Pollak Library to add technological improvements

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The Pollak Library is updating itself to fit into the technological world by offering students a variety of services from lectures, to computer labs and to online research catalogs.

“We are an academic library, so the focus is on students,” said Library Instruction Coordinator Stephanie Rosenblatt.

The library will have National Poetry Month programs in April, which will include poetry readings. May will be Privacy Awareness Month, which will include a “Choose Privacy Week” focusing on students and online security. Journalist Narda Zacchino will be featured as part of a monthly lecture series. She will speak about the role of media in a democracy on March 24.

The library is planning to display student artwork in the Salz-Pollak Room located in the atrium.

“We are working on a plan to make our exhibit space accessible to students, faculty and outside groups,” said Systems Librarian Colleen Greene.

The library uses Facebook and Twitter heavily. The Facebook page promotes events and research guides in subjects such as biology and history. A “Tech Tuesday” column gives advice to students on how to use the new technologies.

A new service the library has is Research Consultation, where a student can request a one-on-one appointment with a librarian, in-person or online, who specializes in the subject. The library has online and text chat, where students can ask librarians questions from any location.

“Twenty percent of all reference questions are virtual,” Rosenblatt said.

Greene said that the library’s focus is not only to help students find information, but to allow students to be able to find the information themselves.

The librarians will teach students rationale when looking at the right databases in order to find the best information available.

“We want to make sure that it’s the thing you need,” Rosenblatt said.

Greene said that she saw a student complain on Twitter about how professors always assign projects on PowerPoint because the students did not have the software.

“So I hopped in and I said, ‘Do you have Google Docs?’” Greene said.

With Google Docs, which comes free with all student email on the Student Portal, students are given a free version of PowerPoint.

In 2007, the library posted a blog asking students whether the library should decrease its hours during the budget cuts. Over 300 students commented on the blog saying not to cut the library’s hours.

“That was a really neat example because most people here hadn’t seen how social media tools could be used in that way,” Greene said.

The Information Learning Commons (ILC) equips the library with computer labs. The largest lab, which is the Titan Lab in the basement, has more than 200 computers, and the ILC Oasis North on the first floor has about 140 computers.

Afsaneh Hamedani, manager of the ILC, said that the ILC has submitted a proposal to add more Smart Rooms to the library due to their “overwhelming popularity among students.”
Smart Rooms are equipped with computers, projectors, smart boards and TVs for students to work on group projects, and there are three in the ILC Oasis North.

“(We) are always attentive to students’ learning behavior … evolving technology trends have a definite impact and role in molding the students’ learning behaviors,” said Hamedani.

Hamedani said the ILC is proud to provide the Genius Corner, which gives students hands-on assistance in connecting to wireless networks and printers. ILC laptop checkouts allow students to check out laptops for four-hour library use.

Greene said the library is in the process of updating its website to resemble a virtual branch extension of the library, which should be available by summer. They are also digitizing a local history collection of photographs of Orange County from as early as the late 1800s to add to the website, according to Greene.

“The emphasis of the library is to flip as much things to electronic as possible,” Rosenblatt said.

Currently, the library has more than 50,000 eBooks, according to librarian Joy Lambert.

“We’re more than willing to meet students where they want to communicate,” said Greene.

TAGS: librarian, library, Pollak, research, technology update, worden

About Tim Worden
Tim is a senior journalism major at Cal State Fullerton and is serving his second semester as copy editor for the Daily Titan. He plans on becoming a reporter and copy editor after graduating in May. In his free time, he enjoys reading.

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