Library Renovation Project Under Way

The long-anticipated renovations to Fondren Library have begun. The primary goal of the current project is to provide additional space, both to house the collection and for users.

The completion of two major buildings on campus has allowed staff members of the Computer and Information Technology Institute and the Baker Institute to vacate the space they were occupying on the north end of the library. This has resulted in the return of approximately 11,000 square feet to the library. The regained area will be used for book stacks, user space, additional computer labs, a classroom, an expanded and relocated Electronic Text and Image Center, and study rooms.

New Reference Room

Architecturally, the north end of the first floor will resemble the Current Periodicals Room on the south end of the building, with a two-story open space overlooked by a balcony. The renovation will restore the space to its original configuration before it was converted to offices.

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- Electronic Text and Image Center

Also located in the newly renovated area will be the expanded Electronic Text and Image Center. This area will function as an alternative computing space, where faculty, students, staff, and others can explore new electronic resources.

The reference collection will be relocated to this area, complete with tall windows, comfortable chairs, and pleasant study surroundings. Additional Owlnet computers will be located throughout the Reference Room and on the balcony. Two networked group study rooms will also be located on the balcony area overlooking the Reference Room. Data and power connections for laptop computers are planned for the study tables.

New Computer Classroom

Adjacent to the new Reference Room will be a networked classroom containing approximately twelve computers. This classroom will be employed to teach people to use digital library resources, LIBRIS, and the Internet. The classroom will also function as a computer lab when it is not scheduled for classes.

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Journals Through the Computer

Picture yourself sitting in your own office or home, reading the library's latest issue of your favorite research journal through your computer screen. The possibility is closer than you may think.

Fondren Library is now providing online access to nearly one hundred academic journals through the “Electronic Journals” link of the library web page (http://riceinfo.rice.edu/Fondren/). These journals are cataloged in LIBRIS and, if you are using the “Webcat” interface, you will be able to link directly from the LIBRIS record to the online journal.

Science Titles

Publications of professional societies in the sciences and engineering characterized the first wave of reputable research journals to become available online. The strong technological base of these societies allowed them to be in the forefront of this movement. Many of the important refereed journals in computer science, mathematics, and physics can now be accessed online at little or no additional charge to subscribing libraries and their communities. (For example, there are presently fifty online physics journals available to the Rice community.)

JSTOR

Recently, an additional group of journals has been made available through the JSTOR (i.e., Journal Storage) project, which aims to provide an electronic archive of important journals. The project started in 1994 with ten journals in history and economics. It currently includes nineteen titles in six fields—ecology, economics, history, mathematics, political science, and population studies.

JSTOR will provide one hundred important journals in ten to fifteen fields within three years. Unlike the majority of journals migrating to electronic form, the journals available through the JSTOR project include all issues of a title, starting with the beginning issue and continuing to within a year of the current date.

The journals are scanned and converted through optical character recognition (OCR), making the full text searchable. All JSTOR journals may be searched, or groups of journals may be searched by discipline. An image of an article, complete with any graphs or photographs, may then be displayed using browser software, such as Netscape. High-quality printouts of page images may be generated from a laser printer.

The JSTOR project is centered at the University of Michigan, with start-up funding from the Mellon Foundation. Fondren Library has joined the charter members, helping to fund expansion of this project. JSTOR's plans include the building of additional in-depth clusters of journals in specific disciplines and the recruiting of additional library partners. We anticipate that Fondren Library will continue to participate in future stages of JSTOR, making additional research titles available to you at your desk.

Library Price and Space Considerations

Most of the electronic journal titles currently being added by Fondren Library are available at little or no charge because we have a paper subscription. Subscriptions to electronic journal titles in cases where the library does not have a paper subscription generally cost 120% to 150% of the paper subscription price. Thus, moving from paper to electronic journal subscriptions will not eliminate the inflationary and budgetary pressures facing Fondren Library and other research libraries.

As the number of electronic journals increases, particularly those which include the full archive of a title, Fondren Library must consider whether the availability of electronic titles might allow us to minimize our space constraints through additional remote storage of paper materials. Fondren Library's staff, working with Rice faculty and students, will examine factors such as literature use patterns, availability of adequate computing equipment, and reliability of online access as we establish the role that each of these journal titles will play in providing for the information needs of the Rice community.

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Behind the Scenes: Circulation/Reserve

Robert Rivas assists Dr. Elizabeth Long, as Scott Gilbert takes a call.

Both the Circulation and the Reserve Desks are staffed every hour the library is open. To provide the coverage necessary, the Circulation/Reserve Department employs the equivalent of seven and a half regular staff members and also hires between twenty-five and thirty student assistants during the academic year.

All Rice students, staff, and faculty have borrowing privileges in the library, as do a number of outside borrowers. Library privileges are also extended to Friends of Fondren, Rice Associates, Rice Founders' Club members, eligible HARLiC (Houston Area Research Library Consortium) card holders, Houston Graduate School of Theology students and faculty, Houston area university onsite interlibrary borrowers, and staff at some Houston museums. The total number of users presently on file is 17,982.

No longer is borrowing limited just to books. The Circulation/Reserve Department checks out all kinds of materials, from videos to laptop computers to study room keys to CD-ROMs. Many of these items circulate only to Rice students, staff, and faculty. The total number of checkouts per year is approximately 240,000.

In addition to handling the basic transactions of checking out library materials to borrowers and checking them in after each use, staff members have a number of other duties. Overdue notices, recall notices, and fine notices are printed each weekday and mailed to users. Once library materials are thirty days overdue, a bill notice, which includes the replacement charges for materials, is sent.

Circulation also handles the new books' shelf, where new items are kept for one month before being sent to the regular stacks. Locations in online records must be changed before books can be moved. In addition, circulation staff members sell "copicards," which are used in all sixteen public photocopy machines in the library.

Library carrels are assigned to graduate students and faculty. The keys are issued by circulation staff, who also monitor the use of the carrels and offices in the library, checking them regularly for library materials to make sure they are properly charged.

When library users cannot locate a specific item in the library, staff members can initiate a search for the missing material. Users are notified as soon as materials are located. If materials cannot be located, items may be replaced, after consultation with a collection development librarian. However, before materials are replaced, circulation staff members continue searching for them for at least six months. The same process is followed when users pay for lost books.

Any materials placed on reserve for a course have to be processed so that LIBRIS records indicate that they are in the Reserve Room, that they are on reserve for a specific professor's course, and that they circulate for a specific loan period. This semester 5,375 items have been placed on reserve.

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Did You Know...

Chemical Abstracts Student Edition has been added to RiceInfo. CASE, designed for undergraduate students, indexes and abstracts over 200 of the most widely held chemistry journals, as well as over 200,000 dissertations. The file includes coverage from 1967 to the present and is updated weekly.

Another addition to RiceInfo is the History of Science and Technology Database. It describes journal articles, conference proceedings, books, book reviews, and dissertations in the history of science and technology.

Policy Research Online File has also been added to RiceInfo. This file indexes and provides links to online research in the complete range of public policy research. Its content is drawn from think tanks, university research programs, research organizations, and publishers.

A very successful Friends of Fondren book sale was held in mid-February. Proceeds are still being tallied. Volunteers from the library staff included: Elizabeth Baber, Sarah Bentley, Jean Caswell, Debra Cosby, Steve Johns, Kerry Keck, Pamela Pavlivskak, and Jane Segal.

Fondren Library has received a large bequest from the estate of Dr. Francis L. Loewenheim, a professor of history at Rice from 1959 until 1996.

Collection Development Specialists

Robert Sabin

Bob Sabin is one of three science and engineering librarians at Fondren Library. He is responsible for collection development and in-depth reference in six academic areas: ecology and evolutionary biology, biochemistry, biomedical engineering, chemical engineering, chemistry, and human performance and health sciences. In addition to manning the Reference Desk each morning during the week, he provides library resource instruction to classes in his academic disciplines. In recent years Bob and a fellow librarian have offered a course in accessing science and engineering resources on the Internet.

The role of electronic resources in science and engineering is of particular interest to Bob. He cites the current trend toward increasing numbers of full-text electronic journals as particularly exciting for these disciplines, making research easier and more convenient. He feels that, with many electronic journals now being refereed, quality need not be sacrificed, but he also recognizes the challenge in sifting the best resources from the tremendous volume of information accessible on the Internet.

Bob was born and raised in Minnesota. After earning degrees in biology and library and information science, he accepted a position managing a branch science library at Juniata College in Pennsylvania, where he later became Director of Libraries. He next moved to Auburn University in Alabama as University Bibliographer for all science and engineering disciplines. In 1988, Bob came to Fondren Library. He feels that Rice University combines the best of both Juniata and Auburn—a small college atmosphere, with major research and graduate programs in science and engineering.

At Rice, Bob particularly enjoys being a University Associate of Hanszen College and having informal contacts with undergraduates through that affiliation. He participated in the University’s Web Week this semester by working at the library’s booth and by teaching a science-oriented Internet searching class.

When not in the library, you can find Bob swimming laps in the Rice pool. As he says, “What better way is there to exercise in Houston’s hot and humid weather than in a cool pool where you feel a sense of weightlessness, and what better place is there to work than in a dynamic and technically challenging environment such as Fondren Library?”

Jane Segal

A native of Michigan with a background in the social sciences, Jane Segal loves the opportunities and challenges that new technologies are bringing to reference work. She received her B.A. from Kalamazoo College and worked as
(Collection Development cont.)

a social worker for the State of Michigan before heading to Western Michigan University, where she earned a master’s degree in library science.

Before coming to Rice, Jane worked as a reference librarian at SUNY Oswego and as bibliographic instruction librarian at Ohio State University in Columbus. After working in various medical libraries, she returned to the social sciences, earning a master’s degree in anthropology at the University of Houston.

Jane joined the staff of Fondren Library in 1990. As the social sciences/humanities librarian, Jane has collection development responsibilities in the areas of anthropology, English, psychology, and sociology. In her role as selector of the library’s fiction, she emphasizes multicultural works but also includes popular fiction, such as mysteries.

Jane Segal

Jane participates on committees both within Fondren Library and in the greater library community. For the past three years she has worked on a committee organized through the American Library Association which is evaluating various indexes published by H.W. Wilson Company. The committee is reviewing Art Index, Business and Periodicals Index, General Science Index, and Social Sciences Index to determine what periodicals should be included in these indexes. Within Fondren Library, Jane participated in the Collection Analysis Project, and she is working on issues pertaining to our online catalog. In addition, she heads a task force to revise the library’s guides to electronic resources.

Although not a native of Houston, Jane loves living here. She enjoys travel and plans to pursue an interest in Latin American culture by travelling to Mexico for an intensive Spanish language course.

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(Library Renovation cont.)

Twenty-Four Hour Service

An important new service will be offered upon completion of the renovation. With certain exceptions (e.g., weekends, holidays, summertime), the entire Fondren Library will be open twenty-four hours a day. Students will be able to use the general collection, reserve materials, videotapes, and the Owlnet computers, as well as check out materials at the Circulation Desk. This new service is a direct result of student input through library surveys and the Student Association. The intent of this service is to meet the need of creating a safe study space on campus.

New Stack Space

After the renovation is complete, materials located throughout the building will be shifted and unpacked to alleviate crowding. New stack space to be created in the back part of the first floor and in the basement will provide the library with three to five years of growth space for the collection. Enlarging the stacks is critical, because the library’s collection grows at a rate of approximately 38,000 volumes per year. The building is currently at capacity and filled to overflowing in some subject areas. The shifting project will take place over the next year.

Remodeled Staff Areas

Staff areas in Circulation/Reserve on the first floor and in Document Delivery in the basement are also slated to be remodeled to make them more efficient. Both areas will have modernized space for staff and additional network connections to improve customer service.

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Murder in the Stacks

Could you be guilty of murder, mayhem, or kidnapping in the stacks? Have you damaged library materials, perhaps inadvertently? How can you help protect them? Books are gathered into the library for all to share. Unfortunately, many people want to use a book themselves but have no concern about the future of that book.

Books have many fates. Some die of old age, as the paper crumbles away. Others are worn by hard use but can be rebound. At Fondren Library approximately forty books per month are rebound (which means they are out of circulation for six weeks). About two hundred more books per month require repair (which means they are out of use for about two months). Spines are broken, pages torn, and covers damaged. Although these injuries can be treated, the books will never be the same again. In addition, many books are injured by being marked with pencil, pen, or highlighters.

While some books have been chewed by dogs, most injuries are caused by humans. Perhaps the worst injury is mutilation, for missing pages cannot be recovered and cannot always be replaced. Some books have to be pronounced dead and laid to rest (i.e., withdrawn). Frequently books have been drowned, with water damage causing covers to warp and pages to stick together.

In addition to mayhem and murder in the stacks, there is also the problem of kidnapping. Each year approximately two hundred books are formally declared lost after an extended period of searching. This represents a monetary loss of between $11,000 and $14,000, but the intellectual loss is incalculable. Many of these books are out-of-print and cannot be replaced.

What are the leading causes of the death of books?

- Damage caused by dropping or improper handling
- Staining from dirt, dust, and food
- Mold and buckling caused by water damage
- Deterioration from poor storage conditions and weak bindings
- Intentional mutilation, such as removing pages from books instead of photocopying

How can you help?

- Carry only a few books at a time.
- Use care when photocopying pages to avoid breaking the binding.
- Protect books from dampness and moisture. Do not use them as umbrellas.
- Use bags to protect books from the natural elements.
- Use bookmarks instead of folding pages or using paper clips.
- Remove books from the shelf carefully. Grasp them at the center of the spine and pull or lift gently.
- Keep food and drink away from library materials.
- Do not write or mark in or otherwise mutilate library materials.
- Return books on time, in the same condition you found them.

Don’t be guilty of murder! Help preserve your library collections!

(Based on an article with the same title in Houston Academy of Medicine-Texas Medical Center Library’s Library Lines; excerpts used with permission.)

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