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Tri-Institutional Library Support: A Lesson in Forced Collaboration

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SUMMARY. This paper will discuss the trials and tribulations of three separate institutional libraries supporting one new graduate-level academic program. In January 2002, a new distance graduate program in Applied Psychology began with technical, administrative, and academic support provided by three separate institutions. While one institution was initially charged with providing the bulk of library services, in reality, libraries at all three have contributed one service or another. The lead library provides remote database access and document delivery, and initially provided electronic reserves. After the first semester and several glitches, electronic reserves were moved to institutional library #2, which was also hosting the course management system. In the fall of 2002, institutional library #3 began to contribute with an information literacy module that has been incorporated into the orientation for all new students.

KEYWORDS. Collaboration, distance education, library services, technology

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BACKGROUND

The *Campus Alberta Graduate Program in Counselling* was developed by a consortium of three Alberta universities, in partnership with key stakeholder groups in the professional community. The program is jointly sponsored by:

- the Centre for Graduate Education in Applied Psychology at Athabasca University;
- the Division of Applied Psychology at the University of Calgary; and
- the Faculty of Education at the University of Lethbridge.

The *Campus Alberta Graduate Program in Counselling* is a Canadian, collaborative, inter-university, distance education alternative for individuals wishing to prepare for roles as either professional counsellors or counselling psychologists.

The various components of the program are offered through both on-site and distance modes of delivery, drawing on the combined resources and strengths of the participant universities. Students are able to mix and match courses from any of the participant universities.

The program is designed to complement rather than compete with the current on-campus programs in Alberta. The goal is to provide students who face various barriers to completing degrees through traditional programs with the opportunity to further their education. The program will enhance the on-campus programs at the University of Calgary and the University of Lethbridge by providing a high-quality alternative for students in the on-campus programs who face scheduling difficulties.

Finally, the program is designed to foster the continuing professional learning of counsellors and psychologists through access to individual graduate courses. An open registration policy will encourage professionals to continually upgrade their knowledge and skills. Professionals may take additional courses as non-program students or complete a Post-Master's Certificate in one of the areas of specialization.

THE SUPPORTING CAST OF LIBRARIES

The University of Calgary supports approximately 25,000 students, about 1,500 of whom are enrolled in distance programs. The University of Calgary Library has taken a leading role in recognizing that information resources are critical to the success of a student's educational experience. The Library's mandate states that all students, regardless of location, will receive the same

resources and services and it strongly advocates equal access to information for all distance learners. The Library has provided both financial and professional support, to develop and deliver services for users outside the physical library, across Canada and outside its borders. The U of C offers full library support to distance students through a service known as Library Connection. Library Connection strives to offer all the services of a University Library to students who are at a distance, including instruction and tutorials, research assistance, and document delivery.

Athabasca University, Canada's Open University, supports over 26,000 students, all of whom are engaged in distance or online learning, and offers approximately 60 programs at master's, bachelor's, diploma and certificate levels. AU is dedicated to removing barriers to university-level studies and to providing quality education across Canada and internationally. The Library supports distance learners through a Web site, e-mail service, a toll free telephone number and delivery of materials through the postal system at the Library's expense. The AU Library Information Gateway provides access to quality information resources including library catalogues, journal databases, online tutorials, selected Internet resources, a digital reference collection (Digital Reference Centre) and an electronic reserves system (Digital Reading Room).

The University of Lethbridge supports approximately 7,200 students, 1,200 of whom are enrolled in distance programs or are taking courses at remote campuses in Calgary and Edmonton. The University of Lethbridge participates with the universities and other post-secondary institutions of Alberta in a variety of co-operative programs and activities. The University Library strives to provide seamless and equitable access to its collections and information literacy programs to all students regardless of their location. Library or research related questions are answered through the Uask@ULeth service available from the Library's home page. The service provides an online form for students to query a librarian as well as a toll free number for personal consultation. Access to the U of L suite of print and online resources, including the full text journal collections is also available to all U of L students.

STATISTICS

The Campus Alberta Applied Psychology program launched in January 2002 with just over 60 students, but quickly settled on 48 as several dropped out. In January 2003, an additional 86 students entered the program, bringing the total number of students served by the three libraries to 134. Approximately 115 students are expected to enroll as the next cohort in January 2004.

Through the Fall 2002 semester, the 48 students enrolled in this program accounted for 1,830 reference and document delivery requests, all to the U of C Library. To the end of August 2003, there have been 3,782 document delivery requests sent to the U of C. This seems to put the program on target for an average of 2,000 requests per calendar year, but it would also seem likely this number would rise as more students enter the program. At Athabasca University from April 2002 to March 2003 approximately 90 requests from CAAP students were received at the Library Information Desk, just over half of which involved document delivery. The remainder represents requests for assistance with accessing and/or searching online resources. AU circulation statistics show 124 items checked out to CAAP students during this period.

Program-specific circulation and database access statistics are not available from the primary institution, but because student IDs were entered manually into the patron database at Athabasca, AU is able to determine from the III Web Access Management System that Campus Alberta Applied Psychology students initiated 26,359 connects to the AU databases from January 2002 to August 2003. Independent searching generates some of this database activity, but it can be assumed that a substantial portion of the total connects were to persistent links embedded in electronic course reserves. Most interaction between CAAP students and the AU Library occurs through connects to the online databases.

INSTRUCTION

There have been two face-to-face instructional sessions given by the lead librarian, one during each of the two summer institutes that the program has held. While the students all receive an online orientation that includes an introduction to library resources and information literacy, the summer institute is the only time they get to have hands-on instruction with a librarian in the room. In 2002, the Distance Education librarian and psychology Liaison Librarian from the University of Calgary met with the 48 students for 3 hours, walking them through the basics of information literacy and database searching. In 2003, the same librarians met the larger group of new students in two sessions, again three hours per meeting. Students each had their own PCs for hands-on practice during these sessions.

There was no library session scheduled for the students returning for their second year, but these students took it upon themselves to request a refresher meeting for library research outside the normal second year institute hours, and the psychology Liaison Librarian was able to meet with these students. General feedback from the summer institutes has been positive.

In the fall of 2002, the Education Librarian at the University of Lethbridge was approached by one of the CAAP faculty members to produce an online guide to Information Literacy that would be included in the orientation session for new CAAP students. This librarian was able to modify a guide to create a comprehensive Web site with program-specific information. This guide was used for the first time in late fall of 2003, when the 2004 students undertook their program orientation.

INITIAL GROWING PAINS AND LEARNING CURVES

This was the first multi-institutional (multi-library) initiative for all three of the libraries, and as expected, there were (and continue to be) bumps along the road. When originally conceived in 1998/1999, each of the three institutions would play a major but separate role in the administration of the CAAP program. Athabasca University would be responsible for development of the learning technologies employed within the program and provision of technological support to students, the U of Calgary would be responsible for registration and library support, and U of Lethbridge would be responsible for central administration of the program (Collins, Hiebert, Magnusson, and Bernes, 2000). This paper, of course, deals with the area of library support.

As the first semester approached, the program made it clear it wanted to offer as much reading material as possible in an online environment. The U of C Library's Copyright Officer has found that it usually requires several months to obtain copyright permission to digitize and post articles and chapters in the electronic reserves module. The program finally presented the Library with a list of 59 readings six weeks before classes were to start. In this short timeframe, copyright holders needed to be found for all 59 readings, permission obtained to digitize, and the Library needed to obtain and scan the articles as well. As the weeks passed and it became apparent that permission would not be forthcoming to post all the articles in time for the first courses to begin, the Library suggested the program consider distributing traditional paper course packs containing those readings that could not be digitized. The campus has a standard license to reproduce readings for course packs at a cost of \$.05 per page, so the only issue was who would pay for the packs. The Library suggested that since it was originally going to be covering the copyright costs for the digital copies, it would cover the cost of the course packs for this one semester, since it had been unable to secure permission to digitize in time for the beginning of the course. The program was amenable to this, and the DE Librarian received a crash course in course pack production. Course packs were produced for all 48 students and mailed via pri-

ority post at the end of December to ensure students had the readings in time for the beginning of the semester.

RESERVE READINGS

Because this program is delivered entirely online, the administrators wanted to make readings available in this format as well. Canadian copyright law has a “fair dealing” provision that is considerably more restrictive than the “fair use” provision in U.S. copyright law. Fair dealing seems to be lagging in the area of digitization, as the following faculty guidelines from York University (2003) show:

Generally, according to the Access Copyright license, you *cannot* input copyrighted materials into electronic format except for the sole purpose of producing paper copies. Even then, the electronic copies must be destroyed promptly after the paper copies have been made. The dissemination or distribution of any electronic file in any electronic form in any way is not authorized by the Access Copyright license. Therefore, works which are protected by copyright cannot generally be transformed into a digital or electronic format for electronic distribution. Digital reproduction is not considered to be an acceptable form of reprographic reproduction and thus can easily lead to copyright infringement. (E section, para. 2)

As such, permission to scan articles for posting online, even in a secure environment, must be secured from each copyright holder.

Online readings for the first semester were run through the U of C’s home-grown electronic reserves module, Allectra. The campus Copyright Officer obtained permission for all articles posted online. Allectra represents a very secure environment that requires students to be authenticated twice—once to verify campus enrollment, and again to verify enrollment in a specific section of a specific course. This level of security was deemed necessary by the builders of the software to allay the fears of copyright holders that scanned material would be used by students other than those in the course for which permission was granted.

As the CAAP program began, it quickly became apparent that many of the students had not completed the necessary registration paperwork and thus were not listed in the Registrar’s database at the U of C. As a result, about one quarter of the students did not have access to their online readings at the start of the course. A generic login and password were distributed to these students, which of course defeated the security of the system. After approximately two

weeks, all students had completed their paperwork and all had access to the readings, but by that time Allectra had received a great deal of bad publicity among the students and the program administrators. This would prove to be a fatal blow for Allectra and in subsequent semesters all reserve readings were hosted in the Digital Reading Room developed by Athabasca University.

Athabasca University Library's Digital Reading Room was developed in-house to provide online access to required course readings and supplementary materials. In addition to functioning as an electronic reserves system, the Digital Reading Room (DRR) is also a searchable, multidisciplinary database of learning resources. As of October 2003, there were twenty-one digital reading files for the CAAP program.

The DRR operates on the principle of open access, permitting anyone to view the "digital reading files" for each course, and requiring patron verification only when access to licensed or protected resources is involved. Database articles are linked to by means of persistent URLs and access requires authentication through the Library's proxy server. There are a few resources that require a username and password that are available only to students registered in a course (for example, to control access to a professor's unpublished manuscript or to instructor commentaries). Some of the resources in the DRR are publicly accessible Web sites.

Course developers are able to enhance their digital reading files by including a variety of formats that support a range of learning styles. One instructor, for example, uses audio clips to welcome students to the course. Obtaining copyright permissions for digitization of materials is not the preferred method for adding content to the DRR, although AU Library can accommodate this. In cases where CAAP students have received required course readings or course texts by mail, this is indicated in the digital reading file. Web forms are provided for students to request supplementary materials that are print-based, such as books and photocopied journal articles. When students submit these forms, staff at the AU Library Information Desk receive an e-mail request for the item, process the request and send materials through the postal system.

Generally this system appears to be working well, apart from the need for library staff to occasionally troubleshoot browser configuration or other access problems. Because students are accessing electronic reserves through AU, it was determined that AU Library should perform this function and information to this effect was added to the CAAP Library Web pages. Close coordination between the Library and course developers and instructors is essential to ensure that print-based resources are available from the Library and that relevant Library information is conveyed to students in their courseware.

ID CARDS

Student identification cards are issued by the University of Calgary and bear the logos of all three institutions. The numbers on the cards are used to provide remote access to databases at the U of C. The libraries at Athabasca and Lethbridge manually enter these numbers into their patron databases to allow CAAP students to have remote access to their systems as well. In addition to receiving remote access at all three institutions, CAAP students are also able to check out books at all three institutions, though in reality no students visit more than one library in person; books housed at other libraries (CAAP or other) are obtained through document delivery services by the University of Calgary.

The issue of database access forced an interesting discussion. Database licenses stipulate that databases are only to be made available (especially remotely) to the faculty, staff and students of the purchasing institution. The students enrolled in the CAAP program were certainly U of C students, but they were also considered students of Athabasca University and the University of Lethbridge. After much discussion and counsel, the licenses were interpreted in such a way that they could legally allow access by students in the CAAP program.

In the spring of 2003, the U of C acquired the EBSCO Psychology and Behavioral Sciences collection full text database, which brought the issue of database access for course developers to a head, as the people at Athabasca responsible for working on the Digital Reading Room wanted to have access to this database even though they weren't officially affiliated with the CAAP program. The U of C librarian responsible for database licensing interpreted their license to allow only students and instructors directly involved in the program to have access to U of C databases. This means that if a CAAP faculty member wants to include an online reading that is only available through the EBSCO database, the Electronic Resources Librarian at Athabasca must request the permanent links from the DE librarian at the U of C to then insert into the DRR. While a seemingly cumbersome approach, in reality there have been few articles requested by faculty for inclusion in the DRR that are only available from this one uniquely held U of C database.

CURRENTLY

There are currently 123 students enrolled in the program, which consists of two separate intakes (2002, 2003). In January 2004, an additional 115 students were admitted to the program. Overall library support appears to be successful

and thus continues with few modifications. Collection development did not occur as systematically as it should have, but after a formula to share funding between the three supporting institutions was agreed upon, this has continued to improve the holdings to support the curriculum.

One challenge for the librarians supporting the program is that the academic administrators for CAAP rotate every two years. This means ongoing education of what we can and cannot do for the program, and also means there can be swings in the amount of support and understanding the libraries receive from the program (though the funding is locked in).

It is our belief that students need to receive some additional information literacy training. They receive an online orientation before they start the program, and hands on training during their summer institute six months in to the program, but librarians are often contacted to answer questions that were answered in one of those training sessions, so it seems clear that some periodic refreshers or point of need instruction could enhance the student's understanding of the research process and library specifics. It can be challenging for students to learn how to interact with more than one library in terms of how to access different systems, resources, and support. At the same time, the librarians supporting the students in this collaborative program have had to learn how to interact with students who may be more familiar with another institution's library.

THE FUTURE

The CAAP program has expanded through a partnership with the Vancouver (BC) Art Therapy Institute to offer a specialization in Art Therapy. Students complete the first half of their program with the core curriculum, and then specialize in the field of Art Therapy. While this should have little or no impact on library services since these students are already in the CAAP program, in reality the lead library likely needs to improve its collection in this area, and until that is accomplished document delivery may feel an extra burden. The Vancouver Art Therapy Institute does not have a library of its own.

Campus Alberta is proposing to expand the Counselling program by duplicating the current Applied Psychology program with a similar program in Inclusive/Special Education (CAISEI). The University of Alberta, hosting the largest research library in the Province, is a partner in this initiative, so that library may be brought on board in some capacity to support the program. It would be interesting if students in the CAISEI program had access to more resources than the students in the original CAAP program.

CONCLUSIONS

It can be done! It is possible to coordinate various library services from three separate libraries to support a single academic program. It is important to maintain clear lines of communication, and to remember that the goal is to serve the students in the program. Libraries considering similar collaborations need to avoid turf wars. We still have one or two issues that do not feel satisfactorily addressed, but will continue to work together to either come to a satisfactory arrangement, or will develop workaround solutions so that service to students is not negatively affected.

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