You’ve Gotta Read This! Connecting with Readers at an Academic Library

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You’ve Gotta Read This! Connecting with Readers at an Academic Library

Abstract
At our small, liberal arts college, the library has developed a vibrant browsing collection of popular fiction and nonfiction titles in both print and ebook formats. Additionally, we have developed extensive outreach and programming initiatives to support the recreational reading habits and intellectual engagement of our students and faculty outside of the classroom. Some of these efforts include an annual summer reading booklet, an online featured reader column, and first year and other thematic reading and discussion groups. Learn how librarians on our campus continue to successfully promote recreational reading in support of lifelong learning.

Keywords
recreational reading, leisure reading, summer reading, reading programs, reading promotion, book discussions, outreach services, academic libraries, recreational materials, popular reading collection, academic libraries, college libraries

Disciplines
Information Literacy | Library and Information Science

Comments
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Browsing Room

Opened in spring 2003 and housed in a glass and brick enclosed space on the main floor of Musselman Library, the Browsing Room contains contemporary and award-winning works of fiction and popular nonfiction, poetry, and short stories from the library’s collection. The Browsing Room encourages recreational reading for personal discovery and lifelong learning.

One Room, Three Collections

McNaughton Rental Collection - 384 Titles
A rental collection of approximately 500 titles. Includes popular and genre fiction, multiple copies of popular titles, and New York Times bestsellers.

Browsing Collection - 1,057 titles
Purchased titles that are part of our permanent book collection. Includes fiction, poetry, young adult literature, graphic novels, and nonfiction judged to be of enduring value to the collection.

Overdrive (as of 2013) - 301 Titles (as of 9/18/2014)
Supplementing our academic ebook collections, OverDrive now includes popular fiction, nonfiction, and a small number of audiobooks.

First-Year Student Reading Discussions

Using titles recommended in You’ve Gotta Read This!, in fall 2013 the library launched a student reading discussion series as a way to provide intellectually engaging opportunities for students.

All participants receive a free copy of the book (funded by Friends of Musselman Library) and attend the book discussion, which is led by a faculty member and/or librarian.

2013-2014
3 discussions with 21 participants

2014-2015
2 planned discussions (Fall/Spring)

2013-2014 Selections

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian by Sherman Alexie
Moonwalking with Einstein: The Art and Science of Remembering Everything by Joshua Foer
All the Unseen by G. Willow Wilson

2014-2015 Selections

The Book Thief by Markus Zusak (Fall) / To Be Determined (Spring)

OverDrive

Launched in 2013, OverDrive has grown to include 301 titles. For the 2014 You’ve Gotta Read This! issue, we purchased 97 (of the 208 recommended books) on OverDrive. Of those 97 titles, they circulated 182 times from May to September 2014.

Overall, OverDrive use has grown over the course of Summer 2014, in part to You’ve Gotta Read This! Issue launch and “Bring Your Own Device” OverDrive training party.

Rate of Circulation for Browsing Collections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collection</th>
<th>Total # of Titles</th>
<th>Total # of Checkouts</th>
<th>Circulation Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>McNaughton Rental</td>
<td>1,057</td>
<td>1,011</td>
<td>1.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Browsing Collection</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>1,092</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Collection</td>
<td>2,029</td>
<td>1,092</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

OverDrive Checkouts by Month, August 2013-August 2014

Events and Programming

Sponsoring lectures, exhibits, film screenings and book discussions, provide opportunities for the library to connect with the College and greater-Gettysburg community. Faculty partnerships have contributed to the success of these programs. Securing co-sponsors and grant funding has been key to making these learning opportunities affordable and sustainable.

Read Green: A Gettysburg Environmental Series

Spring 2009

528 total participants
3 Bank Discussions
Including: Arstotz, Vegetable, Avocado: Field Notes from a Catastrophic Deep Economy
2 Film Viewings
1 Author Visit
Bill McKibben

Conflict and Resistance in the Middle East
Fall 2011 - Spring 2012

804 total participants
15 events related to life during conflict in regions with heavy American involvement, Iraq and Palestine.

5 Book Discussions
Including: A Mercy in Acre, Upper 11 Near the River Palace
5 Film Screenings
6 Lectures

Iron: Beyond the Headlines
Fall 2014 - Spring 2015

11 scheduled events to explore the history, art, culture, and everyday life of Iranians.

4 Book Discussions
Including: Heart of Darkness, Persopolis, and The Captains of Khor
3 Film Screenings
1 Luncheon
1 Author Visit
Dalia Sofer

Next Page

In September 2013, the library launched Next Page, a new online column featuring guest reader reviews from the Gettysburg College community.

The column provides a way to highlight different perspectives and disciplines on campus, to stimulate ideas and inspire conversation, and to model intellectual engagement in a liberal arts setting.

Since Next Page’s launch...

14 individual reader profiles
4,053 page views (as of 9/17/2014)

Available at http://nextpagegettysburg.blogspot.com/