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Savannah State University Innovates to Ensure Excellent Customer Service

Shanesha R. F. Brooks-Tatum

HBCU Library Alliance, sbrooks-tatum@hbculibraries.org

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Scrapbooks were processed by **Backstage Library Works** and microfilmed. The digitized images of the pages were placed on DVDs and are currently being transferred to the Website. Eighteen photographs were sent to the **Conservation Center for Art and Historic Artifacts** for repair.

Library staff engaged faculty members in a project centering on the archives. Each year the **Chesnutt Fellows Program** pays ten Faculty Fellows stipends to participate in a yearlong program that assists them in incorporating **ACRL** standards for information literacy into their syllabi. "Collaboration is key," shared **Wynn**. "We also evaluate how faculty are teaching with and without **ACRL** standards to gauge outcomes," he added.

"Through this program we are able to make faculty and students aware of the rich archival materials housed at the Library, and the diverse ways that the materials can be used in teaching and research," **Tuttle** remarked. Library staff encourage faculty fellows to assign activities that teach students to use the archives. "Since collections are digitized, students do not have to visit the Library to use the materials, but we do want to ensure that they are aware of what we have as well as the history of the institution that they are now part of," **Amerson** shared.

This collaborative effort between faculty members and librarians is part of the **University's SACS (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools)** Quality Enhancement Project. Additionally, librarians began a multimedia oral history project called the Broadell Project, in which they collected oral histories and subsequently cataloged presentations. "This garnered even more attention for the archival collections. Ultimately, the project not only improved archives but also served as training for faculty and staff," **Wynn** stated.

"The Library is growing and expanding. Our focus is on working closely with faculty members so that through every point of contact, awareness of the Library's diverse and valuable collections reaches even more faculty members and students," added **Wynn**. The digitization efforts increase national and worldwide awareness of the unique collections at **Fayetteville State University**.

To learn more about **Fayetteville State University's Library**, visit *http://library.uncfsu.edu*. 🐾

Savannah State University Innovates to Ensure Excellent Customer Service

by **Shanesha R. F. Brooks-Tatum** (Project Coordinator/Writer, HBCU Library Alliance) <sbrooks-tatum@hbculibraries.org>

Savannah State University is the oldest public **HBCU** in the state of Georgia and the oldest institution of higher education in the city of Savannah. Founded in 1890, the campus serves 4,300 students and an increasingly diverse population.

The **Asa H. Gordon Library** is the main library on campus, where **Mary Jo Fayoyin** has been the Library Director for ten years. In 2007, **Fayoyin** and her staff implemented an enhanced strategic plan that positioned the library to spearhead innovations that have garnered institutional, local, and national press coverage. Transformations in these areas were prompted by the library staff's self-assessment, which made clear their need to holistically examine and rethink their approach to customer service.

"The questions that we reflected on were 'Why we do what we do?' and 'How can we improve what we do?'" stated **Fayoyin**. Following the initial assessment, the library implemented a strategic plan addressing key areas that surfaced from patrons' feedback. **Asa H. Gordon Library's** innovations are primarily in three areas: cutting-edge technology, information literacy and assessment, and library accessibility.

Although technological advances were made, assessment tools were strengthened, and library accessibility was substantially improved, the library's core strategy continues to be improved customer service. "Our library is innovative *for the sake of* customer service. We are forward-thinking and customer-oriented because we value our patrons," **Fayoyin** added.

The **HBCU Library Alliance** was especially helpful in providing the leadership training **Savannah State** library staff and faculty needed to create a strong and clearly-defined strategic plan. While the **HBCU Library Alliance** identified the library's strengths and weaknesses, implementing the enhanced strategic plan required the commitment and efforts of the entire library staff.

James Stevens, Systems, Databases, and Periodicals Librarian and **COST (College of Science and Technology)** Liaison, wrote script for most of the programs and helped lead technological advancements at the library. He spearheaded the development of the library's text messaging reference service, which received "trend setter status" recognition in the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* and the *HBCU Digest*. However, technology is useless without training for the end-user, so **Stevens** developed programming to train students. He developed a strong relationship with the Student Body President and Cabinet through giveaways and other incentives for students.

Louise Wyche, a librarian at the **Gordon Library** for over ten years, focused on improving customer service. **Wyche** and Librarian, **Ivy Brannen** developed a training program for library assistants and student assistants. **Brannen**, who earned her Master's degree in Library Science while working as a Library Assistant at **Savannah State**, now heads the Circulation Department, which helps students have easy access to resources. "We received funding to hire additional librarians, and we were happy to support **Ms. Brannen** as she earned her library degree," **Fayoyin** remarked.

Caren Agata heads the library's Information Literacy Program, which was implemented with grant funding in 2008. The information literacy program ensures that students leave

Pictured above is the Asa H. Gordon Library. Photo is courtesy of Asa H. Gordon Library, Savannah State University.

Savannah State as information literate and civically engaged citizens of the world. Librarians are recognized as fellow teachers on campus, assigned to colleges, academic departments, and/or programs on campus through the Library Liaison Program.

Savannah State faculty members were paid a stipend with an understanding that they would incorporate information literacy into their courses. **Lauren MacMillan**, Collection Development Librarian and Liaison for the Social Sciences, particularly helped spearhead this effort through the assessment of programs. As illustrated in Table 1, the Information Literacy Program has grown tremendously.

Table 1

Academic Year	Classes	Students
2008-2009	47	852
2010-2011	165	3410

The **Asa H. Gordon Library** applied for a two-year grant as a part of the university's Title III award to implement the program. But first, library staff had to secure university support to apply for the grant. "Think outside of the box when it comes to funding programs," **Fayoyin** suggests. "Everyone is asking for funds. Find seed money to prove that your program is important and needed, and to ensure that it will be successful," she adds. Because of its success, the Information Literacy Program has become institutionalized and is funded out of the university's state budget allocation.

In order to determine the degree of success achieved, library staff engage in continuous multilevel assessment of all programming, initiatives, and special activities at the library. Student learning outcomes are assessed using the Project SAILS (Standard Assessment of Information Literacy Skills) exam. Pre- and post-testing documents students' information literacy skills and proficiency levels and pinpoints areas needing improvement.

Data on user satisfaction are collected through the suggestion board, the comment section of the library Website, surveys, and LibQual, a survey tool created for academic libraries. User satisfaction surveys run continuously, not just at set times during the semester or academic year, and replies are posted to the suggestion board and library Website. "When patrons know that you are honestly interested in what they think and how they feel, and that you are open to receiving their feedback at any time, this builds open, genuine relationships that lead to more innovative transformations," **Fayoyin** remarked.

Some of these transformations include building a café in the library, designing a presentation/collaboration area, providing space for the ReWrite Center, creating a Gallery to celebrate African art, and maintaining up-to-date technology in the library's computer lab, which is open longer than any other lab on campus. To ensure that the technology remains in working order, three staff members — **James Scott**, **James Stephens**, and **Hunt Luker** — agreed to take on the added responsibility of maintaining lab computers. While the library is not able to meet every single need, library staff do their best to compromise by understanding the circumstances informing each request and deciding on what will benefit the most patrons. This helps ensure the delivery of excellent customer service.

Now, librarians at **Savannah State** sit on several campus committees, and **Fayoyin** sits on the Deans' Council. "We have a say in the University's strategic planning and budgeting committees. We're able to affect change in a greater way," said **Fayoyin**.

In this age of swift technological changes and austere economic cuts, libraries cannot continue to do things "the same old way," **Fayoyin** further explained. "We need to continuously critically examine what we are doing and change the ways that we practice librarianship in order to meet the needs of our patrons."

To learn more, visit *http://library.savannahstate.edu*. 🐊

Shown below is Ms. Mary Jo Fayoyin as she leads a library instruction session. Photo courtesy of Asa H. Gordon Library, Savannah State University.

in April for a new position as **Head of Collections & Systems at Rollins College** (Florida). See his Star of the Week profile on the *ATG NewsChannel*. *http://www.against-the-grain.com/2011/08/atg-star-of-the-week-jonathan-harwell-georgia-southern-university/*

Just got a copy of *Information Today* (January 2012, v.29, issue 1 which I think I am going to subscribe to finally). There is a full page report on the **2011 Charleston Conference** by the smart-as-a-whip **Donald Hawkins** (truly, I wish I had written this report). Check it out. And also **Don's Conference Circuit** blog! *http://www.theconferencecircuit.com*

And speaking of **Charleston**, got a note from the on-top-of-it **Roula Harb**! She had read the article that **George Machovec** and I wrote for *Searcher* — **In the Company of Librarians: The Charleston Story** which was published in the latest issue. *http://www.infotoday.com/searcher/default.asp*

And while we are speaking of **Roula Harb**, be sure to read her profile in this issue of *ATG*, p.66.

The magnificent **Digby Sales** (**University of Cape Town**) wrote that he already has the okay to attend the **32nd Charleston Conference**, November 7-10, 2012! Do you? **Digby** says that he had a great Christmas holiday with all of his siblings and most of his nieces and nephews. And since then he has been very busy! There is a new **UCT** Executive Director, **Ms Gwenda Thomas** who started work at the beginning of November. As one of two acting deputy directors, **Digby** has helped as much as possible in both advising as well as taking on new responsibilities without giving up the old ones! *http://www.lib.uct.ac.za/*