Many changes have occurred at the Loras Library over the past year. Our research, patron counts, surveys, and focus groups have driven the changes. Based on the information we gathered, we have made changes to accomplish the following:

- identify more group study spaces without building new rooms, as these areas are very heavily used, especially throughout the evenings;
- designate quiet study spaces so that students will know they can rely on those areas being quiet and to feel free to ask others to be quiet as well;
- build upon our welcoming surroundings;
- endorse an environment so the library is seen as both an educational place and a social place; and
- create more comfortable surroundings so that the library becomes the “family room” of the campus rather than the “formal living room”.

When examining the literature regarding how today’s students study and work at school, we found out that, although students “communicate a great deal online, they still want direct interaction with others.” (Lomas and Oblinger) In addition, Lomas and Oblinger found that “once freed from the classroom, students gravitate to the spaces most appealing to them. Comfortable and customizable spaces quickly become candidates for frequent use between classes.” The library provides that opportunity.

According to Peter Booth Wiley, “The successful opening of a new central facility can be overwhelming. Obviously effective and early planning is a requisite, but there is always the unexpected. Every facility looks like it will work on paper better than it works in reality.” In addition, Wiley stated that “library systems face incessant, rapid changes in technology and mounting demands for new services. That’s why it is essential to view any new library facility as a living, growing organism. The new library isn’t ‘finished’ when the doors open. It will have to be constantly adapted to its always changing or ‘new’ environment.” Knowing that people might be concerned about changes happening in our “new” library, we found this information important to our decision-making process. We are a living organism and are in a state of change — not only with the facility but resources and services, too.

Scott Bennett, a renowned library building expert, when talking about the library as place, states that there are two conceptions. “One of these, which has a long and worthy tradition, conceives of libraries as service places where information is held, organized, and managed on behalf of those who use it, who are often also directly assisted in their use of information by
library staff. The other, which springs from a recognition of the essential social dimension of knowledge and learning, conceives of libraries as spaces where learning is the primary activity and where the focus is on facilitating the social exchanges through which information is transformed into the knowledge of some person or group of persons.”

It is finding a balance between the library as service place and the library as learning place that prompted us to move some things around. The need is for more learning spaces to be evident to the students as they find their way around the building. While they need spaces where they can work in groups, they also need spaces where they can work quietly by themselves. We intend to increase the social/noisy aspect of second floor so that the other floors will become known as the places to conduct quiet study and second floor as the place to conduct group and noisier study.

We have moved the majority of the reference collection to the appropriate stacks. Part of this was due to the lack of use of the collection and the purchase of many reference titles online (which is the way most students prefer their resources these days). Another part of this was to create a space where the students could be noisier than in other places in the library. We have some reference books behind the InfoDesk for quick answers. The catalog has been updated to reflect these changes.

In addition, the Library has cataloged the Curriculum Library and it now resides on first floor on the Loras Boulevard side of the building.

This collection was moved to provide more access, electronic checkout, and security for the materials.

It is our intent that these changes encourage students to use the ARC even more for a wide variety of reasons.

Resources:

"Designing the Space: A Conversation with William J. Mitchell," Campus Technology, 8/21/2003,  

http://www.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/PUB7102e.pdf


Check out the library’s new web page at:  
www.loras.edu/library

We also have a new faculty services web page at:  
http://depts.loras.edu/library/faculty.html

We’d love to hear if you notice something we’ve missed that you’re used to using on the old web page. We also want to hear if there’s something new you’d like to see on the web page!  
Contact Joyce Meldrem or Kristen Smith.
Library Hours and Patron Counts

Joyce Meldrem, Director of the Academic Resource Center

During the past two spring semesters, we conducted hourly patron counts for one week in February, one week in March, and one week in April. We counted the number of people in the building and also tracked where they were seated. We now have concrete evidence of where students congregate in the “new” building. We found that third floor is the busiest floor and that the busiest hours are from 6 p.m. – midnight on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. We also found out the following about each of the floors:

1st floor:
The busiest areas are the group studies, the quiet study areas in the Center for Dubuque History, the study carrels facing Keane Hall, and finally, the study tables under the stairs.

2nd floor:
The busiest single area in the library overall is the Reference room – there were over 1538 people counted in that area over a three week time period in 2007. The next highest count in any of the areas was 947. This area provides group study tables, comfortable seating, high visibility, and social gathering space. Group study areas are popular on this floor as are the tables that face both Wahlert and Loras Boulevard.

3rd floor:
The areas used most on this floor include the group studies, the individual studies, the comfortable seating in the Reading Room, and the tables in the Reading Room.

4th floor:
The group studies, the atrium tables, the atrium comfortable seating, the tables facing Wahlert, and the tables facing Loras Boulevard are the most heavily used areas on this floor.

Besides determining where people were studying and using the library, we also know that most students were leaving the library between 10 p.m. and midnight. This explains our decision to close at midnight instead of 1:00 a.m. However, to support the students who do want to study past midnight, the area between the Library and the bookstore is open 24/7 while classes are in session. There are restrooms and vending machines in the area.

We added extra hours last spring because the student government asked the student body when they would like the library to be open. However, we found that the only added hours they used were on Saturdays.

This fall our hours are:
Monday – Thursday
7:45 a.m. – midnight
Friday
7:45 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Saturday
10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Sunday
Noon – midnight

Lobby Area 24/7

From the Loras Archives...

The nomenclature of Loras College:

St. Raphael’s Seminary
1839-1849 at St. Raphael’s Cathedral

Mt. St. Bernard’s Seminary
1850-1872 at Key West

St. Joseph’s College
1873-1913 at 14th Street

Dubuque College
1914-1919 at 14th Street

Columbia College
1920-1938 at 14th Street

Loras College
1939-Present at Loras Blvd. (14th St.)
Dubuque Area Photograph Collection

Michael Gibson, Director of the Center for Dubuque Area History

Since 1976, the Center for Dubuque History (CDH), located in the ARC Level 100, has provided a valuable service not only to Loras faculty, staff, and students, but to the larger population locally in the Tri-States as well as to the nation and even world-wide. Each year, over 400 people visit the CDH and over 800 e-mails, letters, and phone inquiries are received.

One of the most utilized research collections in the CDH are the over 25,000 photographic images of the Dubuque area mostly dating from the beginning of the 20th century. This collection is arranged by subject, e.g. churches, schools, street scenes, parks, businesses.

Since 1990, the CDH has published a photograph and caption in the Telegraph-Herald newspaper, first on a weekly basis and more recently monthly. The photo is a regular part of the monthly “Nostalgia” page and is entitled “Yesterdays.” Mike Gibson says that this regular feature testifies to the adage that “one picture is worth a thousand words.” Brian Cooper, Executive Editor of the Telegraph-Herald says this has become the most popular feature on the “Nostalgia” page. This is one example of how the CDH reaches out into the community in fulfilling its mission to “collect, preserve, organize, and make available” the historic resources of Iowa’s oldest city and oldest college.

From the Lynch Office of Disability Services

Marianne Oberdoerster, LODS Associate

We’ve changed our name! The Lynch Office of Disability Services is the new name of what was formerly the Learning Disabilities Center. The change better reflects our mission of working with students with all disabilities, not exclusively learning disabilities. Currently, you can find links to our site on the Inside Loras A-Z index under both names.

The Enhanced Program application process has also changed. All students must be accepted to Loras through regular admission before being considered. Details are located at http://depts.loras.edu/lods/index.html.

Facts from the Library for 2007-2008

Books checked out by Loras Students: 16,740
Books checked out by Loras faculty & staff: 4,977
Database Searches: 100,187
Asking and Answering

Kristen Smith, Information Services Librarian

We at the library have noticed a few things lately about the questions we are asked: they’re getting harder and they’re being asked in new ways.

By harder I mean more involved, more research-oriented and more process-based. The days when reference librarians are asked to identify a quoted passage or look up a distant address have gone by, for the most part. Our users rarely ask this type of question, because they are satisfied with the answers they can find themselves on the web, more often than not. That’s fine—the web is pretty good at answering those kinds of questions. So these days the questions we answer at the library tend more towards teaching the use of specific databases and coming up with appropriate research strategies. Which is also fine—librarians are very good at answering these types of questions. Our users are also asking questions in new ways. In person, in front of the reference desk, in the library, during the hours we can staff it—not so much. Via email, by phone, through instant messaging, via the web page, during classroom instruction, inside of eLearn—somewhat more likely.

All this is leading up to an explanation of some changes that took place in the library recently, involving reference sources and service. They both still exist, to be sure. But they may seem less tangible than in the past. The print “reference collection” has been significantly down-sized and the books themselves moved into the stacks. They are still here, they are still accessible, no longer found in a centralized location but located with other books on the same subject. We have subscribed to a new online reference service: classic reference texts are offered as eBooks in the Credo collection: http://www.credoreference.com/.

The scheduled staffing of the reference desk has been suspended for this semester, primarily because we are starting the semester short two librarians. We are still here, we are still accessible, just no longer found in a specific location at a scheduled time. Feel free to email, call, text, or drop by the offices of any library staff member, however. Our contact information is available at: http://depts.loras.edu/library/libstaff.html.

The Changing Face of the Writing Center

Helena Hall, Writing Center Director

The Writing Center is now open. We work with any type of writing, anywhere in the writing process. Students do not have to come in with a finished draft. If they have difficulties getting started or get stuck in the middle, they can still come in.

Writing is a process. Therefore, the focus of the writing sessions is on how students can improve their drafts. The goal of the writing center is to help students become better writers. As a result, we do not proofread and/or edit papers. Instead, if students have difficulties with, for example, articles, we will give them a mini-lesson about articles. Then we will work through a couple of paragraphs together. After that the student will try to correct the mistakes on his/her own. If the writing consultant notices that the student is still struggling, he/she will help the student. However, he/she will not just point to a place in the paper and say, “you need to add an article here” without explaining why. Just proofreading and/or editing a paper will not teach students the skills they need to be successful writers in an academic setting.

Please encourage your students to use the writing center.
Do I have a Choice (Reviews Online)?

Kristen Smith, Information Services Librarian

*Choice* magazine and “Choice” cards have long been the method (of choice?) by which faculty submitted book recommendations for library purchase. *Choice* is actually the premier source for reviews of academic books, electronic media, and internet resources of interest to those in higher education. Now “Choice” services arrive via the internet, and have become the **Choice Reviews Online** service. The web address is [http://www.cro2.org](http://www.cro2.org). Bookmark this site! It is a huge database of book review information, completely searchable, containing citations and reviews going back to 1988.

But here’s the real advantage. It is still a monthly service, if you set it up to be. It can be personalized to your specific research and teaching needs. A reminder can come to you via email, inviting you to look at your reviews for the month. To begin, go to the address above, and hit the link “REGISTER here to create your profile”

Fill in the profiling information, ask for email delivery, and be sure to indicate what categories to draw the reviews from. Then just sit back and wait for your monthly reviews.

Oh, and by the way, don’t forget to let the library know which books we should buy. Just send your requests to Kristen Smith or Joyce Meldrem.