SUNYergy
SUNY Libraries
Working Together

Library Support for Distance Learners

Beginning with SUNY's Empire State College and continuing with the SUNY Learning Network, "distance learning" is a well-established method for increasing the access to a SUNY degree. This issue of SUNYergy describes some of the techniques and approaches that SUNY librarians are using to provide library services to this growing part of the SUNY student body.

Whether it's distance ed., distance learning, asynchronous learning, or distance education, the implication is that the student is unlikely to be seen going through the doors of your library. Just as certain is the need that student has for information seeking, research and critical thinking assistance and guidance.

Jim Nichols (Oswego) describes some of the library support services available to distance learners at his four year school. Monroe Community College makes significant use of distance education, and Pam Czaja talks about what that community college is doing to meet the information needs of those students. Newer technology, like Ex Libris' Metalib system, plays a part at SUNY New Paltz in helping distance learners (and others) with their research needs. New Paltz' Distance Education Librarian, Stephan Macaluso discusses the role of that tool in supporting the library needs of their distance learners.

The SUNY Office of Library and Information Services as well as all of the SUNY*Connect* institutions offer up resources and technologies to help the distance learner (and the on campus student). First to come to mind in this regard is the array of full-text databases, electronic information resources and other databases that are available SUNY-wide. Of course, if a SUNY student cannot gain access to these resources they do not do her any good. A SUNY-wide license for the EZproxy software (and its widespread utilization) has gone a long way towards simplifying these issues of off-campus access to university-wide electronic resources. The OLIS designed and supports a web-based portal to assist SLN students accessing SUNY*Connect* information resources. The SUNY*Connect* LMS provides new options for "patron empowerment" that can offer valuable services to the distance learner. The SFX software is available across all of SUNY*Connect* and can provide an isolated, off-campus student with automatic linkages to OPACs, databases and other resources. With the advent of the SUNY*Connect* union catalog that student will have more immediate

access to many more SUNY library resources.

This issue of *SUNYergy* provides just a glimpse of what SUNY librarians are doing to guide the distance learner towards good information and good information seeking skills. Let us know how you're working together with that off-campus student and with other teaching faculty to offer up some information literacy.