.

Fondren Library last year borrowed over 3000 books and articles for Rice faculty and graduate students.

Building A Library Collection

How do all those books and journals get into Fondren Library? Why these titles and not others?

Fondren Library has the goal of supporting both the University's academic programs and the research interests of every member of the Rice community. This process involves collecting recognized "classic" works in established teaching disciplines, projecting which books will become classics, and predicting where research and teaching interests will develop in the future. Fondren Library strives to reach this goal by acquiring some materials and by providing access to other books and journals we don't own.

Who selects the material?

The professional librarians who work in Fondren Library select books, journals, recordings, and other library materials. Most librarians select material in several related subject areas, and we have academic training in one or more of these disciplines. We rely upon a number of factors to evaluate which materials are worthy of purchasing. These include: known curricular and research interests, reviews, reputation of publisher and/or author, and recommendations from Rice faculty and students.

Recommendations from faculty and students are essential to the process of developing a collection that meets the needs of the academic community on our campus. The librarians strive for awareness of changes in curriculum and research interests. Comments from Rice faculty and students frequently are our best means for maintaining that awareness.

How do they get here?

Fondren Library uses various means to build the collections as much as possible. Among the most important of these means is the use of library vendors. These intermediaries buy in huge quantities from a wide range of publishers, obtaining significant discounts in prices. Fondren Library shares some of these savings when we buy our books from the vendors—savings that allow us to extend our collections to a greater degree. The vendors usually receive new books very quickly and transmit the material as soon as ordered.

Fondren Library also takes advantage of vendor "approval plans," which allow libraries to describe categories of material (specific subject areas or material from a certain publisher, for example) that we wish to receive automatically from the vendor. We can return anything which is unsuitable, and we receive useful publications much more quickly than if they had been ordered individually.

What limits us?

Why doesn't Fondren Library receive more material (or have a specific book or journal you'd like to use)? Of course, one of the primary reasons for this is the finite amount of money available. The amount of material published is increasing rapidly. More material is published than Fondren Library can purchase and house.

We try to compensate for this discrepancy between our resources and the publishing universe by coordinating our purchases with those of other libraries. The cooperating libraries then borrow materials from each other for the use of our local clientele.

Given existing financial and space constraints, Fondren Library has a policy against purchasing large numbers of duplicate titles, textbooks (unless of superior value to the literature), or reprinted materials. As always, the goal we aim for is to increase the information available to faculty and students.

(Cont'd p 7)
Keep Those Comments Coming

Recently little brown boxes with slots in their tops have popped up around Fondren Library. They are our new suggestion boxes, and they are located in the front lobby, at the Circulation and Reference Desks, in Government Publications, and in the elevator lobby near the mailboxes.

Many library users have discovered this new method of communication and have been feeding the suggestion boxes with a variety of comments. While we post the comments and our replies on a bulletin board near Circulation, we thought you might be interested in a summary of what fellow library users are telling us.

Common Themes

One of the common complaints we’ve found is about the temperature in the building. Some people find the study areas get too hot, and other people say the study areas are too cold.

The University’s Facilities and Engineering Department is responsible for keeping the building temperature comfortable, but they cannot effectively correct temperature extremes without knowing exactly where the problem is. We would like library users to report the location of temperature problems to the Circulation Desk, so our staff can relay the information to Facilities and Engineering.

Another common frustration mentioned by users is problems with the copiers.

We recently added seven new copiers and several of those are maintained by a copier company. However, the machines are used a lot and heavy use affects print quality. Again, we ask our users to report the problem to our Circulation staff. If we know the specific copier having problems, we can attempt repairs or call a service representative for repairs.

Some people have mentioned that the noise level on the first floor is too loud at times for them to study quietly. Part of the problem is that two major service points are located on the first floor. Our staff has been asked to moderate their conversations to help the situation. If you are in search of a quiet area to study, we recommend the second through fourth floors.

Comments have been made about our weekend schedule not meeting students’ needs. Some users would like Fondren Library to stay open later on weekend nights.

During the past year we looked at our usage statistics and found that we had a low number of people in the building late at night on the weekends, while there were people waiting for us to open in the mornings. We adjusted our weekend hours to open a little earlier and close a little earlier to accommodate the larger number of users in the morning.

During finals we do extend our weekend hours to allow students more time to study. We will take into consideration the comments we have received when we set up our schedule for the fall semester.

Suggestions Taken Seriously

We appreciate the time our users take to write their comments, and we promise to address the problems as best we can. We hope you will take advantage of a suggestion box to make your thoughts known to us.

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Progress Report
(cont'd from p.1)

Department, which comprises the Business Information Center, the Brown Fine Arts Library, and the Computer Reference Area.

Sara Lowman is now Head of Reference and Sandi Edwards is Head of Satellite Collections.

A Special Services Division has been created and will report to Assistant University Librarian Ferne Hyman. This division is comprised of the Woodson Research Center (Nancy Boothe, Director) and Community Services Department (Una Gourlay, Director).

And finally, in order to provide more administrative attention and oversight for collection development, the position of Coordinator for Collection Development and Electronic Information Resources has been created. Kerry Keck, formerly an assistant documents librarian, has been appointed to fill this position.

Again, I want to express my thanks to you for your support and encouragement during the past year. With your assistance, we will make the Fondren Library a better place for teaching and research.

Fondren Library Locations and Frequently Called Numbers

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reference</td>
<td>285-5113</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brown Fine Arts Library</td>
<td>527-4832</td>
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<tr>
<td>(3rd floor Fondren Library)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Business Info. Center</td>
<td>527-6062</td>
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<tr>
<td>(1st floor Herring Hall)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Circulation</td>
<td>527-4021</td>
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<tr>
<td>(1st floor Fondren Library)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Computer Ref. Area</td>
<td>527-4076</td>
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<tr>
<td>(1st floor Mudd Laboratory)</td>
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<td>Fondren Express</td>
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Semester and Holiday Library Hours
For Information about regular and holiday hours, call 527-4800

Books and Beyond... 
...paving the way for knowledge