

Transformation Begins when the Renovation is Done: Reconfiguring Staff and Services to Meet 21st-Century Research Needs

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Introduction

Between 2006 and 2011, UCLA Library's Charles E. Young Research Library underwent a multi-million-dollar renovation to update existing facilities,¹ and the renovation project has been nominated for prestigious awards.² Since completion of the renovation, foot traffic into the library has increased by two-hundred percent. A robust and evolving set of research and instruction services are now in place, including a collaborative digital scholarship space, wired group study rooms, laptop lending, attractive study spaces, and a bustling café. The library has become a popular conference center on what is known as UCLA's "North Campus"—home to the arts, humanities, and social sciences. To be sure, this renovation has been a nice change from the Research Library's former ascetic, drab, inflexible, and unwelcoming interior. Though the library had its regulars, most users dropped in only long enough to grab a book, look something up, or print from the lobby computers.

At the earliest planning stages, a year or more before the architects were brought on board, library administrators hired a consultant to gather input from faculty and graduate students about their needs. The university librarian also consulted with key faculty members and other stakeholders to get a sense of their concerns about the nature of the changes a

renovation might bring to the library. During the RFI phase for the project, library administrators insisted that the architects selected must be invested in receiving user input or at least willing to use UCLA Library administrators as library consultants rather than hiring outside consultants. Once the architectural firm of Perkins+Will were hired, planning teams consisting of library staff members were convened to brainstorm particular elements of the renovation, including a multifunction service desk, the reference desk, a digital commons, a study commons, and other key library features. Along the way, a team dubbed "the Research Commons Demonstration Group" was created to test out potential furniture and technology configurations in the existing reference space.³ This pilot space enabled observation of undergraduate users, the only academic constituency that was not otherwise tapped for input.

On the face of things, this renovation project drove systemic change throughout the library organization, necessitating new staffing patterns and services. That is, while new research and pedagogical practices and technological innovations begged for updated spaces, the renovation process itself forced the library to confront the need for change in ways it would not otherwise have done. Whole departments were physically relocated in order to repurpose spaces

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within the library, new positions were created to oversee the new spaces, and services were reworked to accommodate new library users and their needs.

The goal of this article is to offer a deeper perspective on the long renovation project (“long,” in the sense of the “long Xth century”): the perspective of those of us working within the building. More specifically, the aim is to argue that the renovation coincided with a larger shift toward a culture in which librarians and library staff are instigators, not just implementers, of change that is both data-driven (based on assessment or participatory design) and serendipitous or opportunistic (based on outreach). To this end, the ensuing discussion will focus on one of the largest units in the Research Library in order to flesh out the complexity of the cultural shift experienced in the course and wake of our recent renovation; highlight some of the issues confronted during the first year; and describe an assessment project that grew out of these experiences.

New Roles, New Librarian Positions

Collections, Research, and Instructional Services (CRIS) is a unit of subject specialist liaison librarians and support staff, based in the Charles E. Young Research Library. CRIS is responsible for building and managing research collections in the humanities, social sciences, and area studies, and delivers general and specialized reference services. Our librarians also participate in UCLA Library’s Teaching and Learning Services activities by delivering one-off and extended instruction to undergraduates and graduate students in relevant subject areas. CRIS collaborates regularly with other units and individuals within the Research Library, including Access Services, Library Special Collections, the Richard E. Rudolph East Asian Library, Library Information Technology Operations, Library Development, Library Communications, Building Services, and Library Administration.

CRIS is the product of a series of mergers that brought together collection development, reference and instruction services, maps and cartographic resources, and government documents. Thus, over the past decade, CRIS members have gone from being specialists to being “specialists plus”: the liaison model and research mission of the library still demands a certain degree of subject expertise as well as general reference and instruction. Prior to the renovation, all of these individuals reported directly to the head of

CRIS. Once the initial stages of the renovation project were well underway, the supervisory Associate University Librarian set in motion structural changes in the unit, primarily by setting up two teams with team leaders reporting to me as the unit head, in order to better organize the reporting relationships and create a leadership team.

By the time this new team structure was put in place, plans for the renovation were taking shape and it was becoming clear that the new facilities would challenge CRIS’s existing staff. The CRIS leadership team knew there would be some kind of digital commons for collaborative projects of various kinds. We also knew that, while the new reading room would house a reference desk, the new space configurations afforded an opportunity to radically reconsider our reference service model. We agreed that the new digital commons, which would become known as the Research Commons, would present a challenge if only because it was an entirely new kind of space for our campus and we had few, if any, models to go on. We wanted to have a librarian on board who would come to work thinking about that space and what kinds of scholarly activities might happen in there. More importantly, we wanted this person to think through the role librarians would need to play in these new scholarly modes of research and teaching. Our hunch was that the skills and expertise this librarian ended up bringing to bear would be skills and expertise that all subject specialist librarians would eventually need. In other words, this position would prefigure the subject librarians of the future. Over the course of six months, we worked to develop a position called the Librarian for Digital Research and Scholarship (LDRS). This position was posted in the fall of 2010 and our new LDRS was on board in August 2011, about a month before the renovation opening.

The idea for the reference services position, eventually dubbed the Librarian for Advanced Research and Engagement (LARE), had a slightly different development. Initial drafts of the position description focused on a coordinator role for the new Reading Room, which would house our reference desk and print reference collection. As we further developed the draft, in consultation with library administrators, the position evolved into a broader scope, taking on an organization-wide purview as UCLA Library’s primary outreach and assessment position for advanced research on campus. However, in the final version

of the position description, the LARE was focused on the Research Library and tasked with innovating CRIS-led reference services, strengthening our approach to outreach, and leading rigorous assessment projects. This position was filled in March 2012, after the renovated spaces had been open for six months.

Retreat, Reorganize, Reorient

At the time we pitched these positions to CRIS staff, we were suffering from attrition-fatigue. Several librarians had left in recent years and we had not been able to fill those vacancies. Most librarians had absorbed extra subject areas and duties into their portfolios as a result. The LDRS and LARE positions looked nothing like the positions we had typically had in CRIS or anywhere else in the library, for that matter. They did not focus on subject area coverage for collection development and liaison work. Consequently, the LARE and LDRS positions were a challenging sell to CRIS members, who had to be assured that these positions would yield long-term pay-offs as the new librarians blazed trails that we would all be expected to follow in coming years.

The structural change brought about by the new teams and leadership model in CRIS promised to be unsettling to an already enervated and increasingly isolationist (i.e., easier to do it myself than jump through hoops to collaborate or seek approval) departmental culture. With the department in flux, any team identity that was imposed from above threatened to result in a further drop in morale. Consequently, about a year into the new structure, we held a CRIS departmental retreat. The goals of this April 2011 retreat were to find and/or redefine our team identity by crafting a new mission statement and strategic direction, and to lay the groundwork for further reorganization based on internal input.

Leaders of large organizations often opt for retreats when their teams are broken in the hopes that it will somehow tap a hidden vein of sap to stick the fractured bits together. Thus, the announcement of a retreat provoked eye-rolls from team members and there was noticeable resistance from some individuals. Interestingly, throughout the retreat, participants asserted their identity as flexible—not only open to change but already inhabiting their roles as change agents. What they had experienced was repeated blockage or resistance to changes they suggested over the years and this was a large reason for the pervasively cynical atmosphere in the department.

Some weeks later, CRIS held two short mini-retreats to tackle the unit reorganization. These involved brainstorming new organizational structures that would enable us to absorb the extra work of vacant positions, at least temporarily, and strengthen the relationship of the department to other parts of the organization, including library administration. Throughout the renovation and retreats, there was repeated reference to “when the new LDRS/LARE comes on board, s/he will deal with that.” At one point, a colleague quipped in frustration, “So we’re just going to wait until this person gets here? You think they will be able to magically do something that we can’t figure out ourselves right now?” This comment marked a turning point for the CRIS leadership team; in particular, it prompted us to reflect on the ease with which we had fallen into a mindset of deferral rather than action, even as we intentionally set out to rethink and reconfigure our department.

The urge to postpone solutions until a new hire is made is rooted in the belief that changes of any significance must be ready for primetime before they can be rolled out. It also comes from the assumption that any change will be disruptive, and disruption should be avoided because it is too hard to manage, off-putting to those we serve, and so on. Once the leadership team was able to orient decision-making around the need to enact constant, iterative, and well-managed change, a significant degree of pressure was relieved. We acknowledged areas in which too-frequent change had damaging effects, as with key academic departments that were starting to feel underserved because repeated interim librarian assignments had had the cumulative effect of leaving their subject areas with significant collection gaps. Where we needed to offer stability, we would do so; otherwise, we would move ahead, try things out, learn from failures, and try other new things. The key to making this new approach viable was our renewed efforts to foster a stronger assessment culture within the library.

During the first academic year with the new spaces, two of us from CRIS took advantage of the two-part participatory design workshops offered through the Council on Library and Information Resources by Nancy Foster of the University of Rochester. These workshops provided us with a framework for sustaining the iterative change in a meaningful way. Back home, we set about creating a condensed version of the workshops for our colleagues in the UCLA Li-

brary. By offering these workshops, we aimed to create a community of practice around the participatory design approach to assessment. Our participation in the CLIR workshops also helped set the stage for a broad, post-renovation assessment and design project that will be described later.

Returning to the physical components of the renovation, most of the responsibility for moving the plans forward from the design phase into construction lay with the University Librarian and Deputy University Librarian as well as the head of Building Services. The library remained open throughout the renovation, which on the one hand, allowed us to remain accessible to users. On the other hand, with no downtime in the delivery of services and collections, staff had difficulty setting aside time to plan. As the construction progressed and the opening became more of a reality, individual managers and directors began asking when decisions would be made about the opening and who would decide details of the logistics for providing services and moving bodies and materials through the new spaces. It became clear that, rather than wait for answers, we needed to take the initiative to plan for the opening ourselves.

A renovation working team formed and began meeting weekly through the spring and summer of 2011. Members of this team included unit heads from Access Services, Library Special Collections, and CRIS, as well as the Director of Communications, two Associate University Librarians, the LDRS, and other public services coordinators. The group made decisions on everything from signage to staffing and services. The closer we got to the opening, the more the team needed to come to terms with the fact that our preparations could only be provisional at best—we would be in a long-term phase of iterative change. In fact, iterative change would be our *modus operandi* from here on out. There would not be a time when we were finished and could “get back to work.” Change would be our work, in large part.

Lessons Learned in the First Year

From day one, the renovation has been a huge success in terms of numbers and visibility for the library. There has been significant media coverage and door counts have more than doubled. During finals, in fact, we continue to be over capacity, with students sitting on the floor and a host of capacity-related facilities issues (overflowing garbage cans, lack of toilet paper in

the bathrooms, etc.) But our popularity notwithstanding, we encountered a number of additional challenges differing staff vs. student expectations; communications; and getting buy-in on the spaces, both from library staff and from some of our users.

Among the many lessons learned from the renovation is—new spaces require new approaches and constant assessment of how we are meeting users’ needs. Our expectations about what users wanted from a “21st century” research library were upended as they moved into the new spaces and began using them. Challenges have arisen, some anticipated but many unforeseen, in regards to user attitudes towards library spaces, conflicts between user groups, communication both within and outside the library and getting buy-in from interested parties.

The first floor of the library was a highly controversial area; the entrance to the building is located there, and as such, it is the most high-profile section of the library and is home to the most radical renovations. Included here are a new Research Commons, home to twenty futuristic media:scapes⁴ (pods, we call them) intended for collaboration; fifteen new group-study rooms; a classroom outfitted with cutting-edge educational technology; a new Reading Room to house the library’s extensive reference collection⁵ and to serve as home to reference services; a gallery space; a conference space for up to 150 people; and a café.

One of our key challenges became figuring out how to manage user expectations. The Research Commons filled up with students seeking quiet study space instead of the noisy, collaborative research we imagined happening there. Likewise, the activity we expected to happen in the front part of the reading room, near the reference desk, was slower to take hold. The Reading Room has an open area with a table behind the reference desk that we expected to use for consultations, but we found that, because of the acoustics of the small space, students expecting pin-drop silence would shush reference librarians.

The extent to which students expected the space to represent a traditional library surprised us. To a certain degree, we should have expected them to want the Reading Room to be quiet. It is after all, a glassed-in space full of books and tables, without any of the flashy technology evident in the rest of the renovation. But, initially, we brainstormed many ideas about how to change the culture of the room to make it more accepting of at least some low levels of noise.

FIGURE 1
Floor Plan—First Floor of the UCLA Charles E. Young Research Library

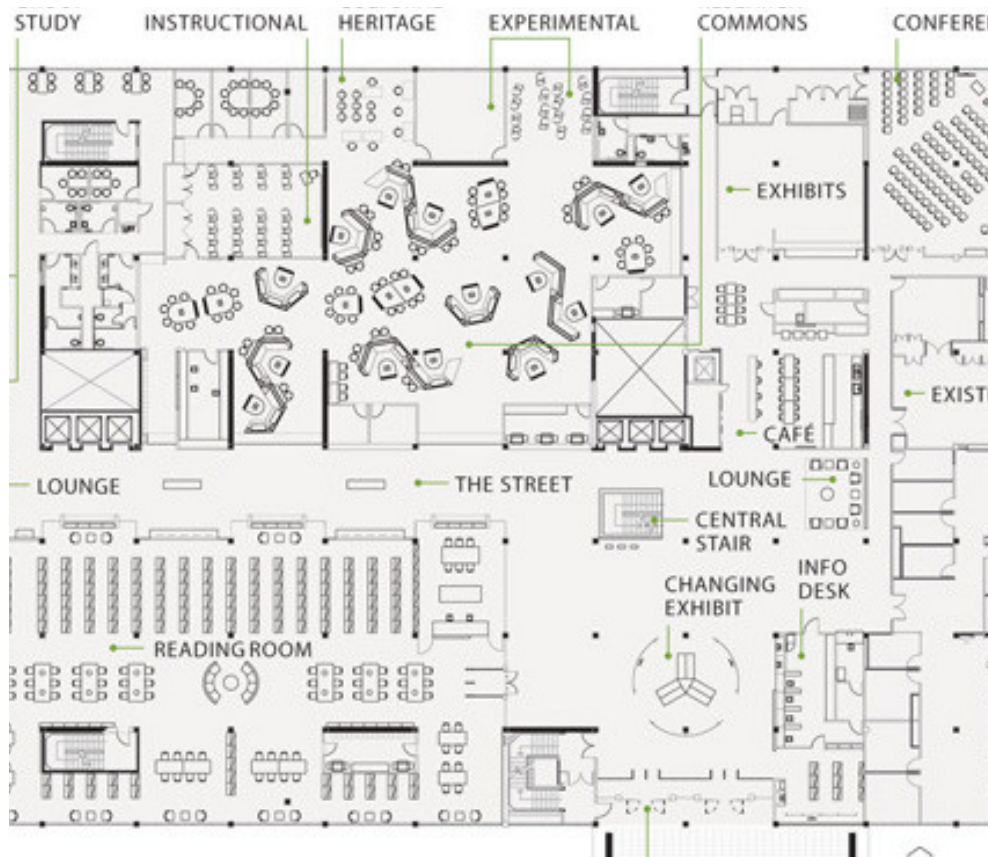


Image source: http://www.metropolismag.com/cda/popup_image.php?image_id=22725&slideshow_speed=

FIGURE 2
UCLA Reading Room



These ideas included holding small seminars in the consultation space, using signage to indicate varying degrees of noise levels as you went further into the room and moving graduate reserves into the room in order to draw more graduate students into the space. The Research Commons, designed as a collaborative space for group work and technology-intensive projects, has also often been co-opted for quiet study. The design was created to minimize the need for signage; however we found that intended use was not necessarily intuitive to users. Patrons thus defaulted to their traditional ideas of how a library is used, shushing groups who were using the space to collaborate.

We also started to form the impression that the majority of users were undergraduates, not the social sciences and humanities graduate students⁶ we had expected (perhaps naively) to use the new library spaces. Anecdotally, reference staff reported more undergraduates asking questions than in past years. We also received comments from unhappy graduate students. In December 2011, we sent out an informal survey to departments across North Campus asking

about their use of the Research Library. Several of the respondents—all graduate students or faculty—emphasized that they had a hard time finding space in the new Research Library and felt crowded out by undergraduates.

To be clear, we are not at all interested in banning undergraduates from the library, as a number of graduate students requested (only some of them were joking). Many undergraduates at UCLA are engaged in serious study, such as writing research papers or theses, or completing a capstone project. We do not limit use of our research collections to graduates and faculty and we have no interest in doing that with services or spaces, either. Nevertheless, we do want to provide a welcoming space for graduate students and it seemed that our newfound popularity was endangering that goal.

Case Study: The Research Commons

If one area best illustrates the multi-faceted challenges of this renovation, it is the Research Commons. Today, when you walk through the Research Commons

FIGURE 3
UCLA Research Commons Pod



you will find instructors engaged with students in many of the technology-enhanced spaces. You will see students with laptops working together and using the large monitors to display a presentation, document, spreadsheet or visualization that is the focus of their collaboration. And, you will actually hear conversations. But when we first opened, we observed that the area was used mostly for individual study. The monitors were hardly used at all and, as mentioned earlier, students actually hushed anyone—including librarians—who dared to speak above a whisper.

UCLA librarians and technical staff were accustomed to managing group study rooms and classrooms, but the pod area posed challenges from the start. To be sure, some issues were simply a matter of staff and users gaining experience working in this new environment. Other changes were brought about by the efforts of the Research Commons Working Group (RCWG), the cross-unit group that was created to manage these spaces.

The Working Group was created and is led by the Librarian for Digital Research and Scholarship. The group is the connective tissue between the vision for these spaces and the reality of making them work on a daily basis. It is composed of seven or eight library staff members, including one technical lead for the Research Library and a representative from UCLA's Center for Digital Humanities, which, in a partnership with the library, designed and manages two of the instructional areas in the Research Commons.⁷ The group meets weekly and deals with everything from overflowing wastebaskets, to managing online reservation systems, to supporting complex events.

As soon as the Research Commons opened, groups expressed interest in reserving not just one pod, but all the pods. This presented the Working Group with several challenges. The original design concept was to establish the pod area as a commons, one that would always be open to drop-in users for collaborative research. With easy access to power and wireless Internet, the area became extremely popular with individual users seeking a quiet place to study. Those users were, for the most part, uninterested in using the large screens to display their desktops.

As a result, groups seeking collaborative space were unable to find a pod to work in, unless they were willing to confront and displace individuals. Even when they did find space and attempted to connect laptops to the screens, they ran into technical prob-

lems. For example, Mac users needed VGA adapters for their laptops.⁸ Once they were connected, many were unfamiliar with how to adjust the display settings on their own laptops or ones that they borrowed from the laptop lending area.

Several factors limited our ability to help users in the open area. First, the assumption that users would intuitively use the pod technology for collaborative work meant that the open area was designed as self-serve. There is no reference or service desk where librarians or library assistants could be noticeably stationed to provide assistance. Since most of the issues raised were technical rather than research questions, librarians were reluctant to commit to staffing this area. Technically trained student staff in the Laptop Lending area was available to help users, but that desk has no direct sightline to the Commons. The trained student workers cannot see users in the pods, and vice versa; if they want to help users, they must leave the lending area unmanned and risk the security of the equipment.

Also, in keeping with the minimalist design, with its preference for icons rather than verbiage, signs to post instructions on how to use the pods or find technical assistance were discouraged. Finally, the team of student programmers that created the self-serve online reservation system for the group study rooms informed us that they would not be able to extend that system to the pods in time for the Fall 2012 opening.

To address these challenges, the Working Group meets weekly, designing experiments and keeping a close eye on user feedback. Initially we implemented a very simple online form that captured what users liked and where they encountered difficulties. We decided to accept limited reservations in the pod area, mostly from faculty who were willing to test the equipment, experiment with the technology, and provide us with frank feedback.

We worked closely with the professors and teaching assistants to craft assignments for break-out groups in the pods. From these groups, we learned how to concisely explain and demonstrate pod technology to students who brought multiple types of devices. We also observed unexpected macro-dynamics of using the space for large groups. In short, the area does not function the way a traditional library classroom does, with the instructor providing a demo while others watch and follow along. Instead, groups operate as self-contained units. Therefore, assign-

FIGURE 4
UCLA Icons



ments have to be distributed to the groups in advance or online and, once in the pods, the instructor and teaching assistants circulate to answer questions and provide assistance.

By accepting these initial reservations, we were able to observe firsthand how users interacted with the technology and the space. Eventually, we were able to advocate for tabletop signs explaining how to connect laptops to the monitors using the Pucks. Since the pods are unique to the research library, and student staff works in both the College (undergraduate) and Research libraries, we created a specialist student-worker position, and trained that student to help users in the Research Commons.

We also began to better understand and explain the pedagogical implications of using the pods for group work. Faculty from departments such as Information Studies and Digital Humanities had experience assigning group projects and could easily envision the pods as a place where students could work together on those assignments. To help other instructors envision and make effective use of the pods, we

hosted events such as an open house, where we organized concurrent hands-on sessions with software applications (e.g. Google docs, Zotero, etc.) that were designed to enhance collaboration.

These events have allowed us to broaden our user base beyond a few key departments. We opened our Working Group meetings to librarians and staff who wished to use the pod area for open-house-like events that they organized for their groups. We have hosted GIS Day, a Digital Library Showcase, and other longer-term events, such as a three-week National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institute that made use of multiple spaces in different combinations.

Other feedback we received was more cultural than technical. Early experiments made it clear that the word “collaboration” was too vague; users expecting quiet imagined collaboration in a library to happen silently. In an effort to address feedback about heated exchanges between users expecting quiet and those engaged in conversation, we experimented with signs. Our first attempts were too wordy and were ignored. We realized we needed to brand the Research

Commons with two important words: “group” and “talk.” We devised one large sign that we placed at the main entrance of the open area. It includes a photograph of a group of users seated in a pod with a laptop that is connected to the large screen. This has worked well, and as mentioned previously, we have seen a change in the interactions taking place in that area.

With a full academic year of experimenting and experience, we gained the knowledge we needed to encourage more groups to use the pods. We also realized that, in order to balance the overwhelming need of users seeking study spaces (particularly during tenth week and finals) with the emerging need of groups intending to use the pods for group work, we would need three things. First, we needed an online reservation system that would allow us to have more nuanced policies (e.g. one set of rules for graduate students and another for undergraduates). Our group study rooms were at nearly full capacity, and we were eager to offer online reservations and services for the pods using the same system and workflows as the group study rooms. Second, we needed more sys-

tematic feedback—in particular, data from users who were not using the Research Commons. Third, we recognized that to balance these needs we would need to coordinate our efforts with other groups in the Research Library and even other libraries at UCLA.

Given that the problems were complex and the potential solutions required coordination among units, we felt that we needed a clearer understanding of user needs. Thus, we created the North Campus Research Community Study (NCRCS), a multi-modal study to assess humanities and social sciences graduate student support needs. Our hope is to build on the results of the NCRCS study, in addition to what we have already learned from ad hoc service adjustments, to better develop the possibilities of the Research Library renovations. We also hope what we learn from graduate students at UCLA will be useful to other librarians as they move forward with creating new learning spaces.

The UCLA Library North Campus Research Community Study: Project Overview and Preliminary Insights

The team for the North Campus Research Community Study is comprised of the Head of Collections Research and Instructional Services (CRIS), the team leader for Humanities and Social Sciences, the Librarian for Digital Research and Scholarship (LDRS), and the Librarian for Advanced Research and Engagement (LARE), all based in the Charles E. Young Research Library.

When first seeking a more holistic understanding of graduate student needs, the team surveyed available literature to see what could be gained from the work of other colleagues. At the time this review was conducted, a few available studies touched on issues of graduate student research needs, but did not have enough information to make plans and changes without further local investigation. The available literature on the subject of graduate student research behaviors does clearly demonstrate that a one-size-fits-all approach does not work. Different disciplines have different needs and practices. And indeed institutional culture may also play a role in behaviors and methods. Further details of the literature review can be found in Appendix A.

This information gave insight into some of the issues librarians were grappling with, but specific questions about departments and students at UCLA still needed to be answered in order for library staff

FIGURE 5
General Usage Guidelines Sign



RESEARCH COMMONS

WHERE GROUPS
meet | talk | work | explore | create

WITH ACCESS TO
big screens | laptops | wireless

Reserve a pod or group study room at
<http://www.library.ucla.edu/libraries/researchlibrary/reserve>

Questions? Ask a Librarian

to make effective changes. Based on discussions with colleagues at other institutions who were in the midst of assessment projects, the team was careful to design the study with a scope that could be completed with available resources. We had no outside funding and only the available time of four librarians, all with other responsibilities, and two part-time interns.

There were a number of challenges to face as the team embarked on this project. One was that being part of UCLA necessitated obtaining a certification of IRB exemption because the study involved human subjects. Even though a full review was not required, this process still required a huge amount of paperwork and documentation that was unfamiliar to the group. Another challenge was that the four members of the research team were coming from different backgrounds and experiences, and while these were complementary in many respects, also meant that roles and communication methods had to be negotiated. The unfamiliar complexities of the IRB documentation process required the assistance of a colleague outside of the library for advice about data management. She has continued to provide excellent advice and support in this area—both management and analysis, as will be mentioned later.

This study is a work in progress and the intention is to complete it in at least two phases; we will discuss here what has been learned to-date (Phase 1), which involves several types of assessment—interviews with faculty, observations of user behavior in the Research Commons, headcounts, and an online questionnaire.

Subject liaison librarian colleagues from a variety of North Campus disciplines helped to identify North Campus faculty members who advise and train graduate students to do research. Through these faculty interviews we aimed to gain information about the types and manner of support being provided in departments and show where librarians might be of assistance or develop complementary services or programs. The NCRCS budget and time constraints limited the scope to ten interviews for now, which the team recognizes to be a small sample. Accordingly, the data gathered will be interpreted as illustrative rather than absolute. In the course of the interviews, a pair of research team members met with each individual faculty member with a list of questions and topics to guide the conversation. One librarian would take notes and manage the recording device while the other conducted the interview. The recordings will

be transcribed to allow for textual and other types of analysis using a variety of digital and statistical tools. We hope to identify themes and patterns, as well as have the opportunity to become more versed in the tools themselves, thus placing ourselves in a better position to collaborate with researchers in the future.

During the same period, the research team observed and documented student behavior in Research Library spaces through the use of floor plans and behavior codes to capture the types of activities occurring and at what times of day. Two graduate students from the Information Studies department became involved in the NCRCS study as interns. They assisted with developing a classification system for user behavior (e.g. group work, solo study, etc.) and set about counting users, observing behaviors and recording this data. Patron behavioral observation began in October 2012; library staff and project interns wrote narrative observations and utilized floor plans to note locations of behaviors. The outsider's perspective that the interns brought to this was very important; often they would note behaviors or occurrences to which library staff had become desensitized.⁹

Simultaneously, the team gathered quantitative data about the number of students in the different sections of the Research Library. Staff and students in the Access Services department gave valuable assistance with this component. Counts were done three times on weekdays, and twice on weekends, if staff were available.

This observation and documentation took place over an extended period—during the fall and winter quarters—but was limited in scope by staff schedules and the time-intensive nature of the documentation and subsequent coding. It may be that we decide to do further observation in the future to have a larger data set from which to draw patterns and conclusions.

The online questionnaire asked subjects to complete a variety of question types, including multiple choice, rating, and short answer. The questionnaire was anonymous, but asked for some demographic data to categorize and give context to responses (subject area and enrollment level/user category). The questionnaire was open for six weeks in November and December 2012, which was a generally busy time in the quarter and may have affected the response rate. Libraries frequently have difficulty achieving high response rates to surveys; in an effort to address this concern, the research team distributed the ques-

tionnaire in a variety of settings and through multiple methods. Requests to participate were sent to email distribution lists through academic departments and their librarian subject liaisons as well as to other campus centers' email lists, also social media. In addition, because of the focus on graduate students, the team sought locations where these students spend time outside of the library in order to distribute the questionnaire there, such as cafes, departmental reading rooms, and other lounges; this was also partially an attempt to capture comments of non-library users. As an incentive, participants were entered in a drawing to win a \$50 gift card. These efforts were moderately successful, depending on one's definition; the survey received 277 responses, 111 of them graduate students,¹⁰ representing a range of departments in the humanities and social sciences. (No respondents indicated that they did not use the library, so either this strategy was unsuccessful, or in a more positive interpretation, all graduate students use the library, so there weren't any of them to record.)

As previously mentioned the amount of data collected thus far has been limited by available funding and staff resources. The research team recognizes that critical information about student needs will come from the mouths of graduate students themselves. In phase two of this project, the team intends to conduct focus groups and possibly also individual interviews with graduate students, as well as expand upon the number of faculty interviews. The focus groups will be shaped by the issues uncovered in the earlier assessments. The aim is to interview approximately 30-40 students, asking about such topics as: how they learned to do research, where they work/study, how they interact with fellow students and faculty, and where they need support.

Initial Findings

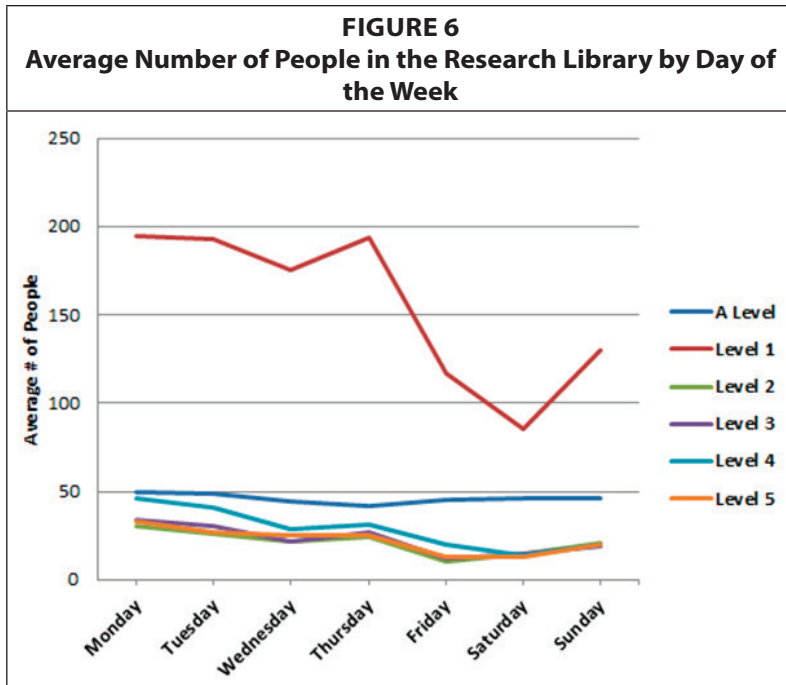
Initial results of these investigations have revealed unanticipated and illustrative information, in addition to confirming some of the team's suspicions. Comments from the survey and from interviews with faculty highlight the lack of adequate workspace for graduate students. While some departments have extensive facilities—offices, conference rooms, and in a few cases dedicated reading rooms—others have little more than a departmental lounge. The survey seemed to indicate that graduate students prefer to work at home or a coffee shop and come into the build-

ing only to check out materials, but at the same time want space to work in the Research Library. The non-library spaces enable solitary work, but do not allow for or support community building and collaboration. Faculty mentioned the need for students working on a dissertation to have a place to interact with others in similar areas to share ideas, commiserate, and receive feedback.

Preliminary observation data and headcounts in the Research Commons showed that library staff members' impressions of the space as merely a large study hall were not entirely correct. Yes, during the day the majority of the activity was individual study, but results indicate that the amount of group work increases in the evenings and on Sundays with a shift beginning around 5:00 pm; it is just that most library staff are not around at those times to observe it. Upon consideration, this is a logical pattern—classes and work fill the majority of daytime hours and student schedules are far more flexible in the evening and weekend hours. This is not to say that the majority of evening and weekend work is collaborative; there is still a fair amount of individual usage as well. Indeed, the survey sample of graduate students indicated that nearly 58% of them never have group work and about 56% did not use the collaborative group spaces in the building.

Group work was also observed happening in the upper-level stacks floors. The team could not determine whether these groups were made up of graduates or undergraduates without disrupting them, but wondered if the crowds of individual users in the Research Commons pods was pushing some group work to alternative spaces. The challenges for use of the unrenovated stacks floors were also clearly demonstrated in the survey. Most of the survey comments were about the lack of electrical outlets, the old and dilapidated furniture, and the spotty wifi coverage, as well as mentioning the temperature was too cold (ironic, but not uncommon in Los Angeles).

When survey responses about usage of building space were filtered by user groups—graduates and undergraduates—the team noticed a clear delineation of the most frequently used spaces. The stacks floors were the most-used space by far for graduate students, with the café a distant second. For the undergraduates, the Research Commons was the most-used, although the Reading Room was nearly the same; the café came in a close third. This question did not capture what the



graduates were doing in the stacks, so frequent usage could mean either going there to check out a book, or going there to work. Other questions addressed the building usage in general and still others asked about users' preferred study/work environments. One of the team's goals moving forward is to further explore this issue, through additional survey data analysis, as well as subsequent assessment components (focus groups, etc.).

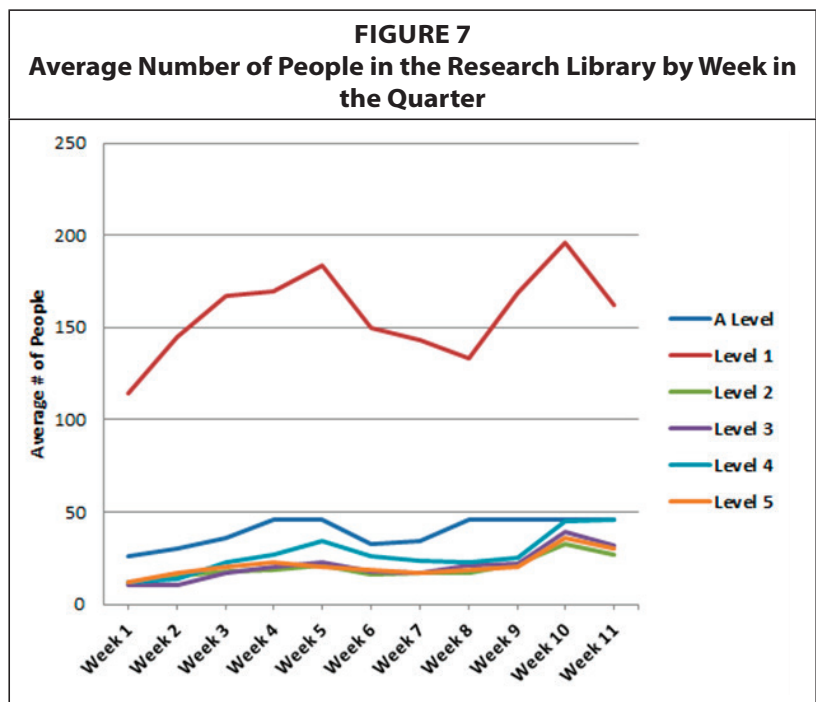
Survey comments about what could improve the Research Commons also differed starkly by user group: undergraduates (though the sample was too small for any significant conclusions) primarily wanted more of the existing seating, while graduate student comments centered around wanting more space for individual work and separation from undergraduates.

The following graphic showing the fluctuation of users in the Research Library overall was also interesting. Initial data indicate that undergraduates are the primary users of the first floor spaces, but that usage fluctuates widely depending on the day and time in the quarter. Usage of the stacks is much more consistent, which would seem

to support the theory that this is a space more dominated by graduate students with a steadier workload. These initial conclusions clearly require further investigation, but could offer some opportunity for staff to explore new initiatives to create spaces specifically for graduate students.

As we continue to analyze the data, library staff will also be assessing the results of changes made in the course of the project's first phase. What worked? What failed and why? How did the library adapt out of these failures? What additional changes can be implemented with existing resources and what are the more intransigent problems or gaps that will need longer term planning or fundraising to accomplish?

During the summer and fall quarters of 2012, CRIS experimented with providing walk-in reference service in the Research Commons in an attempt to encourage use of the pods' monitors and to advertise the assistance a librarian could provide. This initiative was unsuccessful; there were a number of factors that may have contributed to this: user expectations about the physical appearance of a place to get help, lack of signage, difficult



floor plan and sight lines, as well as reluctance of staff to leave the Reading Room desk unstaffed in order to funnel users to the alternate space. Analysis of space occupancy data suggests that the number of students in the Reading Room and Research Commons are roughly equivalent, so in some ways the failure of this initiative is confusing. The team's hope is that with additional information about student needs a more successful strategy can be developed to facilitate access to librarians and make their expertise and services more visible.

Over time, one of the team's goals is to piece together a map of graduate student needs that will enable the department (and the library) to create a more strategic approach to outreach, programming (workshops and events), research support and instructional support. This map would only reflect a particular moment in time, so measures will have to be developed to receive continued longitudinal feedback from North Campus graduate students.

A key to our success will be communicating what we have learned and collaborating with other groups to meet the needs that have been identified, especially since North Campus researchers use multiple library facilities and services, including the Arts Library, Music Library, Law Library, and Management Library, as well as South Campus libraries in the sciences. What is more, graduate students relate to the library in more than one capacity--as researchers and as teaching assistants or instructors of record. Accordingly, library groups such as Teaching and Learning Services, liaison librarians, Public Services Council, Scholarly Communication Steering Committee, and library management must all be made aware of our study results and able to use them to inform their own activities.

This communication and ongoing assessment will be a focus area for the Librarian for Advanced Research and Engagement. One anticipated (and already observed) challenge moving forward will be that experimental programs that succeed from an attendance/PR perspective may not actually be sustainable. In some cases, these experiments may prove to be too resource-intensive. In other cases, experimental programs may not align closely enough with the Library's strategic vision, when considered alongside other competing priorities. Proactive communication and outreach will help librarians and library staff to navigate these challenges as they arise.

Conclusion

The cultural shift experienced in Collections, Research, and Instructional Services and the rest of the Charles E. Young Research Library is evident in other parts of the library organization, as new librarian roles and new services are evolving. We are still struggling somewhat in certain areas of the library where unfilled positions persist. Because it has not been easy to identify work that we can stop doing, more work is being spread over fewer individuals, a situation faced by many academic libraries since the economic downturn of the past few years. There will likely be recruitments for more traditional roles, if/when the financial situation recovers, but even those more traditional job descriptions will get a makeover in light of the new roles we have created over the past two years. After all, our staffing patterns and service models will need to acknowledge and accommodate a persistent state of experimentation and evolution.

In a nice way, our cultural change has turned out to mirror the Research Library renovation design. The design consciously centered on three keywords: Journey, Discovery, Collaboration. Physically, the new spaces embody these ideas. The library's glass walls, open construction, and communal spaces are all meant, figuratively and literally, to reveal the inner workings of the humanities and social sciences research process, which is itself an iterative, often experimental, and increasingly collaborative endeavor.

Despite early successes, both with service and staffing improvements in the Research Library and with participatory design community building efforts library-wide, staff must continue to train themselves to be patient with the iterative process. The organization is enormous, especially if one considers the entire University of California system. For decades, preferred practice has been to either roll out finished projects or, when a finished product is impracticable, launch scrupulously planned pilot projects. The shift to a culture of iterative change and experimentation will take some time.

Appendix A.

In a recent white paper, a team of researchers at Columbia University and Cornell University (part of 2CUL) discussed their findings related to support humanities doctoral students at both institutions. Their study aim was to identify areas where the library might support these students and potentially shorten the time to completion for their degrees. Through focus groups and interviews with students, the team identified several areas where the library could play a role: provide space; foster community; provide access to research collections; provide expertise in research skills, information management, and teaching; develop their scholarly identity. Their study also acknowledged that there were diverse needs and preferences in different disciplines.

A 2005 article by Andy Barrett in the *Journal of Academic Librarianship* discussed about the information seeking habits of graduate students in the humanities. Through interviews with 10 students, the author learned that most rely heavily on their research supervisors to develop their projects and that the time pressure for program completion for these disciplines was quite acute.

A 2006 article by George, Bright, Hulbert, et.al. in *Information Research* also identified similar patterns in the information-seeking behavior of graduate students, that they start with their professors, then move to colleagues/other students, and after that consult library professionals. This is relevant to our questions; however the focus of this article is more about looking for information than about research environment and support needs.

Also from 2006, an article by Jankowska, Hertel, and Young in *Libraries and the Academy* discusses how in many cases graduate students do not spend much time in the physical library, so electronic access becomes critically important, as well as alternative methods for getting assistance. They also note that many graduate students prefer quiet study spaces and carrels, though some do want to work in groups.

In a survey at the University of Notre Dame, conducted in 2008, librarians sought to assess how the library was meeting graduate students research needs, focusing on information seeking behaviors and their satisfaction with the resources available. Respondents were primarily from the sciences and humanities. (Kayongo and Helm, *Reference and User Services Quarterly*, 2010) Similar to the other articles, this offers information about how students are finding information, but not about their methodologies and approaches to research outputs and products, or what resources are needed to support those.

The report “Researchers of Tomorrow” released in June 2012 by the British Library and the Joint Information Systems Committee presented the results of a 3-year study of the information-seeking practices and behaviors 17,000 UK doctoral students at 70 different institutions. Their results indicate heavy reliance on secondary sources, confusion about Open Access, and difficulty finding relevant resources. They conclude that these students are not fully embracing the opportunities offered by digital resources and tools and that this raises questions about current research training methods and support.

The ARL report “New Roles for New Times: Research Library services for Graduate Students” by Lucinda Covert-Vail and Scott Collard, and Ithaka’s report “Supporting the Changing Research Practices of Historians” by Jennifer Rutner and Roger C. Schonfeld, were both released in December 2012 after the UCLA project had begun, but confirm and support many of the things the team was learning through its own investigations, as well as highlighted areas to explore in further detail. The Ithaka report is one of an in-progress series of investigations into research support for specific disciplines and is an important effort that will complement and provide further details to libraries seeking to learn more about individual disciplines.

Notes

1. A detailed account of the redesign strategy can be found in: Chang, Jade. "Dual Mode: An elegantly restored research library at UCLA brings the analog and digital worlds together." *Metropolismag.com*. <http://www.metropolismag.com/story/20120720/dual-mode#.UAmP2ilReO8.mailto>. July 20, 2012.
2. In 2012, the UCLA Library was nominated for the International Interior Design Association's Calibre Award in the Academic Project Category, an award that recognizes the most collaborative designer-client design projects. In addition, the library has been nominated for the 2012 American Institute of Architects/American Library Association Library Building Award (results pending).
3. While the Research Commons Demonstration Space helped us figure out what kind of chairs people liked; it was not particularly helpful in determining how people would use the space.
4. The central feature of each pod is a large monitor; hence the manufacturer's name, "media:scape." The main technical feature of the pods is the ability to connect multiple laptops to the monitor with switches (Pucks™) that allow users to toggle control of which laptop screen is displayed on the large, central screen.
5. CRIS weeded the 56,000-volume collection down to the current 28,000 volumes; moved the collection to a temporary space from which we delivered reference services during construction; and moved it back once construction was finished. As a Research 1 university with important area studies programs whose materials are only available in a paper format, we anticipate maintaining a significant print reference collection for the foreseeable future.
6. The Charles E. Young Research Library largely services users from UCLA's North Campus, home to social sciences and humanities departments. While we do have users from the hard sciences departments located in South Campus, they have other libraries closer to them that serve as their home base, such as the Biomedical Library or the Science and Engineering Library.
7. The two CDH-managed spaces are, in the floor plan, labeled as "Digital Cultural Heritage" and one of the spaces (with moveable desks) labeled "Experimental." The Digital Cultural Heritage laboratory features a high-resolution rear-projection screen. The second "Experimental" area has been renamed the "Digital Hub."
8. Students and faculty can borrow dual-boot (Windows and Mac) laptops and, as an option, they can now also borrow VGA adapters that allow them to connect these (and similar models of) laptops to monitors in group study rooms as

well as the pods. See <http://www.clicc.ucla.edu/tiki-index.php?page=equipment> for additional information on laptops that the library loans to students and faculty using the same online system that allows users to borrow books that are placed on reserve.

9. For example, in their observation report, interns recorded that students were sitting on the floor waiting for laptops to be returned so that they could check them out. Student staff working in the Research Commons did not mention this in their reports.
10. There were only 31 undergraduate responses, but this was not the target user group and the survey was not marketed to them. References to undergraduate responses are with the acknowledged caveat that the sample size is too low to make significant conclusions about their behaviors, though it is an interesting point of comparison.

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