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Promoting the Big Picture: Leisure Reading in the Library

Stephanie Bowen
Gettysburg College

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Promoting the Big Picture: Leisure Reading in the Library

Abstract

While this internship was an opportunity for me to explore librarianship, it also turned out to be an experience in working for a college. Everything you do in higher education is focused around institutional values and goals. College's create grandiose strategic plans or epic mission statements (which sound like mandates from the Divine) in order to convey their institutional value. Maybe we should all dress in suits and sunglasses because we're on a mission from God? [*excerpt*]

Keywords

Musselman Library, Gettysburg College, Barbara Holley Library Intern

Disciplines

Library and Information Science

Comments

The Interns at Gettysburg College's Musselman Library captured their internship experiences since the spring of 2011. Over time the blog has featured Fortenbaugh, Smith, and Holley interns. They shared updates on semester long projects, responded to blogging prompts, and documented their individual intern experience.

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Promoting the big picture: leisure reading in the library

November 11, 2013

By: Stephanie Bowen

While this internship was an opportunity for me to explore librarianship, it also turned out to be an experience in working for a college. Everything you do in higher education is focused around institutional values and goals. College's create grandiose strategic plans or epic mission statements (which sound like mandates from the Divine) in order to convey their institutional value. Maybe we should all dress in suits and sunglasses because we're on a mission from God?

Institutional directives may seem confusing and convoluted but sometimes you just need to examine the small things to figure out the big picture. At Gettysburg College, we support ideal of intellectual climate. According to the 2013 strategic plan produced by the President's office, Gettysburg College "plans for the enhancement of the campus climate in ways that promote a strong academic culture and support the healthily personal and intellectual development of our students." If you're looking for the primary example of an "intellectual climate," the library is where it's at. We have floors of books, mountains of databases, and illustrious microfilm sets! However, I think it is the most disposable of library resources that promotes our intellectual environment.

The Room with the Glass Door



This is the browsing room – it's where the leisure reading collection is found. It supplies recent fiction, popular memoirs and newsworthy non-fiction. Studies have shown that reading for fun boost your academic performance. It improves your vocabulary and keeps your mind sharp. In order to foster an

intellectual environment, the library provides you with popular reading materials to boost brain function and facilitate intellectual conversation. I mean who didn't talk about the deeper issues within the Hunger Games trilogy? Reading gets you thinking, gets you talking and gets you involved.

If you like this -> read this



From my recent B&N trip...
Yes I take pictures of book displays.

So we have a room full of interesting books which promote intellectual thoughts. Great. But are we doing our best to help to promote popular page-turners? Personally, I don't think so. The library provides you the physical book but it doesn't provide information about them. In the book world providing information and opinions on select titles is called readers' advisory. A popular source of reader advisory is the New York Times book review. At the local book store, advisory could be book displays of like topics or staff favorites. Even Amazon has some advisory with those columns "Customers who bought this, also bought this" or "featured recommendations" or "recommended for you." That section on your Amazon account can get a bit scary. I recently purchased a Duck Dynasty book for my Dad's birthday. Amazon now thinks I'm an avid hunter with an addiction to cameo. No one said advisory was perfect, but it can be a useful tool to improve the quality of a search for reading material. In response to the lack of reader's advisory in the library's browsing room, I have taken on the project of researching sustainable models for the library. As mentioned previously, it's the small things (like the browsing room) that contribute to the bigger picture of intellectual climate. By proposing reader's advisory options, we support the continuation of informed discussion.... or maybe we're just on a mission from God.

To make up for my two week absence, I will try to write a couple posts this week. Topics include: my recent trip to the MARAC conference and the daunting task of applying to grad school.

<http://blogging.musselmanlibrary.org/2013/11/>