

**Sabbatical Leave Report for  
Thomas A. Stough, Associate Librarian, Oxnard College  
Spring 2011 Leave  
(July 2011)**

This report follows upon the author's *Content Outline for Sabbatical Proposal for Fall 2010* submitted to the 2009-10 Sabbatical Committee. I was not chosen for leave in 2010-11, but was listed as an alternate. When I submitted my proposal, I was unaware that one-semester leaves are typically taken in spring semesters. Another faculty member was obliged to postpone his sabbatical leave for Spring 2011. Therefore, the 2011-12 Sabbatical Committee chose to offer me leave for that "slot", which I gratefully accepted.

Between the time the proposal was written and then granted, conditions had changed considerably at the college. Construction had proceeded apace on the Learning Resource Center renovation. At this writing, the new structure is scheduled to be completed in Spring 2012, with a grand opening planned for Fall 2012. I had originally planned to examine library instruction practices statewide. Given the circumstances, I changed the focus of my leave to visiting recently built or renovated California community college libraries and learning centers, as well as those considered most "cutting edge" in technology and architecture, regardless of structure age. The overall goal was (and remains) to learn from best practices around the state and to incorporate these ideas into services offered to students at the college's library, learning center and tutorial center.

Additional photographs and commentary may be found at my sabbatical blog: <http://tomslibraryadventure.blogspot.com/> This report focuses on practical ideas in preparation for Oxnard's new library/learning resource center, as well as on the training and community service aspects of the sabbatical leave.

College Library Architecture and Services for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Students

From January through March 2011, I visited the following campus libraries:

National University, San Diego  
Pearson Library, California Lutheran University, Thousand Oaks  
Voskuyl Library, Westmont College, Santa Barbara  
Cuesta College Libraries, San Luis Obispo  
Shatford Library, Pasadena City College  
Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles  
Luria Library, Santa Barbara City College  
Doyle and Mahoney Libraries, Santa Rosa Junior College  
American River College Library, Sacramento

In addition, I attended a number of professional meetings and webinars. I had intended to visit more campuses, but the March increase in fuel prices curtailed my plans. Also, my colleagues needed to focus on student service toward the end of the academic year.



**SCIL Works 2011, January 7, 2011**

Keeping it Real, Keeping it New: Pushing Boundaries in Challenging Times

National University, San Diego, CA

Southern California Instruction Librarians (SCIL) is a group within California Academic and Research Libraries (CARL). CARL is affiliated with the national Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) and the American Library Association (ALA). SCIL's main purpose is to provide hands-on, practical workshops for librarians who teach research skills in academic settings. Here are the two main sessions I attended:

Pushing Boundaries: Convincing Yourself to Let Go by Kelly Myer Polacek, MS, MLS, ELS

Ms. Polacek described a dilemma common to many instruction librarians: feeling the need to cram every tidbit of information about library services into one 50-minute session that represents librarians' only captive "face time" with a given group of students. She warned about the limits of "cognitive load" on students and suggested a "radical" strategy: "Saying No to Multiple Databases!" That is, demonstrate one resource and research skills applicable across various platforms. She used a sample assignment from a lower-division biology class and the PubMed database for illustration. She also pointed out that ACRL standards call for teaching broad-based research processes.

Ms. Polacek's points are well-taken and I have strived to include these lessons learned in library instruction sessions presented during Summer 2011. However, it is easier to "just say no" to presenting everything in subject-specific classes. Freshman English classes, the typical LI setting, require a broader approach.

Let's Be Direct About Assessment: Making the Leap from Indirect Data to Direct Evidence of Student Learning by Henri Mondschein, California Lutheran University  
Pearson Library

Mr. Mondschein gave a well-received presentation on how to use ACRL standards in library instruction and to align them with institutional student learning outcomes. "Indirect data" are largely student and/or faculty perceptions of "how well are we doing",

whereas “direct data” come from systematic assessment in the classroom. The following steps were identified to create a “curriculum map” for library instruction:

- Identify key courses for integrating information literacy
- Determine IL competencies for each course
- Align ACRL standards/campus SLOs with competencies
- Review syllabi and course assignments and create lesson plans
- Create quick quizzes and scoring rubrics

In considering the creation of SLOs for Oxnard College, described later in this paper, I have considered Mr. Mondschein’s suggestions. CLU’s accreditation environment is different from Oxnard’s, but many of his points are valid for us.

I also toured the library at National University and noticed a small, but potentially important bit of nomenclature that Oxnard may wish to emulate: the use of “Help Desk” as opposed to “Reference Desk” for the librarian-student service point. When working in libraries and learning centers, it’s easy to forget that “circulation desk” and “reference desk” are meaningless “libraryspeak” for many students.

### **California Lutheran University Pearson Library, January 11, 2011**



Upon Mr. Mondschein’s invitation, I toured “his” library at CLU. Notable services offered: loans of laptop computers and Kindle e-book readers, both inside and outside the library. Since then, Oxnard College Library has moved cautiously in this direction. I also liked the portable chairs and whiteboards offered in student group study rooms, allowing “customers” to customize their space.

## **Council of Chief Librarians/Community College League Vendor Day, Ontario, January 28, 2011**

This event is held twice per year and allows community college librarians to sample the virtual wares of major service providers such as ProQuest, EBSCO and Gale. The networking at this event allowed me to arrange a later visit to American River College.

As for vendors' presentations, the overriding theme was changes to their online interfaces. The representative from Gale took a lot of heat for her company's wholesale change of user interfaces for its *Opposing Viewpoints* and *Biography* products...without notifying its librarian user community first. This attendee was also unhappy, both with the changes and with the way they were "sprung" on users without notice. However, I came away from the presentation convinced that Gale's changes to the interface were good and worthwhile. They were made for students' sake, not for librarians or other faculty members. Today's end users are used to entering a simple search string and getting results, i.e., "Googling" (also see p. 7).

## **Voskuyl Library at Westmont College, Santa Barbara, January 31, 2011**



Director Debra Quast saw my sabbatical blog postings and invited me to see "her" newly-renovated library. To a larger extent than most, the facility is Ms. Quast's, as she was allowed full creative control over the renovation by Westmont's president. (Small, private liberal arts colleges, of course, differ greatly from community colleges.)

Although the exterior remained the same, many interior walls were removed to create a more open and inviting space. Faculty and students voted on color schemes and served on the committee overseeing the work. Since the renovations, gate counts have tripled.

One very unique piece of furniture, not seen elsewhere: slow treadmills for kinesthetic learners. These operate at 2 mph and are not fitness machines. They incorporate a shelf for reading material or mobile devices. For the fidgety researcher, these are a godsend. Ms. Quast admitted that the president was leery of the idea at first, but allowed her to try it. He and the entire campus community are grateful for his positive decision.

As for the student/librarian service point, called the “Help Desk”, I was pleased to see that librarians work back-to-back with student computer technicians. This is an idea very worthy of consideration by Oxnard College and belongs in the “why didn’t I think of that?” category. When students ask a librarian for assistance, they receive assistance with research techniques, content and evaluation. Often, there are software and hardware issues that impede student progress. Librarians at Oxnard College often cannot attend these issues, either because of a lack of knowledge or because they lack administrative rights to fix network or hardware problems. Enter the onsite computer tech, who can often fix things right away. Thus, the “customer” leaves satisfied and employees learn from each other. This kind of teamwork will be greatly needed in the new Learning Resource Center at Oxnard College.

**Cuesta College Library, San Luis Obispo, February 16, 2011**



Retired Cuesta College Library director Dave Dowell took me on a tour of the main campus library on the left of this photo, as well as the adjoining learning center on the right. The library has today’s common mix of group study rooms, individual carrels and wireless connections for mobile devices. Coffee is sold onsite, but remains strictly outside, unlike Santa Barbara College, for example.

This is the construction site for the library at Cuesta’s North County campus, planned for opening in January 2012. SLO County’s large size requires four sites to serve all of its students. The North Campus is 35 miles away from the Main Campus.



## Shatford Library at Pasadena City College, February 17, 2011



Among California community college librarians, Pasadena City College is well-known for its innovative services, for-credit library instruction classes and superb collections. Dean Mary Ann Laun's example of visiting campus libraries statewide during her sabbatical is what inspired me to conduct my own "excellent library adventure".

This image shows a possible style of orientation room furniture that could be used in Oxnard's new library. Having laptops integrated in desks allows for a much more pleasing look during lectures and meetings and better use of space.



In consulting with the faculty and staff at PCC, I also learned a great deal conceptually about creation and maintenance of Web pages, Facebook sites and chat reference services. It is obvious that deciding to offer these tools will require a serious commitment on Oxnard's part in staff time. They are not "set and forget" services.

### **Hannon Library at Loyola Marymount University, March 3, 2011**

This was a rare opportunity to view a working and recently completed library-in-the-round, which is, of course, the design of Oxnard College's new LRC structure. The staff at Hannon cautioned me that sound travels very freely in the round and that baffles, soundproofing and scheduling are very important to keep happy neighbors in the building.



### **SCELC Vendor Day/Discovery Searching, March 3, 2011**

The Statewide College Electronic Library Consortium (SCELC) is an organization for private college librarians in California and analogous to the Community College League's consortium. This annual vendor fair was an opportunity to sample services and to network with colleagues. Many of the services on offer were well beyond the scope of Oxnard College. However, presentations from several integrated library systems vendors were quite informative, especially in regard to the latest trend in online libraries: discovery searching.

Discovery searching is the process of finding information across a library's entire collection with one search statement. References to paper books are listed, along with complete electronic books and journal articles. It is also possible to include print reference books in these searches, a wealth of information for undergrads that is often forgotten, even by librarians. Reaction to discovery searching has been mixed among academic librarians. Some consider it a dumbing-down of teaching search techniques and are concerned about its effect on library student learning outcomes. This writer sees it as inevitable. Unless and until library collections can be searched as easily as generic Web pages ("Googling"), libraries will become increasingly irrelevant to today's students.

At this writing, the District's board has approved purchase of the Voyager ILS for Moorpark, Oxnard and Ventura College libraries. This will include the Primo module, which creates a discovery search interface. I applaud this decision.

### **Luria Library at Santa Barbara City College, March 10, 2011**

SBCC, like PCC, is known statewide and beyond for its innovative and cutting-edge online services to its community. Some details about chat and text reference may be found on my blog. Oxnard College can, and



should, incorporate many of these technological ideas into services in its new Learning Resource Center.

However, I'd like to focus here not on technology, but rather on people and attitudes. Director Kenley Neufeld and his staff are not only forward-thinking, but also very positive in their outlook. This attitude is infectious for students and translates into lively interactions between "customers" and librarians, as I observed that Thursday in March. This component is at least as, if not more important than, architecture, furniture choices, espresso carts, WiFi and all the rest. This is key to the success of the new LRC at OC. Luria Library is another location where student computer techs work directly with students and librarians and all learn from each other.

### **Santa Rosa Junior College Doyle and Mahoney Libraries, March 15, 2011**



SRJC's libraries in Santa Rosa and Petaluma are architectural showcases. They demonstrate what can be done with good funding, community support and a grand vision. Like SBCC, the SRJC staff are friendly, student-centered and exhibit a genuine esprit de corps that translates into a happy clientele.





## **American River College Library, March 16, 2011**

Most of the structures shown in this essay and on the blog were built as modern libraries from the ground up. I was especially interested to see ARC's library, as it is an example of an older building that received modernization. Thus, it's more analogous to Oxnard's current situation. Like Oxnard, ARC serves a large Hispanic population, though at 40,000 students, its user base is larger than all three Ventura district campuses combined. This was a very busy library and I largely gave up



speaking with the librarians on reference duty and simply observed their interactions with students. All were friendly and helpful. The acoustics in this building are a bit barn-like, which can interfere with communication. I am hearing-impaired, but noticed this was true at times even for those with normal hearing. The visit was another reminder that we need to pay attention to the soundscape in Oxnard's new Learning Resource Center.

## **Deans & Directors Meeting, Sacramento, March 17 & 18, 2011**

For the past two years, I have attended this annual gathering as the only representative from the Ventura County Community College District. It is a creation of the Council of Chief Librarians and the Community College League (both known, confusingly, as CCL). Representatives from the state chancellor's office (CCCCO) were in attendance and gave presentations about the State's deteriorating budget situation. We learned about how limited funds were being redistributed to keep the State's core central services for community college libraries in place. There was a lot of talk about offering one central database service to all CCC libraries, with a possible availability in January 2012. Open-source integrated library systems were also mentioned.

Lessons learned from site visits: the college's new Learning Resource Center will incorporate all of the technology, equipment and architecture that is seen as needed in modern academic libraries. What we need to concentrate on now is deciding which services to modify or eliminate, which ones to add and how to fund them in the current fiscal climate.

## **Sabbatical Leave Activities for Direct Benefit of Oxnard College**

As mentioned above, the increasing price of gasoline and general preoccupation of colleagues with the end of the spring semester put a rather early end to my travels. As the only full-time library faculty member at Oxnard College, it was necessary for me to take on the following tasks during April and May of 2011:

- co-creation of Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLOs) and Student Learning Outcomes (PLOs) for library instruction and reference services with part-time librarian Bryan Thompson, in service of accreditation requirements and program review.
- compilation of book circulation, gate counts, reference questions and database searches statistics for current and past reporting periods, both for accreditation and peer survey requirements.
- creation of a Facebook page for Oxnard College Library, thus beginning the process of offering live chat reference and related services to OC students.

I also attended the following continuing education sessions and meetings during the course of the leave period:

Entire leave—completion of CD-ROM course in lip reading, in lieu of attendance at classes in the San Fernando Valley mentioned in the *Sabbatical Leave Proposal*.

Jan. 31—Library & Learning Resources Advisory Committee

Feb. 4—ProQuest webinar on radio frequency identification (RFID) technologies in libraries

March 9—OmniUpdate seminar at the college for the latest information on updating the college's Websites.

April 14—QuestionPoint webinar, a service from OCLC that allows for online, cell phone text, chat and shared reference services among library consortia.

April 21—Gold Coast Library Network Annual Meeting at Calif. Lutheran University.

April 22—Library & Learning Resources Advisory Committee meeting at the college.

April 28—eLumen training at the college for accreditation-related documentation.

May 4—Library Journal Webcast on “discovery” search tools.

May 6—Google Tools seminar at Ventura College.

May 14—“Hearing Loss on the Job” workshop in Artesia, CA (certificate below).

May 17—Faculty dinner and commencement exercises at the college.

May 23-27—Summer Institute for Teaching Excellence at Ventura College.

June 15—Oral interview panel for Learning Resources Supervisor position at the college.

## Community Service

The primary contribution I made to my local community during Spring 2011 was volunteering for BRIDGES Charter School, a new K-8 public school in Thousand Oaks. I served as the chair of the Instructional Media Parent Managed Cohort, later renamed Library PMC. Our group organized book sales, garage sales and donations to enhance the classroom collections at Glenwood Elementary School, which served as the shared campus with BRIDGES during 2010-11. For 2011-12, BRIDGES will move to its own campus at the site of the former Park Oaks Elementary School. There, the Library PMC will create an entirely new all-campus library “from scratch”.

Additionally, I served as an amateur radio communications volunteer for several public and training events as a member of the Auxiliary Communications Service (Ventura County Sheriff’s Department).

## Sources for This Report

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## Certificate of Completion for Hearing Loss on the Job Workshop

