

Liaising in the Between – A Plan for Interdisciplinary Outreach

Erin Fields
Women's & Gender Studies Librarian



a place of mind
THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Interdisciplinary Outreach – Between a Rock and a Hard Place

Interdisciplinary subject areas provide a unique challenge for liaison librarians. These challenges include, developing relationships with faculty who have librarians within their home departments and implementing programming within a department with several sessional instructors.

In addition to the problems listed above, the Centre for Women's and Gender Studies (CWAgs) at the University of British had a library portfolio that had shifted hands several times. The shifting of the portfolio created a situation where faculty and students had become accustomed to having limited systematic contact from the library.



Comic found at
<http://www.phdcomics.com/comics.php?n=1295>

Background

CWAgs, founded in 1991, is the home of the Centre for Race, Autobiography, Gender and Age (RAGA) and the undergraduate and graduate Program in Women's and Gender Studies. The Centre acts as a coordinating body that highlights feminist research at UBC and provides a network for scholars, both nationally and internationally.

A permanent librarian position for the CWAgs portfolio began in November 2009. A program of outreach was developed in January 2010.



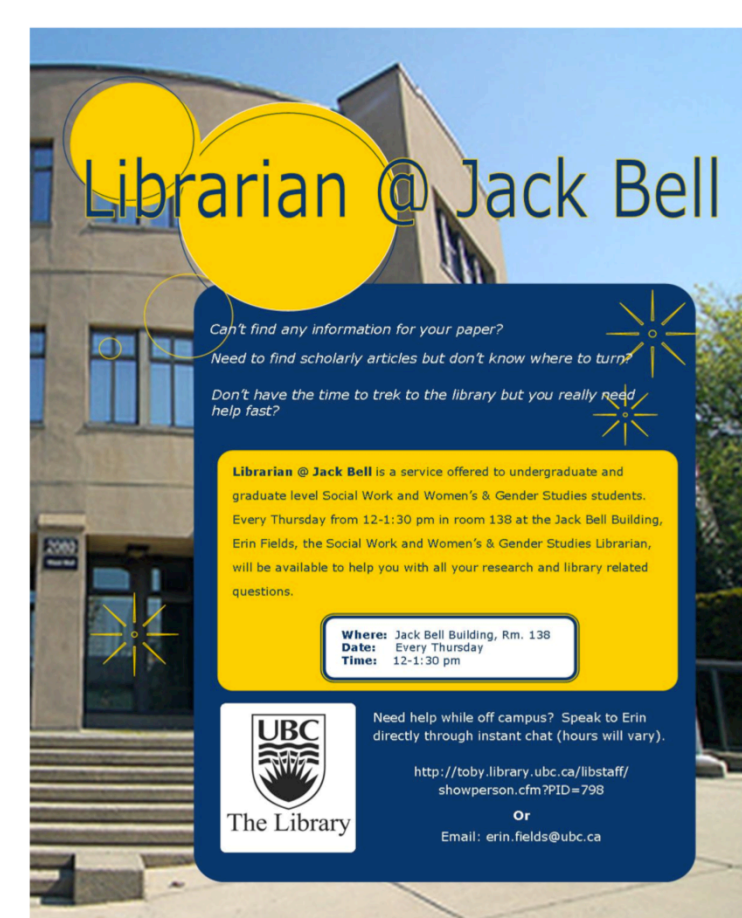
Jack Bell Building
Centre for Women's & Gender Studies

Program Objectives

- 1) Develop a system of initiatives to encourage contact with the faculty and students of CWAgs.
- 2) Promote the services and resources of the library specific to the study of women, gender and sexuality.
- 3) Highlight the unique nature of interdisciplinary research and instruction assistance available to faculty and students from external departments.

Librarian @ Jack Bell

The Librarian @ Jack Bell program is a weekly drop-in service offered to both CWAgs and School of Social Work. The purpose of the program is to provide students with onsite research assistance. Additionally the service puts a "face" to the library which raises awareness of library service.



Newsletter

CWAgs produces a semiannual newsletter that provides updates to faculty, students and scholars subscribing to the listserv of the centre. The newsletter contains reports from the director, undergraduate and graduate advisor, and visiting scholars. To bring awareness about the services available to CWAgs, the "Librarian's Report" was added to the newsletter. This column was used to report on consultation services provided to faculty and students, to highlight new tools and resources, and to offer research support.

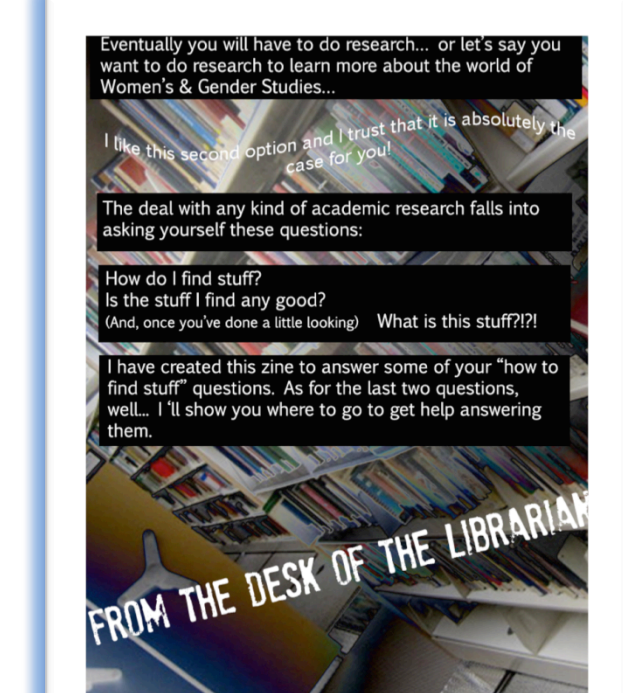


Research Zine



The Women's & Gender Studies Research Rescue Zine was designed as a handout for Imagine Day, a day that invites new students to the faculty for an informal "meet and greet."

The zine format was chosen due to the nature of the audience. Women's and Gender Studies students and faculty are politically active. Many create their own activist artwork and publications. The format was meant to engage the students in an expressive and familiar manner that would encourage further contact.



Podcasts

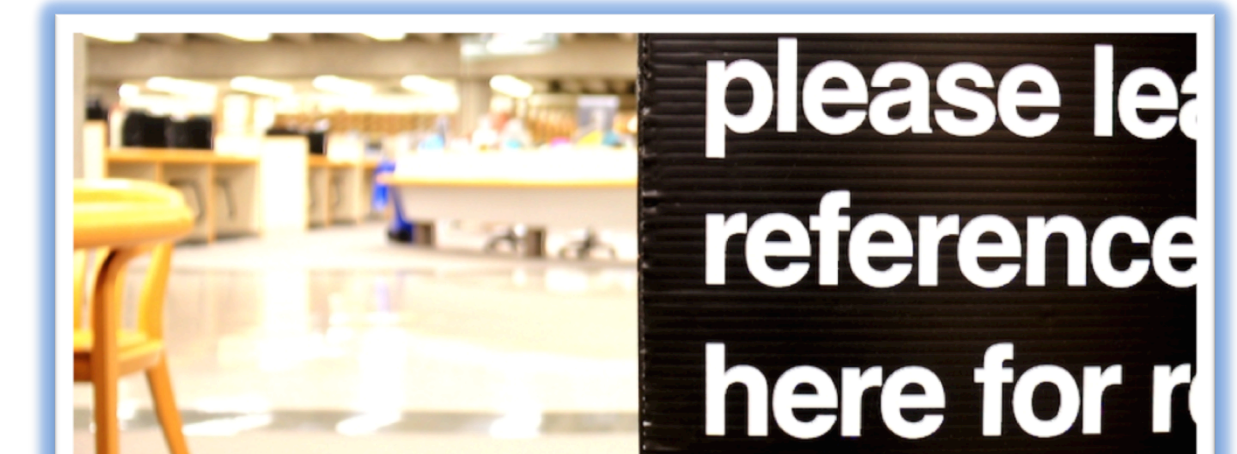
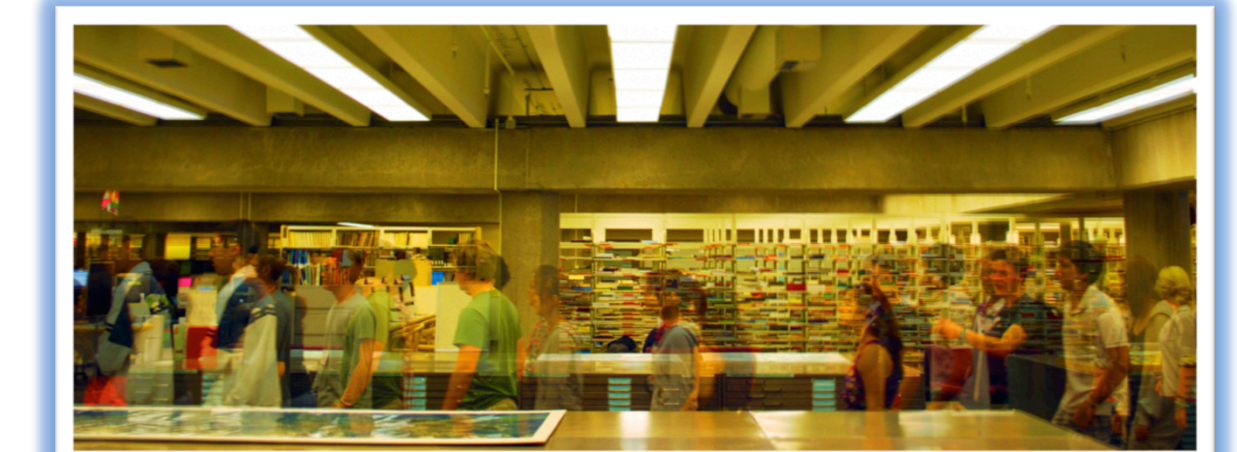
CWAgs offers a lecture series on Wednesday afternoons for the fall and winter semesters. The series includes post doctoral and visiting scholars, faculty both from CWAgs and additional departments who are engaging in research that is relevant to the mission of the centre. In collaboration with CWAgs, the lecture series is being recorded and offered to the public as podcasts. The podcasts began in September 2010 and have had over 460 "views" from such places as Burkina Faso, Algeria, Korea, China and Germany.

	July 2010	August 2010	September 2010	October 2010	November 2010	December 2010	January 2011	total
CWAgs Lecture Series: Podcasts and Notes	17	27	28	63	76	28	15	256
Items								
The Legacy of the Maoist Gender Project in Contemporary China: A Feminist Research on Women's Oral Life Narratives								203
Life and Lives: Gendered Quests for Innocence in Russian Orthodox Anti-Abortion Activism								106
Memory Traces of Ethnic and Gender Violence in Columbia's Armed Conflict								61
What Does Autonomy Mean for Mothers?								51
Teaching sex, queering 'youth'? Thinking about education through secularism and homonationalism								44

Workshops & Consultations

To encourage information literacy instruction at both a basic and advanced levels, workshops for faculty and sessional instructors were developed. The purpose of the workshops were to highlight the services that were unique to Women's and Gender Studies scholarship.

From these workshops came a series of consultations with faculty and visiting scholars at CWAgs who are invited each semester to engage in research and discussion with the department.



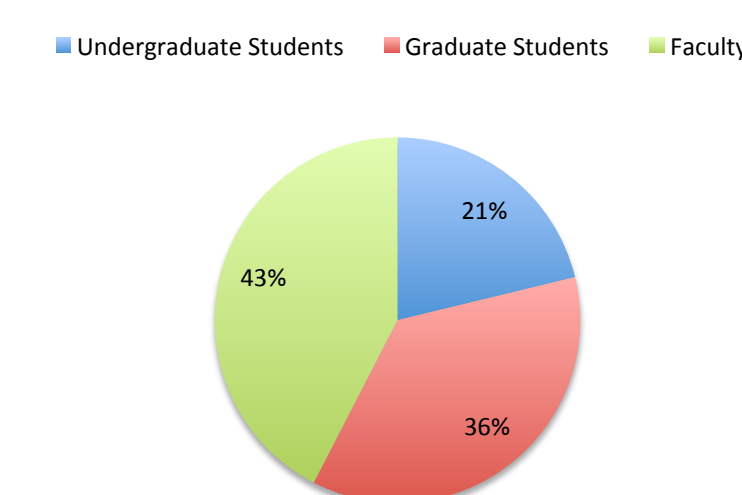
Photos by Paul Lesack

Conclusion

Prior to the introduction of these initiatives, contact with CWAgs was limited solely to the undergraduate population. Although these interactions are important, contact with faculty, sessional instructors, and graduate students provides greater opportunity within the department for library collaboration.

The process has been a slow one but there has been an increase in consultation services to graduate and faculty, involvement in course development and instruction (e.g. collaboration on course reading lists) and collegial involvement in departmental initiatives (e.g. promotional assistance for the conference "Constructions of Risk", invitation to Critical Pedagogy in Instruction lecture).

Percentage of Consultations Provided by Group After Project Initiation



Statistics from January -December 2010