

## The student experience

### Library promotional video

A new library video has been produced for use at induction and promotional events. The video is based around interviews with students rather than the more traditional orientation-type approach, and aims to provide new and prospective students with a flavour of the services and environment which the library offers.

The level of enthusiasm about the library, its services and resources expressed in the interviews was impressive. It was, however, entirely consistent with results from our surveys and other feedback mechanisms. Most students commented on the approachability of staff, the high quality of the IT and resource provision and how central the library service is to their learning experience.

### Mystery Visitor

In late 2006/early 2007 the Department, along with the libraries of Loughborough and Leicester Universities, Leicester City, Leicestershire and Rutland, took part in a mystery visitor project. Three trained staff from the Department made mystery visits and phone calls to the public libraries, and public library colleagues did the same for the university libraries, with a focus on customer service, library environment and information.

We had excellent reports from both of these, with compliments for staff on their friendliness and helpfulness. The visitor also liked the range of publications and the new Learning Zone. One or two small areas were identified as requiring enhancement; we were already aware of these and are addressing them. All in all, this was felt to be a useful exercise which we plan to repeat for different aspects of the service in future years.

### National Student Survey

Having been in the upper quartile nationally in the previous two surveys, Learning Resources once again gained very good scores in the National Student Survey in 2007, with an average of 4.2, despite this taking place immediately after the disruption of our building work. The most satisfied students were from the Faculty of Business and Law, who gave the library a rating of 4.4. Naturally, there were areas identified for improvement, which we shall continue to work on: more books, more quiet working space, and improving the rate of re-shelving stock, but in general we were delighted with the positive feedback we received.

## Learning Zone



£1.68m of funding in the HEFCE 06/08 Capital Round was invested during the year in the redevelopment of the ground floor of the Kimberlin Library to create the Learning Zone, a richer, learner-centred, and more flexible physical space, which opened February 2007.

The Zone has proved to be an extremely popular facility, with very positive feedback from both students and academic staff. It clearly meets a previously unfulfilled need of providing a social (but purposeful) learning environment on campus, and is busy from early morning until late at night. The four bookable syndicate rooms have proved especially popular, and have been in constant use throughout term-time. A challenge for all HE libraries is maintaining a balance of study environments to meet the varying needs and demands of their different user populations, and a positive side-effect of the Learning Zone is that it has been easier to maintain a quieter, more traditional environment on the other floors.

The development has attracted considerable external interest, including a visit from a JISC (Joint Information Systems Committee) Working Group looking at Learning Environments.

### Self Service

In tandem with the Learning Zone development, the Library has introduced a new self service system based on RFID technology. Students are able to issue books to themselves on four self issue terminals, including one for short loan, so that no matter what the time of day (or night) it is possible to borrow books from either of the main collections.

### Issue ...



### ... and return



In addition, users can return items via two new self return units. These have the added bonus of being able to sort books as they are returned, thus saving shelving time. These facilities are particularly helpful for users during the 'extended' opening hours when library staff are not present.

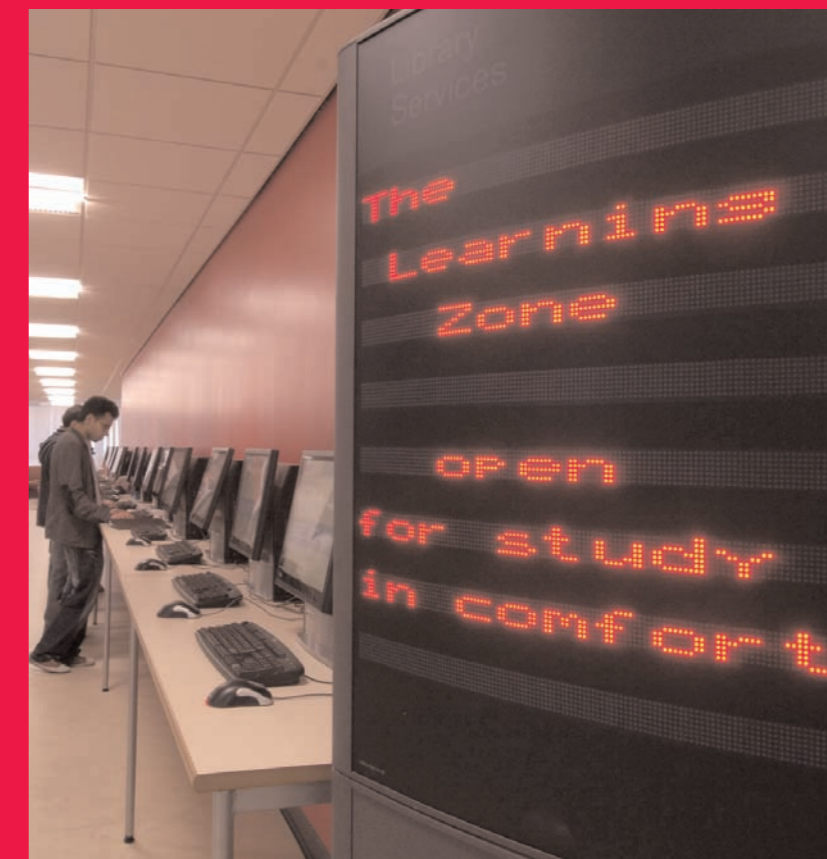
### Student art on show

An added benefit of the Learning Zone refurbishment is the opportunity it provides to display student artwork. Fifteen pieces of work, by eight different artists, were purchased from the Fine Art Degree Show in June 2007 and represent a number of different media, including acrylics, oils, and prints. With over 5,000 visitors a day during term-time, the Library is an ideal location to showcase student work to both internal and external visitors, and to highlight the long tradition and reputation of the University in this field, which extends back to the 1870's and the original Leicester School of Art.



## Department of Library Services

[www.library.dmu.ac.uk](http://www.library.dmu.ac.uk)



# Annual Report 2006-2007

# Overview of the year

The major focus for 2006/7 was inevitably the Learning Zone development in the Kimberlin Library and its related activities, including the implementation of RFID technology and a review of our front of house service model. Any one of these events could be considered a major project in its own right, and the staff are to be congratulated on their stamina and enthusiasm throughout what was, on occasion, a very challenging time.

The Learning Zone was successfully completed by the target date of February 2007. Despite our concerns over building works on our main service floor at the busiest part of the academic session, induction went extremely well, and disruption was managed effectively and minimised as far as possible. Our refurbishment programme took a further step forward with the redecoration and re-carpeting of the upper floors. The huge task of RFID-tagging the entire Kimberlin and Law Library stock was completed with a minimum of fuss and allowed us to move further towards a self-service model, despite some technical difficulties along the way. The 'roving' initiative was implemented, with the aim of providing more proactive support to students. This met with very positive feedback, especially during the induction period. Equally effective has been the 'Just Ask' service, set up to deal specifically with telephone and online queries, and enabling our service desks to focus on face-to-face interactions.

We are well on the way to implementing our 'one-stop shop' for academic learning support, with the incorporation of the Centre for Learning and Study Support (CLASS), IT Training and the Maths Learning Centre into the Department in September 2006. We look forward to building on this development and working with our new colleagues to offer enhanced provision to our students in our newly created 'Learning Development Zone'.

There have also been a number of operational projects which are essential to our service delivery though not immediately obvious to our users. The conversion to MARC 21 was completed by the cataloguing team and was a much bigger job than originally anticipated, eventually requiring a bespoke solution from our systems supplier. New MIS servers and software were installed in preparation for improvements to our departmental management information. In parallel, we have made considerable progress in improving the quality of financial information, and achieving a better match between records on the Library Management System and the university's financial (QLX) system. The Department's new 'E-strategy' was produced and some aspects of implementation have already begun, including the new URL resolver (SFX), which has been very positively received by academic staff. Development of the institutional research repository (DORA) has continued, though perhaps more slowly than we would have liked, and this will be a major focus for next year.

We did not carry out a library user survey this year because of the pressure of other activities. However, we were once again delighted by the outcome of the National Student Survey and by the results of the Mystery Shopper exercise, both of which reported very positively on our service. We were also pleased at the success of our staff in the University's Teaching Excellence Awards, adding yet another Teacher Fellow to our ranks, and receiving the recognition of a Research Informed Teaching Award.

It has once again been a very challenging, but very positive, year for the Library Service and we look forward to building on these developments in 2007/8.

**Kathryn Arnold**

Director of Library Services

## People

### Arrivals

During the year, we welcomed a number of new senior staff. Melanie Ball took up the post of Facilities Manager. Previously a bookshop manager with Waterstones, Mel has responsibility for the shelving team and for the quality of the environment in our buildings.

Amanda Poulton came from Northamptonshire Public Libraries to the post of Academic Team Manager (Learning and Skills Development) within the Academic Services Team.

Jane Mansfield joined us from the NHS libraries service in Lincoln to take up the newly created post of Customer Services Manager in the Public Services Team.

### Departures

Olwyn Reynard retired at the end of February after a long and distinguished career with DMU and its precursors. Olwyn will be best remembered for her time at Scruptoft where she worked from 1969, becoming Campus Librarian from 1976 to 2003. When the Scruptoft campus closed in 2003, Olwyn joined the Kimberlin Library staff as Electronic Resources Librarian.

We were also saddened to lose Sally Luxton, Senior Assistant Librarian in Academic Services, who died in July 2007 after a short illness. Sally started at the then Leicester Polytechnic's Scruptoft campus in 1989.

Fiona McGruer left the department after almost 21 years service to start a new life and career in Cornwall. Having joined initially as a library assistant, Fiona worked her way up to Principal Information Assistant in charge of many front-of-house activities at the main issue desk.

### Staff successes and achievements

*Providing effective library services for research*, written by Jo Webb and colleagues from the University of Newcastle and Northumbria University was published during the year. The work draws out some key principles for research support and offers practical guidance on collection management, specialist sources and the design of effective training and development programmes.

The Department was successful in two categories of the University's Teaching Excellence Awards. Frances Wright was awarded a University Teacher Fellowship for her work in the Maths Learning Centre and in the Faculty of Business and Law. The award recognises Frances' outstanding contribution to developing learning amongst a very diverse range of students. Frances will be funded for 3 years to explore the development of peer mentoring within modules. The Library Service now has 3 Teacher Fellows: Frances, Mary Pillai and Jo Webb – firm evidence of its commitment to enhancing the student learning experience.

A team of staff, headed by Mary Pillai, was also awarded a RITA – a Research Informed Teaching Award – worth £5000. The award will be used to research into how to enable first year students to access help with their learning and study skills development. A pilot study found that students often access other sources of help – including websites, family and friends – before seeking assistance with their learning from specialists. The project will seek to identify barriers to help-seeking and develop resources. There will also be some funding for departmental staff development.

## Learning and teaching

### Learning support integration

In September 2006, the Library became the main central provider of academic and study support for all students, taking responsibility for the Centre for Learning and Study Support (CLASS), IT Training, and the Maths Learning Centre.

Part of the rationale for transferring these services to the Library was to build on existing synergies, and to provide a highly visible and accessible 'one-stop shop' in the Learning Zone for students accessing support. This has proved highly successful, with 100% increase over 2005/6 in take-up of individual study tutorials. CLASS and the IT Training Suite have physically relocated to the Kimberlin building, and we look forward to welcoming Maths Learning Centre colleagues in phase 2 of our redevelopment next year.

### LibLearn

LibLearn is a new area of Blackboard which gives visitors a quick and easy way of finding information about the library, its resources and services. We expect it to be of particular benefit to distance learners. The tutorial, an introductory module aimed at all new students wanting to find out more about the library, has been positively evaluated by users.

### Skills Gateway

A skills and support gateway for students is currently being developed by the Department in collaboration with Student Services. This will provide a single point of access to the full range of skills support for learning and personal development, including study and employability skills. Links to the Maths Learning Centre, CLASS and IT Training will be supplemented by additional linkages to high quality resources produced elsewhere. Ultimately, it is planned that the gateway will act as an interactive signposting tool for all kinds of student support.

### 'Engaging Learners' conference

In June the Department co-hosted a one-day conference with the University of Northampton. 'Engaging learners' explored new directions for libraries and learning support services. The keynote speaker was Sally Brown from Leeds Metropolitan University, who focused on the crucial role of library and learning support staff in building the student experience. Library staff from a number of other universities were attracted to the event.

## E-Strategy

### Find it @ DMU

An OpenURL Resolver (SFX) introduced during 2007 has proved to be an invaluable tool for enhancing access to the thousands of electronic journals available to members of the University. The tool ensures that users are able to link directly to journal articles. Over 17,000 journal titles are already included in the A-Z list from free and paid-for subscriptions.

Users also benefit from this service when they carry out database searches, as results are now accompanied by a 'Find It @ DMU' button. Clicking on the button links the user direct to the available means of accessing the text, whether it be electronic full-text, print copies on the library shelves, or the inter-library loan service.

### Digital preservation

The Library is one of 30 participants in a 2 year project looking at the feasibility of using LOCKSS (Lots of Copies Keep Stuff Safe) to support some of the sector's digital preservation needs. The DMU LOCKSS server is now 72% full, with over 1000 Archival Units (journal volumes). This will help ensure access to key journals in the future should any journal provider no longer be able to do so. The pilot programme is due to be completed at the end of February 2008.

### Printing, photocopying, and e-payments

The previously separate GPAS printing and photocopying systems were integrated during the year, providing a more streamlined service for students, who now only have to make payments onto a single library network account. Credits can then be used for either print copies or photocopies.

Electronic payment is also now possible, with students having the option of paying by debit card. The new facility can also be used to transfer credits to settle library fines, which is especially helpful for students wishing to clear outstanding fines during 'reference only' service hours.

The number of prints generated through library facilities reached a figure of nearly 2 million over the year. Of these, 2,000 were for the increasingly popular large format service covering paper sizes A3 to A1.

### MARC 21 conversion

The library management system underwent a major upgrade during the year. This was essential to accommodate the new international standard for electronic book records – MARC (MACHINE READABLE CATALOGUING) 21 – and the new 13 digit ISBNs which are replacing 10 digit numbers.