New England Library Instruction Group

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NELIG Meeting - November 21, 2003

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NELIG Meeting
November 21, 2003
Worcester Polytechnic Institute, Worcester, MA

Minutes
27 members present including officers, Chris Cox, Chair, Barbara Kenney, Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect, Sandra Rothenberg, Secretary, and Kendall Hobbs, Webmaster

Chris Cox introduced the meeting that was about addressing the needs of different user groups of the library.

The speakers were:
- Barbara MacCarthy, Instructor of English, WPI,
- Barbara Kenney, Information Literacy Librarian, Roger Williams University,
- JoAnne Van Dyke, Student Disabilities Coordinator, WPI, and
- Calvin Hill, Director of Minority Affairs, WPI

Barbara MacCarthy spoke about how she had two different approaches in teaching students who have English as their second language. For the first approach, she takes the students to the popular magazine section of the library and has them pick five articles to read on a topic they like. Later on, she has them write a 4-5 page paper on a different topic and has the librarian give a research session oriented towards this paper. The second approach is to give seven short assignments on 4-5 topics. They key is to make it fun for the students in the library and encourage them to view it as a friendly place to research and to study. Only 10-15 students are in these classes and students also are advised to go to the writing center for additional help.

Barbara Kenney spoke about her experiences with a foreign student from Korea who wanted to know "everything that she knew." She designed a custom-designed information literacy course for him. Barbara maintains a relationship with the ESL coordinator. Generally with ESL students, she brings them to the library and tries to have them understand that the library is an accessible place by having them browse the stacks and showing them that librarians are their advocates in a non-threatening environment.

Anne Van Dyke explained what students with disabilities were entitled at WPI. She also discussed the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics, 6% of the students in the United States have a disability. Students must let professors know that they have a disability (it is their responsibility to do this), and professors can accommodate their needs, though the fundamental essence of the course cannot be altered. Librarians should be sensitive to these issues as well and approach the students if they see a problem.

Calvin Hill outlined groups that have been traditionally included and excluded in multiculturalism. The United States has been demographically shifting with minority groups growing dramatically in recent years. Thus higher education needs to take this into account, as this trend will continue in the future. Calvin says it is up to us as librarians to take an initiative towards various ethnicities in the library and in the library profession. In response to this, one
NELIG member pointed-out that we need to have a customer service ethic that values everyone equally.

[These presentations were recorded and are available online at http://media.atc.wpi.edu/Academics/Library/NELIG/nelig.asx. You will need Windows Media Player 9 to play this file.]

Regarding the upcoming meetings:

Tufts has volunteered for holding the annual meeting. Depending on their availability, we think it will be on Friday, June 11, 2004. Friday, June 4, 2004 will be a back-up date. A planning committee for this meeting was set-up. They will be meeting in the future to discuss possible speakers. The general theme of the meeting will concern multiple issues of reaching different audiences to bring into the library, and building relationships with the campus community. The next NELIG meeting will be on Friday, January 23, 2004 with the location to be determined. NELIG is not sure yet of the date of the meeting in May. There was discussion of possibly having a joint meeting with the LOCI group in March.

Respectfully submitted,
Sandra Rothenberg, Secretary, NELIG