Fall 2007 Welcome Week Information Tables

Drawing on the experience of the previous two years, informational tables were set up at the north and south entrances to the Doe Memorial Library during Welcome Week and the first few days of the following week. From August 20-28, D/M reference staff offered guidance to newcomers and returning students, weekdays between 11 am and 3 pm. The fundamental set up and purpose of the Welcome Week Information Tables was the same as in the previous two years, however several improvements enriched the 2007 experience. A considerable amount of energy went into creating a welcoming environment at both entrances to Doe Library resulting in a buzz of enthusiasm from both students and staff. The tables were set up with laptops to demonstrate wireless access in the library, expose students to our website, and help staff to answer questions. Highly visible, A*sk Here* signs designed especially for the table-top worked well with the adjacent floor- standing Welcome Week posters (listing schedules for Library tours and Know Your Library Workshops) and attracted attention. New clear leaflet display stands provided a clean presentation and easily accessible flyers. Students were delighted to receive free blue and gold water bottles embellished with *Cal Libraries*, a Cal bear image, and the Library's web address.

Traffic was brisk and much busier on the north side than the south side, likely due to activities on Memorial Glade such as Calapalooza, and because Library Tours started on the north side. Construction activity likely tamped down activity on the south side. Staff recorded statistics for all verbal interactions as well as for passers by who took a flyer or other items from the table. As in prior years, questions encompassed many areas of library services: directional, how to navigate the library, library privileges, research workshops, library tours, student jobs, and general questions about library research. Statistics have increased each year. For the 2005 pilot, 746 interactions over seven days were recorded, and in 2006, there were 814 interactions over eight days. This year there were 884 total interactions over for seven days averaging 126 questions per day. The north table accounted for 766 of the interactions while the south table accounted for 118. From 2006 to 2007 the average number of interactions per day increased by 25%.

Observations

- Students were enthusiastic about the water bottles. The logo - Cal Libraries, bear image and Library web address, serves to link and brand, and the freebie aspect dovetailed nicely with Calapalooza's spirit of fun give-aways.

- Copies of the *Library Services for Users with Disabilities* guide were prominently displayed on the tables. While no one asked for this guide directly, many users took them, indicating the importance of making this flyer easy to see and access.

- Students especially liked the black and white postcards with historical images of the Library. Stocks were readily available from the Library Development Office.

- Some staff did not realize they were scheduled for the Welcome Week Information tables and subsequently did not show up for their shift. While the shifts were posted within the regular weekly D/M reference schedule, several of these staff explained that they overlooked the added category. To prevent no shows from happening again, we sent reminder emails with a clear "you are scheduled..." in the subject line to future groups of scheduled staffers two days or so before their shifts. This mostly resolved the issue.

- The set up worked well. The table at the north entrance was placed just outside the Morrison Library. The south side table was placed directly across from the Library Security desk. Because of slow traffic on the south side, that table was closed at 1 pm on Thursday and Friday of Welcome Week and closed altogether the following week.

- The large Welcome Week posters were coordinated by Aija Kanbergs, Doe/Moffitt Welcome Week coordinator, and produced by Mary Scott, Graphics Office, who set them up in various D/M library locations. Mary also created the *Ask Us* signs which are suitable for use in Fall 2008. These signs as well as other Welcome Week table supplies are stored 212 Doe (in the black steel cabinet in the women's restroom vestibule).

Fall 2007 Welcome Week Handouts

To ensure availability, it is essential to consider and determine which and how many leaflets and flyers are needed well in advance of set up, and it is of paramount importance to make sure only the most current leaflets are available for distribution. The initial supply and subsequent restocking of Library flyers and leaflets should be coordinated with Steve Mendoza who coordinates ordering and stocking for Doe Reference.

Handouts offered (most are available through the routine Library leaflet ordering process):

- Welcome Week Academic Calendar (The Doe/Moffitt Welcome Week Coordinator orders these, and will provide a supply on request.)

- Guide to Library Services for Users with Disabilities

- An Undergraduate's Guide to the Library

- Library Services for Instructors

- Library jobs for students flyer (Library Human Resources Dept. supplies)

- Library Proxy Service Guide

- Visitor Information Guide

- Library Services for Graduate Students

- Map of the Libraries

- Floor plans for Doe, Moffitt, and Gardner (MAIN) Stacks

- Know Your Library schedule of classes

- A Visitor's Guide to the Architecture and History of the Doe Library (Library Development Office supplies)

- Bookmarks and postcards highlighting various campus images and events (Library Development Office usually has a supply that can be tapped.)

- Special exhibit flyer from The Library Development Office- The Changing Face of Europe

Staff Feedback

After the Welcome Week tables were dismantled, staff who worked at the tables were given an opportunity to provide feedback about their experience. Following are the questions and a sampling of responses.

What did you like about this year's Welcome Week Information Tables?

- *I liked the large tables.*
- *Certainly the more professional looking signs helped.*
- *Most needed materials were easily available.*
- *Seems like a nice welcoming gesture.*
- *It was handy to have the laptops. They helped to answer many questions.*
- *We should do it every year.*
- *Business was brisk on the North Desk specifically; we had numerous questions during set up time before the scheduled 11a opening.*
- *Wonderful to have the desk there during Calapalooza, lots 'o traffic*
- *The water bottles were extremely popular.*

What would you like to see different next year?

- *Next year we should try to budget for more water bottles. It's a good advertisement.*
- *It would be interesting to have a Library raffle. People always seem to go for free stuff and it might draw them to the table, in order to claim a prize they could have to keep a tab with the URL of the library web page and the News & Events page (where the winner would be announced). This might get a handful of people to visit the Library web page in order to see if they won. They'd at least become aware of the web page as people who come to the table are mostly the new. I don't know how you'd limit the raffle to UCB folk, but suppose with a little thought, you could decide if that was desirable and how. The prize could be something Library relevant if desired, but it would have to be interesting enough to get people to participate. Just an idea off the top of my head. -Tim Dilworth*
- *Keeping track of the types of questions users were asking helped in the past.*
- *Next year we should try to budget for more water bottles.*

Recommendations for 2008

- Offer some type of useful giveaway for students, with the library web address on it, or in some other fashion, overtly branding and publicizing the Library. Water bottles as well as other products can be found at http://www.janway.com.
- Facilitate engagement by facing laptops away from staff toward the student, displaying and drawing attention to the Library web page, and encouraging hands-on navigation and direct access to information.

- Assign one-hour shifts to keep energy level high.
- Open up the north side table one hour earlier at 10am instead of 11am.
- Offer fewer hours at the south entrance over fewer days. (Although, once Doe Annex reopens, south side traffic could pick up drastically.)
- Have a giveaway, especially during Calapalooza.
- Assign the coordinator to set up and close down the tables, instead of leaving this aspect to randomly assigned staff.
- Provide staff a cell number to contact the coordinator in case they need handouts, assistance (w/computer), or their replacement does not show up.
- Arrange for student assistant support two to three weeks in advance. Check with Steve Mendoza, Reference Operations. (Since students are generally away for the summer and not returning until Welcome Week, this might be difficult.) Student assistants can help with scheduling, retrieving handouts, initial set up of the tables, daily set up and close down each day of one or both tables, and final clean up.

Recommended Timeline

Two months before (1st week of July):

- Order giveaway items. Janway, http://www.janway.com, offers a large variety of good products.

Three weeks before:

- Reserve two laptops from Library Systems via helpbox@library.
- Request Welcome Week buttons, Academic Calendars, and two posters from the D/M Welcome Week Library Coordinator.
- Gather handouts from 202 Doe. Check dates for currency. Do not take the last since this is Doe Reference supply. Apprise Steve Mendoza if supplies are dwindling. Let him know what needs to be ordered.
- Work with the Doe/Moffitt Welcome Week coordinator and the Library News Blog manager to blog about the tables on the Library News Blog. Blogging should start the week prior and continue through the table period.

Two weeks before:

- Talk to Alex Warren, Morrison Library, about borrowing the long tables he has stored.
- Talk to Library Development Office staff about flyer's/postcards/bookmarks/booklets they can offer.
- Contact Miguel Labon, Building Manager, to let him know about the table(s), where you will be placing them, and to make sure the locations are compliant and acceptable.

- Contact Gary Bland, Library Security, to let him and his staff know of our planned presence.

One week before:

- Talk to Imani Abalos, Doe/Moffitt Reference Service, about scheduling staff on the information tables using the regular druthers process.
- Send an email to all dmrefdsk staff informing them that they may be scheduled on the Welcome Week Information Tables.
- Prepare statistics sheets.
- Create a supplies box for each table; include all needed supplies.
- Obtain attractive gold, white or other color paper to cover the table tops for a neat and attractive presentation.
- Send reminder emails with a clear "you are scheduled…" in the subject line to future groups of scheduled staffers two days or so before their shifts.
- Set up tables and laptops each day. The student assistant can share in set up tasks. The Welcome Week coordinator needs to logon with their CalNet ID.
- Arrive 5 minutes before closing time to break down the tables each day. Take away and store everything except the tables.
- At the end of the period, return the tables to Morrison Library and turn in the laptops to Library Systems.
- Return leaflets, flyers and any other borrowed items.
- Write up and submit a report to the Head of D/M Reference for uploading to the Doe/Moffitt staff site.

Submitted by Anne-Marie Basso, Coordinator for the Fall 2007 Welcome Week Information Tables

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