INFORMATION SERVICES ACTIVITIES – REPORT TO THE iSCHOOL COUNCIL
December 2008 / January 2009

Instructional / Lab Services

Kathleen Scheaffer organizes the Inforum Instructional Series, Winter 2009 edition, which is currently underway. These workshops are open to all in the iSchool community. New workshops this term include: Mind Mapping with Freemind; Creating Podcasts; Intermediate CSS; Endeca – The New Catalogue; Introduction to Inclusive Design; and Introduction to Copy Editing & Proofreading. Workshop registration is being handled by a new system developed by U of T Libraries. She will teach Working with Wikis in the Instructional Series, and also works with faculty members to provide in-class workshops as needed. Early in the New Year, Kathleen will be collaborating with Marian Press of OISE Library to create and deliver a session on Web 2.0 in the UTL Learning Series 2.0. She recently attended a UTL professional development workshop on active learning, hosted by the Instruction in Library Use committee. She works with Matt Ratto, Steve Hockema and Jutta Treviranus in lab-related activities at iSouth.

Collections

Elisa Sze is continuing to learn the ropes of collection development from Marte Misiek. Elisa oversees cataloguing, and is attacking the cataloguing backlog with gusto. She has trained Inforum student assistants in collection development work, such as monitoring journals and publishers’ websites in search of desirable items. She supervises the two interns who are involved in collections work, and will be teach a workshop on Blogging & RSS for the Instructional Series.

Marte is wrapping up her work at the Inforum, as she prepares to retire in the next few months. She is training Elisa in the work she has been engaged in over the past 30 years, that is, the building of the best and most extensive Canadian collection in our subject areas.

Nadia Moro is focusing on acquiring, cataloguing, and processing all resources for Information Services paper and electronic collections. She has been heavily involved in the re-organization of technical services workflow processes, and the creation of new procedures, in order to improve efficiency and expedite access to Information Services resources.

Meera Thirunavukarasu maintains our serials collection, which numbers over 300 titles, by receiving, processing, and making material accessible to our users. She works with an intern to update catalogue records so that our complete serials holdings will be viewable in the catalogue.

Intern Brian Stearns is cataloguing ~300 museum studies reports/theses, and is in the process of obtaining their authors’ permissions so that the items can be circulated. He is also cataloguing Faculty theses (2005 and on), and was part of the rush cataloguing effort to get material ready for Winter 2009 course reading lists.

Intern Alexandra Ross is involved in a project to update our retrospective serials holdings in the library catalogue. She is researching and writing a discussion paper on the advantages and challenges of maintaining serials in both electronic and paper formats, and is preparing background documentation for the revision of the Inforum’s Collections Policy. Alexandra will be teaching a workshop on Powerful Presentations in the Instructional Series.
Information Technology Services

Ab Gehani (up to mid-January), Tony Lemmens, and Bert Shire continue to provide ongoing IT support to the Faculty. Their main focus in preparing for the new term is on making improvements in our key classrooms (728, 319/313, 310, 225, 212, 114) so that they are more self-supporting and trouble-free for instructors. New mounted projectors, screens, laptop setups, and podiums on wheels, are planned. They are implementing a ticketing system and are setting up remote access to the new file server for home and laptop users. They are working with other University departments to improve the lecture webcasting service (Epresence, at the moment), and are cleaning up Epresence filming from Fall term, encoding it so content can be webstreamed and viewed by all.

Reference & Public Services

Nalini Singh took on public services in the Fall, and is engaged in answering a steady stream of reference questions from students and faculty. She assisted some instructors with literature searches for Winter 2009 course reading lists, and will be teaching a workshop on the new Endeca catalogue interface for the Instructional Series.

The Inforum hosted the Museum Studies Summer Internships Exhibition in the Fall, and gave tours for the alumni re-union, the prospective students information night, and the 80th anniversary celebrations. We are being heavily used, with up to 45 users at peak times. In response to user needs, we have extended our Saturday hours during the past month. The Inforum recently hosted a tea to gather feedback on how best to improve conditions and usage of various 5th floor areas: we hope to have things in place by the end of Winter term. Nalini supervises 10 student Info Desk assistants, and in conjunction with Information Services full-time staff and interns, is facilitating their involvement in project work. This enhances the students’ work experience and provides other staff with much-needed assistance. We have recently hired a circulation/public services technician, Anna Oh, who will work with Nalini to improve and develop our practices, procedures, documentation, and services, in order to keep our publics well-served.

Course support intern, Leigh Cunningham, has been preparing a multitude of course reading lists, binders, boxes, and short term loan material for many of the Winter 2009 classes, and provides faculty support with uploading course material into Sakai. This winter, Leigh has assisted in 48 courses. She will be working on streamlining and documenting procedures and policies in this area.

Web & Digital Services

James Hallam and the web team are working to launch the new iSchool website some time in January. The website will have brand new content, a new design and brand new functionality that will allow people to blog, find friends and groups, network and comment on each other’s work. The information architecture has been intensely reviewed and revised, and should make for a much improved user experience. The Web Team is also working on Sakai, SAM (the Admissions web application) and they recently launched Compass again for the fall term. James and Jeff Orchard will be teaching Intermediate CSS for the Instructional Series. Jeff will also teach Mind Mapping with Freemind.
Tasha Caswell has been content wrangling, that is, determining responsibility and assigning revision tasks for different areas of web content, and is importing content from the current website into the new site. She and Jeff conducted usability tests on navigation structure and labels on 16 students, and the whole web team conducted card sort exercises with iSchool staff. She has been developing guidelines for writing for web, provides Sakai support, supervises one intern, and will be teaching an *Introduction to CSS* workshop.

Intern Steve Marks is the main Sakai go-to person. He created course shells for Winter 2009 term, and provides ongoing support. He continues to build the Course Documentation Repository, and oversees student assistants who are processing the content, to the tune of over 100 courses to date. He is working with Kelly Lyons on ways to improve our Current Contents service. Steve is teaching two workshops in the Instructional Series – *Creating Podcasts*, and *Introduction to Photoshop*.

— compiled by N. Singh