

“Mission Possible: A Library’s Rededication to Public Service”; April 10, 2009; Tennessee Library Association Annual Conference; Nashville, TN
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Presentation description -- Many libraries could use a shake up to rededicate the organization to its service mission. Explore how one academic library recommitted itself to a core service mission through strategic planning, reorganization, and cross training. The library’s approach to uniting service desks may be especially interesting.

mission possible

a library's rededication to customer service



CAROL GROTNES BELK
LIBRARY
& INFORMATION COMMONS



what we plan to cover

- the way we were
- major changes via strategic planning and reorganization
- our new team: learning & research services (LRS)
- team initiatives aimed at customer service
- challenges
- success factors

appalachian context

- enrollment near 16,000
 - 14,500 on campus
 - 1,500 off campus
- more than 1,800 graduate students
- over 730 faculty
- part of UNC System
- one Ed.D. in educational administration



library & info commons context

- opened June 2005
- personnel 87
 - faculty 40
 - staff 47
 - student assistants 31 FTE (140 students employees)
- total budget \$7.5 mil
- collections budget \$3.4 mil
- annual gate count over 1,000,000



the way we were

- traditional library building
 - individual study carrels
 - limited group study space
 - quiet, no food or drink, etc.

- traditional team model
 - reference & instruction
 - access services

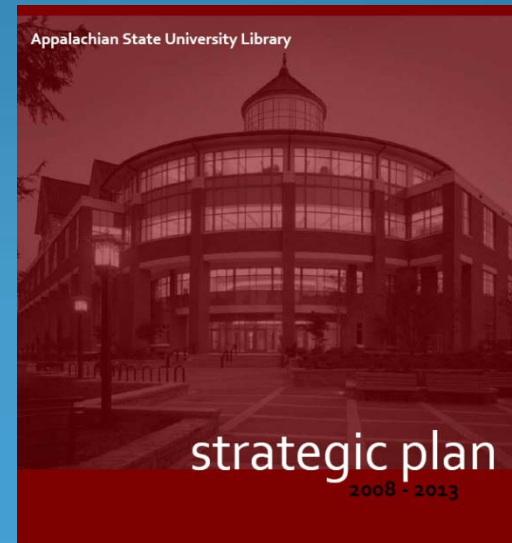
2 major changes

- strategic planning (2006 -2007)
- reorganization (all of 2007)

- both implemented january 1, 2008

major change 1: strategic plan

- process
 - faculty and staff driven
 - 8 member steering committee
 - utilized surveys, small group work, and forums
- outcomes
 - new mission statement
 - new strategic directions
 - both easy to remember



major change 1: strategic plan

- old mission statement – 42 words
- new mission statement – 15 words

The mission of the Appalachian State University Library is to provide materials and services which are integral to the educational, scholarly, and intellectual goals of the students, faculty, and staff of Appalachian State University, as well as other members of the community and region.

- 4 strategic directions – easy to remember
 - Learning
 - Scholarship
 - Engagement
 - Effectiveness

major change 2: reorganization

- process
 - library administration driven
 - individual meetings and wish lists of ideal jobs
 - forums and feedback
 - guiding principles
 - improve communication
 - better decision making
 - innovation
 - service orientation
- outcome...

major change 2: reorganization

outcome

- creation of the new team
 - Learning & Research Services (LRS)
 - a combination of former Access Services and Reference teams
- team makeup – 18 members
 - public service staff (7)
 - information literacy librarians (5)
 - lead librarians (2)
 - e-learning librarian (1)
 - team coordinator (1)
 - part-time librarians (2)

team changes: access services

coordinator

- circulation desk mgr
 - lower level/periodicals mgr
 - gov docs/microfilm tech
 - night services supervisors (3)
 - reserves mgr
 - ill mgr
 - abc express delivery mgr
 - stacks mgrs (3)
- 1 librarian, 12 staff

team changes: ref & instr.

before

- coordinator
- reference & instruction librarians (6)
- web librarian
- reference desk mgr (staff)
- tech support (staff)
- 2 part-time librarians

8 librarians, 2 staff, 2 part-time

after

- information literacy librarians (5)
- e-learning librarian
- information services mgr (staff)

learning & research services

coordinator

lead librarian – desk services (new)

- circulation mgr
- lower level/periodicals mgr
- reference desk mgr
- gov docs/microfilm tech
- night services supervisors (3)

lead librarian – information literacy

- information literacy librarians (5)
- e-learning librarian
- part-time librarians (2)

9 librarians, 7 staff,
2 part-time

LRS team: context

- team focus on high quality customer service and instruction
- 3 service desks – circulation, reference, lower-level/periodicals
- engage more librarians in day-to-day service activities
- cross-desk training so that most team members able to work any service desk at anytime (blended services)
- cross-desk trained student assistants

LRS team: evolution

- built trust within new team
- national search for a lead desk services librarian
- began waves of cross training
 - early-adopters first
 - trained 12 staff and librarians to date
- added two technical support staff positions

LRS team: evolution

- established student assistants training task force
 - standardize knowledge base and skills
 - set service standards
 - training sessions
 - administrative support
 - tools (wiki, online modules)

LRS team: evolution (cont.)

- broke barriers to positive public service
 - liberalized circulation policies: lowered fees, raised circ limits, added grace periods
 - transformed to a 24 hour facility during exams
 - eliminated the NO FOOD POLICY



Food and Drink Policy

Please respect the library building...

- Put a COVER/LID on your drinks
- LEAVE NO TRACE - clean up after yosef
- RECYCLE - take the time to place paper and beverage containers in the appropriate bin
- Special Collections (4th floor) prohibits both food and drink.

It's your library. Take care of it!

Policy adopted December 2008

Content editor: Ken Johnson, johnsnkw@appstate.edu

- **broke barriers to positive public service**
 - **liberalized circulation policies: lowered fees, raised circ limits, added grace periods**
 - **transformed to a 24 hour facility during exams**
 - **eliminated the NO FOOD POLICY**
 - **added service “outposts” to the 2nd and 3rd floor**
 - **connected tech support via walkie-talkies and IM**
 - **began keeping statistics electronically at all service points**

LRS - Service Desk Statistics

Lower Level Desk

General/Directional - ex. "Where are the bathrooms? copiers?" "What are the Library hours?"

Library Catalog - ex. Lookups for titles of books and/or periodical titles. Call # locations.

Skill Based - ex. Using databases or catalog for subject/topic oriented research.

Retrieval - ex. Physically showing or retrieving an item for a patron.

Technology - ex. Assistance w/ equipment and/or software. *(please select tech. type before clicking the button)*

- copiers
- laptops
- printers
- scanners
- software
- wireless
- self-checkout
- appcard kiosk
- microfilm machines

desk stats chart july 2008 – april 6, 2009

LOCATION	TOTAL	%
Circulation desk	3696	19%
Reference desk	11,233	58%
Lower Level desk	2616	13%
2nd Floor Outpost	86	< 1%
3rd Floor Outpost	298	2%
Instructional Materials Center	1463	8%

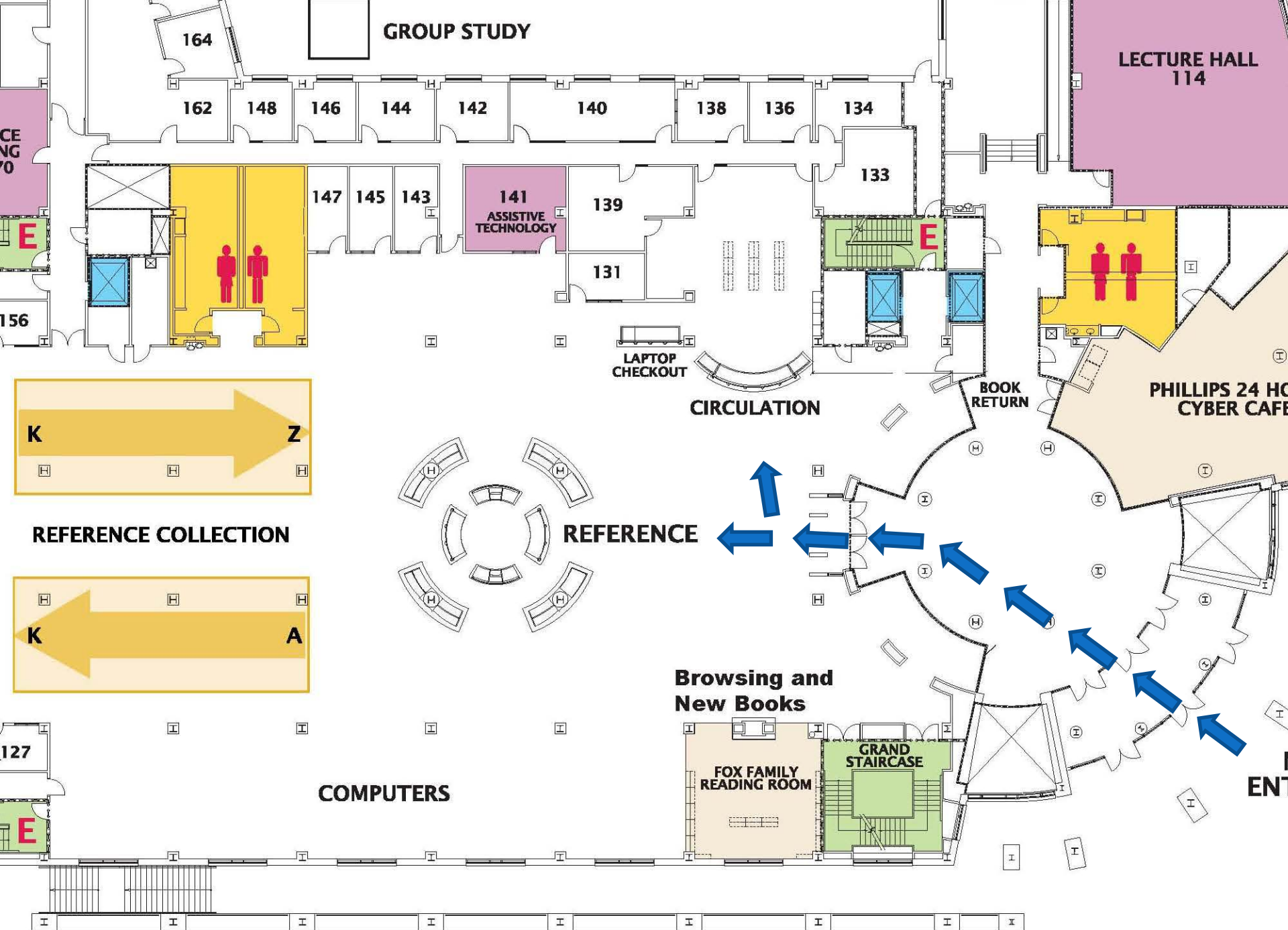
8159 new questions | 73% increase over Reference desk alone |
42% from desks other than Reference

challenges

- staff – there was some culture shock when the two teams merged
- librarians – concerns of status and workload
- occasional service issues
- keeping 18 team members engaged
- determining appropriate training levels

challenges

- the future of the reference and circulation desks
 - are they both still necessary?





challenges

- the future of the reference and circulation desks
 - are they both still necessary?
 - where might we conduct traditional research assistance?
 - what types of transactions can we automate?
 - should we try adding circulation functions at the reference desk?

success factors

- administrative support
- a core of believers
 - coordinator that understands the big picture
 - lead librarian that understands and can figure out the mechanics and details
 - motivated staffer to take on student training initiative
- develop trust and coach the new way
- open communication

Thanks for
listening.

Questions?



Please complete the evaluation form.