

# Report of the Reserve Task Force

## May 2003

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The Reserves Task Force was charged with examining issues and concerns raised by faculty expectations about the timeliness of reserve processing, and what some faculty viewed as a lack of communication from the Unit when problems arose regarding their reserves submissions.

The task force examined the issues raised by faculty, reviewed reserves processing and procedures, and gathered information on how reserves are processed at some comparable institutions. We then reviewed the faculty concerns, explored the issues that arose in our discussion, and concluded our report with final recommendations, and a list of unresolved issues deferred for future analysis.

The faculty survey, while generally positive about the processing of reserves, validated the concerns expressed that prompted the creation of the task force. The issues that stood out from the survey responses were concern about the timeliness with which reserves are processed, primarily the length of time between the deadline for submitting requests and the start of the semester, and the faculty perception that the library's deadlines are unrealistic. We attempted to address these concerns in our recommendations.

One of the results of our examination of the reserves process and a comparison with other institutions is that the Unit needs to do a better job of explaining to faculty how the course reserve process works, or publicizing the fact that most requests are dealt with in a timely manner. Two resulting recommendations should address these problems. First, that the Unit needs to implement procedures to better communicate with faculty throughout the process. Second, that the Unit needs to implement performance measures and standards that will provide library administration, and the faculty, with data that demonstrates how efficiently reserve materials are processed.

The telephone survey of some comparable institutions, comments from the faculty survey about their experience at other institutions, and our examination of the library's current reserves processing, all suggest that these recommendations should be used as a basis for a more rigorous examination of reserves. We were able to organize the issues and make some recommendations, but another group should review the current practices from top to bottom in an effort to address the concerns and issues we discovered, listed and left unresolved.

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### I. Recommendations

- Currently the Reserve Unit purchases any title requested for course reserve that is not in the Moffitt collection, regardless of price or the appropriateness for the collection.

Recommendation: The Moffitt selector should review all course reserve lists to make purchasing decisions in light of the Moffitt collection development policy.

- The Unit currently does not keep track of the length of time it takes to process a reserve list. The Reserve Unit staff estimates that 90% of the lists were processed within four days.

Recommendation: The Unit should date stamp each list with the date on which it is completed as well as date received. This will provide them with an accurate measure of how long it takes to process lists. This will provide a more accurate measure of their performance which they can share with faculty and administration.

- The Reserve Unit does not begin to place recalls and searches for course reserve material until two weeks prior to the beginning of the semester. This results in materials being returned or found well after the semester has begun.

Recommendation: The Unit should begin placing searches and recalls well before this two week window. This may result in having material ressed on and out of circulation before the semester begins. This may also require having some titles ressed on the current semester and other titles ressed on for the following semester.

- The Unit currently lacks room to handle the volume of materials they have to deal with at the beginning of each semester.

Recommendation: The Library should provide the Reserve Unit with more physical room to process materials. Particularly if they begin processing reserve requests earlier than the current two weeks lead time, which would result in materials for more than one semester in their work area.

- If a library preps a copy of a title for course reserve and that specific copy of that title is not on the shelf, the student pulling the material will not select another copy of the same title. Students are instructed to have a search placed for the missing copy. This results in a search being done for a specific copy even though there is another copy of the exact edition sitting on the shelf.

Recommendation: A procedure be put in place to allow students who are pulling books for reserve to pull any copy on the shelf and have a search placed for the prepped copy that is not on the shelf. This procedure would also require notification of the prepping Unit to unprep the missing copy and to prep the copy in hand.

- The members of the Reserve Unit search GLADIS for each item that appears on a faculty submission. Faculty members are not asked to identify the item as being owned by the library or not. This results in the Reserve Unit having to not only search for an item, but also sometimes distinguish between editions or to make other complicated judgement calls on specific titles.

Recommendation: Faculty should be required to supply call numbers for books the library owns and exact bibliographic information for all their submissions.

- The Reserve Unit currently receives submissions electronically, via fax, in person and through the mail. This results in a lack of uniformity in how the information comes to the Unit.  
Recommendation: All submissions should be done electronically and should include complete bibliographic information. This would result in an electronic copy of submissions that could be kept on file, and make them reusable if information needs to be returned to the faculty member. The Reserve Unit should be given the authority to return any lists that are illegible or do not contain complete bibliographic information.
- There is a current stated limit of no more than forty items can be put on reserve for any one course.  
Recommendation: Strictly enforce the limit of no more than 40 titles for one course.
- One of the major faculty complaints from faculty is that they are not notified when a delay occurs because a title they want on reserve has to be recalled, searched or purchased.  
Recommendation: A procedure should be put in place to produce a notice alerting faculty to the status of items not immediately available. We suggest an e-mail form letter be created to serve this purpose.
- The Reserve Unit currently requests titles from NRLF by faxing their requests to the facility.  
Recommendation: A procedure should be put in place in conjunction with the Library Systems Office and NRLF to allow the Unit to place their NRLF requests electronically.
- Currently Gardner (Main) Stacks students search for items from the Gardner stacks prepped for any location. The Moffitt circulation staff also searches for these items from a downloaded list, thus duplicating the work of the Main stacks students.  
Recommendation: The Main stacks students should cease searching for Main titles going on reserve in Moffitt. Moffitt circulation staff should do this searching.

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II. Issues which need to be addressed: These are issues for which we had no recommendation, but wish to bring to the table for discussion and resolution by the AULs for Doe/Moffitt and Technical Services.

- Instructional information should be designed to guide faculty in the use Pathfinder in creating a bibliography of their reserve list. Pathfinder has functionality that allows users to create a bibliography which faculty could use to create a list of submissions and send them to the Reserve Unit. This could be done as feature of the library's reserves web page.

- Have the science libraries limit their reserve requests to their cluster as much as possible. This would be done to reduce the demand on the Gardner and Moffitt collections.
  - Investigate adding a reserve request function to Pathfinder. If MELVYL-T is to replace Pathfinder, investigate the reserve function in the new system.
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III. Systems Office issues: These are issues that would require a change on the part of the Library Systems Office. These are issues that we are not sure could be instituted, but we think should be brought to Systems for discussion as potential improvements to the way reserves are handled.

- Items that are prepped for reserve appear in GLADIS with the message “NOT READY”. We recommend that the message be changed to “Reserve in Process”.
- Shorten the circulation period for items that have been prepped. If a prepped item is charged out to a patron, the shorter borrowing period can be used as an alert to the patron that the book is on ‘reserve status’. This may give the Reserve Unit prompt access to these titles when they are requested for course reserve.
- Prevent reserve prep cards from being printed when an item is prepped and ressed on in the course of the same day. Not printing these cards from being printed would prevent unnecessary searching for titles that are already on reserve.
- Program GLADIS to prevent patrons from charging out a book that has been prepped for reserve two weeks prior to a semester's start. Can a command be set that will inform the circulation staff that the book is wanted for reserves and have it held for the Reserve Unit?
- Provide units with the option of receiving reserve prep postcards for the unit's own books that are going on reserve as well as for books that are being borrowed from them. For example, if Moffitt preps a book that his held by BIOS, a card will be generated notifying both units that the book has been requested for reserve.
- Print course number or instructor's name on reserve postcards. At some subject specialty libraries, (e.g., Art History/Classics), books are shelved by course on the reserves shelf not by call number. This would assist these units in organizing their reserve material when received from the lending unit.
- Program GLADIS to produce separate reserve prep cards by reserve location. This would expedite the sorting of reserve prep cards for those units that give priority to particular units.

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