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Library Profile: W.B. Roberts Library, Delta State University

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Library Profile — W.B. Roberts Library

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Delta State University

Every university has its own personal strengths that it feels set it apart from the rest of the academic pack. In Delta State's case, it is a family atmosphere involving the faculty, staff, students, and local community that has been evident since the very beginning. James Broom, the first president of the institution, exemplified this attitude by writing personal letters to the parents of students. He would update them on their child's academic accomplishments and express how much he enjoyed their personal contributions to the institution. This "personal touch" is what still draws an ever-growing number of students today to Cleveland, Mississippi.

Delta State University is one of the eight public institutions of higher learning in the state of Mississippi. It was founded in 1924 as Delta State Teachers College through the efforts of Senator W.B. Roberts and Senator Arthur Marshall. The college opened its doors in 1925, with a faculty of eleven and a student enrollment of 97.

The school saw steady growth in physical facilities, academic programs, and student

population in its first few decades. In recognition of this expansion, the institution changed its name to Delta State College in 1955. Progress continued for all facets of the institution and in 1974 was renamed Delta State University. In just fifty years, Delta State had evolved from a fledgling college housed in three buildings to a comprehensive regional university. Today, the institution supports a population of over 4,000 students.

Delta State's nickname for its athletic programs has undergone an interesting evolution as well. In the early years, teams were known as the Green Waves. After a few decades, this was changed to the Statesmen and Lady Statesmen, names that are still being used today. However, in the eighties, the student body decided to supplement and breathe new life into the school's mascot by creating the Fighting Okra. As soon as the six foot tall vegetable sporting red boxing gloves and an attitude appeared, the rest, as they say, is history. The character has become wildly popular and adorns apparel and supplies of all shapes and sizes.

The Library

The first library on campus had a rather humble beginning; it was located in a single room in the original Administration Building and housed 1,008 volumes and 22 magazine subscriptions. In 1939, a new library building was erected and named after W.B. Roberts, a legislative leader who helped establish the college. As time passed, the need for a larger facility became more acute. A new W.B. Roberts Library was constructed in 1968, providing much needed space for a growing book collection. The building also provided a home for part of the Division of Education and Psychology. Finally, in 1999, W.B. Roberts Library underwent a \$9 million renovation and expansion.

The current library is a showcase for the campus and has expanded to 91,000 square feet and has seating for 850 people. This added space has allowed the inclusion of an Instructional Resources Center, two open computer labs, and a bibliographic instruction classroom. In addition, users benefit from numerous pri-

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From the Reference Desk from page 67

The Handbook of Advanced Electronic and Photonic Materials (2001, 0125137451, \$3,500) is another significant science set published by **Academic Press**. Authoritative and highly technical, this 10-volume handbook contains 73 state of the art review chapters by more than 180 international experts that summarize advances made since 1970. Topic coverage includes semiconductors and semiconductor devices, High Tech Superconductors and organic conductors, ferroelectrics and dielectrics, conducting polymers, liquid crystals, display and laser materials as well as nonlinear optical materials, nanostructured materials, light emitting diodes and lithium batteries. This is science necessary for the 21st century and this reference provides a major resource for those working in the fields of electrical and electronics engineering, computational engineering, data storage and information technology, solid-state physics and other advanced technologies. University libraries and research and development centers are the primary market for this set.

The *International Yearbook of Industrial Statistics* last published in 1999 is out in a new edition (2001, 1840646195 \$210). Compiled by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and published by **Edward Elgar**, this book provides table after table of comparative international statistics on manufacturing and industrial performance. This information

is of value to faculty and students as well as professional economists, policy makers, businessmen and planners. While there is some historical data back to the 1980s, the vast majority of information covers the middle to late 1990s. Suitable for any library needing this type of statistical data, but given the limited date coverage, it would be most useful for libraries owning previous editions.

A new edition that is not dependent on past volumes is the American Council on Education's *American Universities and Colleges* (2001, 3110169673, \$249.50). Published by **Walter de Gruyter** and now in its 16th edition, this set keeps growing and improving. All of the information and features provided in past editions are here, however they have been updated, housed in two volumes and printed on better paper. Aside from the nuts and bolts on over 1900 US colleges and universities, sections on foreign students in the United States and on professional education remain highlights. *American Universities and Colleges* is one of the most comprehensive directories of higher education available.

American First Ladies: Their Lives and Legacy (2001, 0415930219, \$125) published by **Routledge** is a second edition. Arranged chronologically, these comprehensive essays cover first ladies from Martha Washington to Laura Bush. Written by 29 scholars in a serious but reader friendly style, each essay notes biographical details as well as the roles these women played in politics, society and as first

ladies. While varying in length according to individual activity and contribution, all of these essays provide useful information and taken together give the reader a sense of how the role of first lady has evolved over the years. Another quality feature is the bibliographical essay that ends each entry. In short, if your library needs a good reference book on the first ladies, this would be an obvious choice.

There are also second editions of two titles in **ABC-CLIO's** *Contemporary World Issues* series. *Rainforests of the World* by **Kathlyn Gay** (2001, 0874367123, \$45) and the *Religious Right* by **Glenn Utter** and **John W. Storey** (2001, 1576072126, \$45) are useful handbooks intended for general reader, high school students and first year undergraduates. With obvious environmental concern, *Rainforests of the World* provides background information on the destruction of the world's rainforests. Contents vary from essays on habitats, problems, controversies and solutions to a chronology, sketches of people and events, a directory of organizations, relevant data and documents, and lists of print and non-print resources. Following the same format, the *Religious Right* tracks the political and social impact of the religious right on America. The concentration is not on religious beliefs or doctrine. Selective rather than comprehensive, these handbooks offer useful facts in a handy and easy to use format. Both titles are worthy of consideration, if not for Reference, then for Circulation. 🌱

Delta State Library Profile from page 68

vate group study and seminar rooms and library staff can savor the prospect of a minimum of ten years of collection growth space. The building also offers over 200 staff and public access computer workstations. All of this, coupled with the neighboring multi-million dollar Capps Archive and Museum completed in 1997, provides Delta State and the local community with a wealth of information resources.

The Library Services Academic Unit employs 25 full-time faculty/staff and over 50 part-time student assistants. The library houses approximately 325,000 bound volumes, 1,400 current print journals, 750,000 microforms, and provides access to almost 9,000 electronic journals.

Acquisitions

Every academic department is assigned a library faculty liaison that assists in collection development throughout the year. Each department is routed Choice cards, publisher catalogs, and other relevant resources to best utilize their library allocation. The subsequent book orders are processed in the Technical Services Department, with the majority being ordered online through the Academic Book Center system. If at all possible, materials are purchased through the PromptCat service, which reduces the burden on our two full-time Catalog Librarians. This option includes the catalog record and essentially allows the material to be shelf-ready when the material is received. The Accounts Supervisor handles all purchase orders and invoicing. She also distributes continuous updates on the encumbered status of departmental accounts.

Serials and ILL

As the Serials/ILL Librarian, I supervise two full-time Serials Library Assistants, one full-time ILL Library Assistant, and thirteen part-time student assistants. The Serials Department is also responsible for binding. We check-in materials using the GEAC automation system and EBSCO Subscription Services supplies approximately ninety percent of our serial titles and standing orders.

Two summers ago, we underwent an exhaustive journal review where we verified the assignment of titles to their respective academic areas. Departments were then contacted and allowed to review and make adjustments to their journal subscriptions. While the fiscal climate didn't allow us to add many new titles, several departments took advantage of the opportunity to cancel unused subscriptions and replace them with more relevant journals. All of this information was entered into an Access database and is constantly updated. This allows us to run various reports for collection development, research, and accreditation purposes.

The ILL Department implemented the Ariel Document Delivery system over the summer and it has dramatically reduced the delivery and receipt of journal articles. This

is especially significant since ILL has assumed an even more important role with the increasing emphasis on distance education. We have initiated several new services for the fall term that provide support for distance students and their unique curriculum needs.

The Horizon

As with many state institutions, Delta State is currently facing a shrinking budget because of difficult economic times. This has forced us in Library Services to closely evaluate the services we provide and those that we plan to offer in the future. Even though our materials budget is not at the level we wish it could be, there are some positive changes coming in the near future. In September, we are going to utilize Serials Solution's reporting service. This will generate a single alphabetical list of our electronic full-text journal holdings that can be mounted on the Library Services Web Site. We are also in the process of acquiring a new library automation system that we plan to implement next summer. Both of these additions will allow us to provide our patrons with significantly improved access to our available resources. While there are always challenges that must be faced, with our beautiful new facility and a new automation system on the way, we realize that we are more fortunate than most. This infrastructure, maintained by a dedicated staff, will provide a powerful combination and exciting possibilities for W.B. Roberts Library and Delta State University.

Schappell Interview from page 67

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