

The Evolving Library

Posted on [March 25, 2014](#) by [Carol Hixson](#)

<https://poynterdean.wordpress.com/2014/03/25/the-evolving-library/>

Note from March 2021: Some links in this posting may no longer function. To search for digital content previously available in the USFSP Digital Archive, visit the new repository at: <https://digital.stpetersburg.usf.edu/>. Search the [USFSP Library](#) and [USFSP](#) web sites, as well other secondary sites, if you encounter other links that no longer work.

According to data available through the [USF InfoCenter](#), USFSP has grown by most measures from 2009 to 2013. Student FTE has increased by 15.4%; Student Credit Hours (SCH) have increased by 15.5%; unduplicated student headcount has increased by 21%. In response to the greater number of students and increased SCH, the University has employed 30% more permanent and adjunct faculty.

Reflecting the growing number of students and the faculty to teach those students, the Poynter Library has also experienced growth in the demand for library services. During this same five-year time period, we have experienced an increase of 14% in visitors to the library and 4% in circulation activity. As the chart below shows, we have served 66% more students in class-specific instruction sessions and have had a significant increase in the participation in library-sponsored events – a 79% increase in the number of people reached through our special events. For a variety of reasons, there have been fewer student orientation sessions scheduled in the library. However, I and other librarians have been getting out across campus more and taking our orientations on the road, sessions that are not reflected in these statistics. Overall, we have provided 130% more instruction sessions, workshops and events and have served 56% more people through those events.

Instruction and events:	2012/2013	2011/2012	2010/2011	2009/2010	2008/2009	5 year change (2008-2013)
Number of class sessions	65	64	62	55	48	35% increase
Number of participants in class sessions	1300	1612	1212	1096	782	66% increase
Number of student or faculty workshops (not DL)	23	7	0	0	0	
Number of participants at workshops	62	42	0	0	0	
Number of Canvas/DL group faculty training sessions	49	21	14	11	12	308% increase
Number of participants at Canvas/DL group faculty training sessions	186	87	113	99	63	195% increase
Number of student orientation sessions	4	8	8	9	9	56% decrease
Number of participants in student orientations	255	515	755	805	782	67% decrease
Number of library sponsored cultural and social events	18	10	15	8	n/a	125% increase
Number of participants at library sponsored cultural and social events	728	430	598	407	n/a	79% increase
Total Sessions (instruction, workshops, and events)	159	110	99	83	69	130% increase
Total Participants (instruction, workshops, and events)	2531	2686	2678	2407	1627	56% increase

In spite of the increases in the number of students and faculty and the growing service demands, the number of librarians and library staff providing these core services has remained the same. The faculty-to-librarian/staff and student-to-librarian/staff ratio gets worse every year. *(The only staffing area to see any increase has been in distance learning technical support (instructional designers to assist faculty in the design and implementation of online courses),*

positions which are funded wholly from the student fee for distance learning. Those services are not reflected in the above chart.)

Another area of service – reference and research assistance – has been evolving during this time period, as seen in the chart below. Fewer people are coming in for face-to-face assistance; instead, they are turning more to chat and virtual reference. While face-to-face reference assistance has decreased 41% overall (except for the intensive [Research Assistance Program \(RAP\)](#) sessions), there has been a 206% increase in virtual assistance.

Assistance (in person):	2012/2013	2011/2012	2010/2011	2009/2010	2008/2009	5 year change
General	4643	6189	6103	7726	8633	46% decrease
Skill based	3448	1831	5246	5079	5660	39% decrease
Technical*	1359	3788				
Strategy	313	406	1222	2175	2284	86% decrease
Not classified	6	55				
Total	9769	12269	12571	14981	16608	41% decrease
<small>*technical stats were not broken out prior to 2011/2012</small>						
RAP (one-on-one) sessions	94	86	92	52	59	59% increase

Reference (Virtual):	2012/2013	2011/2012	2010/2011	2009/2010	2008/2009	3 year change
Chat	182	203	77	n/a	n/a	136% increase
Email	115	82	20	n/a	n/a	475% increase
Total	297	285	97	n/a	n/a	206% increase

During this time, the Library has been constantly evolving to meet the needs of today’s students and faculty. In addition to the ongoing redesign of the library’s physical space ([described in previous postings](#)), we have completely redesigned the library’s virtual space, [the web site](#). We have picked up a number of new services during these same years, such as: [the USFSP Digital Archive](#), support for College faculty T& P preparation, and more events showcasing faculty and student research, to name just a few.

We are still responsible for checking materials in and out, processing interlibrary loans, building and maintaining collections to support the University’s research and instruction needs, liaising with a growing number of academic departments and programs, assisting with program accreditations, reviewing library collections and services in support of new courses and programs, serving on University and Faculty committees, and investing in our own research and professional development to ensure that we are able to provide the best service possible.

Our newest venture involves planning a program for managing research data to enable the University to be in compliance with new requirements from federal granting agencies for archiving and providing access to research data. We have just received an internal research grant to help us move forward in this area more quickly. Stay tuned here for more updates on this and other library initiatives.

And, as always, visit us in our physical or virtual spaces and [give us your feedback](#).