

In October 2010 Dr. Lynne Porat attended the 3rd International Library Assessment Conference held in Baltimore, U.S. The conference was attended by 470 librarians and administrators from the United States, Australia, South Africa, England and Israel who presented their experiences and activities on the subject.

At Baltimore

During the conference there were some very interesting lectures. First was Megan Oakleaf from the University of Syracuse who talked about: "Learning Outcomes and the Library". Megan emphasized the importance of the library's role on student success and that the learning experience is an ongoing process for students *and librarians* and must be supported by the library.

Lecture presentation

Another interesting lecture was given by Eugene Harvey, Maureen A. Lindstrom from SUNY Buffalo State College: "LibQUAL + (R) and the Information Commons Initiative at Buffalo State College 2003-2009". Eugene and Maureen demonstrated the use of LibQUAL + (R) to examine ways of providing additional services to students which are not traditionally considered library services, such as support for computer problems and help with registration for courses. After identifying a need, they built a website which provided all library and non-library services in one place ("one-stop shop").

Later, Merdith Wolnick from Clemons University presented: "You Do not Say! Students at the University of Virginia Come Clean When Asked What are you working on, and how can we help?" Merdith described the Focus Groups conducted by the library where students were asked to write down what they would like to improve in the library. Their notes were placed on a large board and arranged by category - for example: the difficulties encountered when trying to study in the library, where they seek help, and more. Librarians later arranged the notes in a very similar way. They found that the busiest hours in the library were between 16:00 and 20:00 (the library is open 24 hours except weekends), so need more staff during these hours, that students tend to use their laptops within the library to search for jobs and writing papers (so need electrical outlets), and the library computers for printing (need good quality printers).

Presentation

Another interesting idea was presented by Karen Diller and Sue F. Phelps from Washington State University Vancouver: "Multiple Methodologies for Space Assessment to Support Learning". They used a map of the library to mark the seating distribution of students at various times during the day. They observed that they prefer quiet areas with views and that in areas that were designated for group work individuals often sit there and spread out their belongings.

In addition to the Mapping Survey, they also conducted a Photo Survey to observe the seating distribution when there is a choice (free spaces) with the ultimate aim of improving the seating and improve concentration. They found that students tend to carry many things with them, like to sit near windows and prefer rectangular to round tables.

Some examples of library Photo Surveys, e.g. UCSC Library

My lecture: "Marketing and Assessment in Academic Libraries: A Marriage of Convenience or True Love?" described the joint work of the Library Marketing and Assessment Teams at the University of Haifa Library, the obstacles encountered at the outset, and the successful completion of several joint projects - the highlight being the document "You Requested, We are Doing" that outlined all the recent improvements in library service.

Lecture presentation.

I was also a judge of the conference poster contest. My favorite poster was: "In the Zone@UNH: Practical Low-Cost Approaches to Student Space Concerns" by Annie Donahue, Jennifer Carroll, and Tracey Lauder of the University of New Hampshire described how they divided the library into three zones: a talking zone, a quiet talking zone, and a quiet zone.

The conference was very well-organized and enjoyable - and the food was wonderful too. More importantly, I had the pleasure of meeting all the top library assessment people.

[Abstracts of lectures presented at the conference](#)

[My full report on the conference](#)

And finally, Ex-President Mr. Jimmy Carter was on the plane with me and shook hands with all the passengers and even agreed to be photographed.

[Mr. Carter on the plane](#)