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Lateka Grays
University of Nevada, Las Vegas, lateka.grays@unlv.edu

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Challenges and Opportunities of Creating Library Services for the Singapore Campus

Lateka Grays, Hospitality Librarian

When the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, opened its Singapore campus, it was critical that library services be provided and integrated into the curriculum. The University Libraries team overcame many challenges to create a libraries services infrastructure to support the students. Work began with then-hospitality liaison librarian Cory Tucker and has been carried on by current hospitality liaison librarian Lateka Grays. Our greatest strengths were the expertise of the liaisons and the support of the university.

We faced challenges to our mission of establishing library services in three key areas: access, communication, and technology. We developed a list of questions to help us address these challenges and keep us focused on the desired outcome.

Access questions:
1. Who needs access (students, faculty, and staff)?
2. What can we legally provide (due to licensing and copyright restrictions)?
3. What will the cost be to provide access?
4. How will we provide access to print materials (books, reports, etc.)?
5. Who will provide reference service to the executive and undergraduate students, given the 16-hour time difference between Las Vegas and Singapore?

Communication questions:
1. Who should be contacted for changes to library services?
2. What types of language barriers exist?
3. How do we alert users to new information about the libraries?
4. What types of resources are needed to support the research and assignments for the students?

Technology questions:
1. What type of infrastructure does the campus have?
2. How do we resolve technology glitches?

How did we address and overcome these challenges?

A web page was created for the campus to provide information about how to access resources, new services, and the types of resources available. http://www.library.unlv.edu/singapore/index.php

Meetings were held to create a user type for Singapore barcodes and interlibrary loan documents. It was determined that entire books not available electronically would not be loaned or shipped. Only sections in accordance with copyright restrictions would be provided through interlibrary loans. However, there is still a need for some print materials that are not available electronically. We continue to look for full-text
Shrestha Sook Yean recently joined UNLV Singapore as career services manager. According to Andy Nazarechuk, dean of the Singapore campus, “Shrestha brings a wealth of academic and industry experience to help the graduates of our program find suitable internship and employment opportunities in the expanding tourism and hospitality industry in Singapore.”

Sook Yean, a native Singaporean, has many years of experience in education and industry both in Singapore and abroad. She holds a masters degree in economics and has taught finance courses at SHATEC Institutes, which is the Hotel Association of Singapore’s higher education facility.

In this position, she plans to set up career days, help students with resumes and job searches, and spread the word throughout the hospitality industry about the pool of highly trained and qualified students and graduates ready to work. She commented, “Through my work experience, I have developed knowledge of the hospitality industry and its needs. Everyone here has been very welcoming, and I’m looking forward to showing the hospitality industry the high caliber of our graduates.”

The creation of Singapore library support was critical to the support of the students and faculty. It is an ongoing process that we are continually refining. We learned many lessons in the process, including the value of early collaboration and frank communication about budgets, logistics, timelines, and expectations.

News from Singapore

In March, the Singapore Ministry of Education announced that Singaporean residents can attend UNLV Singapore with a scholarship from the Singaporean government. The Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT) will launch its first eight degree programs with five overseas university partners from August 2010, one year ahead of schedule. Students enrolled in SIT will receive degrees from these overseas universities that are the equivalent of those awarded in their home countries.

For more information about this degree program, please visit www.moe.gov.sg/media/press/2010/03/singapore-institute-of-technol.php.

electronic versions of materials for hospitality research and research methods.

There is only one hospitality librarian serving the UNLV campus in Las Vegas and the Singapore campus, so the creation of tutorials and online guides as well as the promotion of the chat or instant messaging service and ask a librarian service are ongoing.

Periodic visits to the campus by the hospitality librarian to conduct library research workshops are being considered and contingent upon the budget.

Removing library jargon from self-help guides and tutorials is ongoing.

Tutorials take longer than expected to load, so attempts to shorten tutorials are ongoing.

More resources with international content are needed, so evaluation of existing library resources and trials of other resources are ongoing and dependent upon the budget.

Feedback from faculty and students is always encouraged to select and purchase resources to support research and assignments. (Should I include the purchase request link or my e-mail or both? In the future I would like to survey faculty about given assignments in order to determine UNLV Libraries resources being used for their courses versus the resources used at the National Library of Singapore.)

Contacts were provided to resolve technology issues via e-mail.