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ARC to Success: A Campus-Wide Collaboration between Learning Support Services, Career Services, Information Services, and Research Services

By Molly Allen

Reimagining a space within a library comes in all forms. How can I better acquire a resource? How can we market our collection more effectively to our students? How can we continue to provide innovative spaces and technology within our library?

The planning for the Academic and Research Commons (ARC) at Central Washington University (CWU) began in 2012, with the reimagining of our Reference department. Traditional library spaces are no longer adequate for the interactive learners on college campuses today, and creating a free, open, and collaborative space in the form of a learning commons was proposed as the first step toward this transition.

The first floor of the James E. Brooks Library was redesigned to accommodate individual computer workstations, comfortable seating for group meetings, and a wide open space for collaboration, now utilized for a number of different programs and activities.

The ARC serves as the collaborative hub of the James E. Brooks Library and invites our partners to share the space with us. The CWU Learning Support Services program, providing drop-in and appointment-based writing and math tutoring, subject-specific tutoring, and peer assisted labs, is housed in the ARC. Large numbers of students visit regularly to work with tutors individually and in small groups on projects including the development of reading skills and peer reviews of their writing. Students participate in guided study sessions, reading groups, and other academic pursuits within this space, utilizing whiteboard tabletops, televisions, computers, and other equipment.

Another valued partner, CWU Career Services, provides



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resources within the space on a weekly basis, allowing students to gain tips on writing cover letters and resumes. This partnership has paved the way for Career Services to host a number of career development and exploratory workshops in library classrooms. Two years after the opening of the ARC, Information Services joined the team, providing another location for their busy service desk. The Information Services desk provides technical assistance in the ARC from 5PM to 8PM on weekdays, offering another great resource to students.

Our Research Services team provides assistance in source and material researching, as well as material location. Research Services delivers 24/7 reference with the assistance of AskWA and looks forward to assisting our patrons, whether

student, faculty, or community member, with their research needs.

Presentation rooms and “media:scapes” provide students with the ability to create and practice solo and group presentations, offering a live view of their work. Each year, the ARC partners participate in a technology ‘petting zoo’ during Wildcat Welcome Weekend, showing off all of the incredible technology within the space. Media:scapes offer the ability to project up to six individual devices on a larger, dual-screen for ease of collaboration. The presentation rooms are open for reservation by all students and allow the ideal space for presentation practice, or even a room to play popular touch-screen games such as Fruit Ninja or Duck Hunt to orient students to the technology!

Molly Allen is Secretary Senior with the James E. Brooks Library at Central Washington University.

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The ARC has turned into a perfect location for campus and community events and collaboration. This year, with the hiring of our new Student Engagement and Community Outreach Librarian, the number of events hosted within the library has increased significantly. A staff member shared the idea of hosting a Brooks Library Game Night, giving students a chance to take a break from their studies and enjoy snacks and a few rounds of their favorite games. We hosted our first successful Game Night in September and plan to continue to host themed Game Nights on a monthly basis. Having the open space with plenty of tables and chairs served as a great location for the event, showed students how fun hanging out in the library can be, and gave new and returning students a fun and casual way to make new friends. Other programming within the ARC has proven successful, such as our yearly participation in International Games Day @ Your Library, which invites students and community members to come to the ARC to play a variety of board games and video games. The Brooks Library has invited community poets into the ARC for National Poetry Month to read their works, inviting students, faculty, and staff to relax and enjoy a reading within the space. The addition of programming at the library, particularly within the ARC, shows students that it is a safe, inviting, and collaborative space.

The opening of the Academic and Research Commons within the Brooks Library has proven successful in bringing additional traffic flow to the library. It has shown the value in collaboration through partnerships across campus and has given our students a comfortable place to get together and accomplish their goals. The reimagining of this space within the Brooks Library has brought departments together and continues to evolve as we work in partnership towards achieving our student success, engagement, and outreach goals across campus. 📖

Act, previously known as No Child Left Behind. Washington's U.S. Senator Patty Murray, as co-Chair of the HELP (Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions), is a key player in this legislation.

On July 16, 2015 the U.S. Senate passed the Every Child Achieves Act of 2015 after amending ESEA to include the Reed-Cochran Amendment. The Amendment will help save and expand school libraries in every state in the nation by explicitly authorizing school districts to use federal funds to develop and foster effective school library programs.

Currently, the House Committee on Education and the Workforce and the Senate HELP Committee are working toward agreement on the reauthorization of ESEA.

Calls to action are posted to the WLMA listserv. All WLA members are encouraged to support this legislation.

Thanks to The American Library Association's Office of Government Relations (OGR) for providing text and tracking legislative progress. You can learn more at <http://www.ala.org/offices/ogr>.

Has the time come for a year round legislature?

Our state elected officials are finding it more and more difficult to conduct the people's business in the months allotted annually. Last session required 2 additional "special sessions" to hammer out a final budget, and there is talk of reconvening to address shortfalls in education funding.

There's an old canard in business schools that states "Retail is easy – it's a simple matter of providing people with what they want, when they want it, at a price they are willing to pay, while turning a profit."

Similar irony could be used to describe the work of our state legislature. All they need to do is provide the levels of service Washington citizens demand, at a tax rate they are willing to commit, all while covering employee expenses and saving for a rainy day!

Could this be the year we begin to give our state elected officials more time and resources to negotiate their way through complicated and expensive issues such as education, transportation and public safety? Probably not, but it will be worth watching to see if this comes up as tax hawks continue to experience sticker shock over the cost of the multiple "special" sessions that are becoming the norm for Washington. 📖