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From the Director: The Library as a Place of Memory, Perception, and Expectation

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In his Friends of the Library lecture last April, publisher Gregory Wolfe discussed how those who mediate or curate cultural works are stewards, critics, and provocateurs. These roles are oriented, respectively, toward the past, present, and future.

In this newsletter last spring, I wrote about how the roles of a library are oriented similarly to the three dimensions of time (see "From the Director: The Past, Future, and Present of the Library"). Augustine famously described how the past, present, and future are present to us through memory, direct perception, and expectation. Libraries help preserve and present these experiences of temporality for individuals as well as cultures. As an archive, a library sustains memory by bringing historical collections forward in space and time. As a site of discovery, creation, and sharing, a library is a place of dynamic activity in the present. And through this activity, directed toward anticipated outcomes, a library is a space that opens to the future.

This pre-cast mosaic on Weter Memorial Hall (once the SPU Library) tells the story of the development of writing through different alphabets. Learn more from the penultimate page of this 1963 *Weter Memorial Library Pamphlet*.

In his lecture, Greg also shared his personal motivations for becoming a publisher, which included a desire to create community through communication. Here, too, the work of the publisher is consonant with the work of a library: a library is created for and sustained by a community. All the things that constitute a library — collections, staff, services, spaces, and systems — function to mediate these resources to a community for its formation.

An early publication for the institution that became Seattle Pacific University boasts of its proximity to "city libraries and markets." But

SPU Library Numbers

In academic year 2012-13:

230,081
people entered the SPU Library.

58,284
books were checked out.

228
information literacy sessions were taught by librarians.

12,113
Reference, research, and technology consultations took place.

Orbis Cascade Alliance Numbers

SPU is one of 37 universities and colleges in the Orbis Cascade Alliance.

Combined, there are over **30 million** items in Alliance libraries.

SPU patrons checked out **5,325** items from other Alliance libraries.

The SPU Library loaned **8,637** items to other Alliance libraries.

Connect

Become a Friend of the Library by giving to an endowment that enhances both the quantity and quality of the resources available to students and scholars at SPU. If you are not already a member, or have not yet renewed your annual membership, please visit the Friends of the Library giving site.

Attend the Library's speaker series Creative Conversations, in which members of the SPU community

when the founders drafted the institution's bylaws, it was assumed that the school would have its own modest library (books on hygiene and foreign missions are mentioned as particular needs). Throughout the following century, the SPU Library grew to become an essential resource for developing the community of learners and scholars at SPU.

This year's Annual Report documents the many ways collections, instruction, tools, spaces, and personnel make the SPU Library a place that sustains memory, perception, and expectation for the community at SPU and beyond.

Celebrating Gary Fick

Libraries depend on librarians, and SPU has been blessed with many great ones. Earlier this year the SPU community celebrated the retirement of Gary Fick, who served most recently as sciences and psychology librarian and information literacy coordinator. For his significant record of faithful service to SPU, Gary was awarded the status of Emeritus Professor of Natural Sciences.

In a January post for the Library's blog, Gary reflected on all that has changed during his nearly 50 years as a professional librarian: the materials we collect, the systems we use to provide access to them, the spaces and technologies we provide for their use, and the consortial partnerships we form to share them. Gary was active in all of these changes, and he has left an indelible mark on our collections, services, and building, which he helped design. But this is what Gary wrote he would miss most:

> "what I'll miss most when I retire are the many ways I've had a chance to help people both find the information they need and teach them how to find it in better ways … I've found helping people learn to be very rewarding."

A critical continuity throughout all of the change that Gary has been part of is the teaching role of the Library, a role that Gary significantly shaped through leadership and practice. We are grateful for his many contributions and the legacy he has given the Library and University.

The Library and Technology

Since scientists made the internet broadly available 20 years ago, the ways we access and use information have changed significantly. While many wonder about the future of the library in a digital and networked age, libraries such as ours continue to provide vital resources and services to their communities.

Last year about 86% of SPU's undergraduate students reported using SPU Library resources *in the library* at least once a month. As the metrics on the sidebar and in our Annual Report reveal, the SPU

share scholarly and creative works in progress. The series runs during the school year and is open to the public.

Follow the Library blog and Twitter account.

Explore the Library's website, and the resources and services available through it, by visiting spu.edu/library.

Library is very active place. Print materials circulate at a relatively high rate and online resources are heavily used. Library staff enable students to use these resources through instruction and consultations, and we provide a variety of popular spaces for individual and collaborative study. We are aware, however, that new and emerging technologies continue to transform every dimension of library work, including the materials we collect, the literacies we teach, and the spaces we provide.

A few summers ago, we transformed a computer lab in the Library into a new type of dynamic learning area called the Tech Desk. Under the leadership of Ryan Ingersoll, head of library technology, what began as a new service point and collaborative study space for technologically-related needs has become a center of innovation that is informing how we use — and support the use of — technology throughout the Library. Two summers ago we updated the Library classroom with mobile furniture and technology to support new pedagogical approaches, and last summer we placed new furniture and technology in all the study rooms on the top floor of the Library to support students' collaborative work. (A presentation Ryan made about some of these changes is available online.) Each of these incremental changes has enabled us to experiment, learn, and develop further what the SPU Library of the future will be.