Library’s role as cultural center continues to grow

Library Dean Rod Hersberger announced his goal to expand the library’s role as a campus cultural center last year and now he is watching that vision begin to take shape.

“As a library, we are a defender of open inquiry and free speech,” the Dean said. “That’s why I am so pleased to see our library being used as a place where speakers can share ideas and information with an interested audience.”

Since Hersberger announced his goal a year ago, the library has hosted six speaking events and a seventh is slated. Sigma Tau Delta—the CSUB English Honors Society—(in association with the Rossco Books) has sponsored three California writers series events and the Library has held four faculty research lectures.

In January, Sigma Tau Delta brought author Joe Wenderoth to Stiem Library. Wenderoth provided the audience with a performance-oriented reading of his poetry and other writing. Wenderoth is a creative writing teacher at UC Davis and the author of several works of fiction, essay, and poetry.

On February 15, writer Suzanne Chavez Silverman—author of Killer Cronies: Bilingual Memories—provided a bilingual reading of her works. Chavez-Silverman is a professor of romance languages at Pomona College. She was described in Publisher’s Weekly as a writer who “takes readers across borders and through time, and… throws together a very diverse and complex enough to represent her vast variety of life experiences.”

Author Pam Houston wrapped up the series for the year with a reading and book signing on April 11. Houston is a short story writer whose collection Cowboy Are My Weakness won the Western States Book Award. She also earned the Wills Award for Contemporary Fiction for continued on page 2...
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"Walking the Cat," another short fiction collection. Ms. Houston is the director of the creative writing program at the University of California, Davis.

The series brings contemporary writers from throughout California to the library.

"It can be an amazing experience for students to meet a writer who shares something of our diverse and vibrant contemporary California culture," says Mari MacArthur, CSUB English professor and director of the California Writers Series.

Dr. Ericson Case, an advisor to the Sigma Tau Delta group, said moving the series to the library has been a positive step. "We like the atmosphere there," Dr. Case said.

Dr. Hersberger said that the atmosphere of the December reading room is highly conducive to intellectual inquiry. With its wood flooring and paneling, comfortable furniture, fireplace, diffused lighting, and large windows that allowing plenty of natural light, the room leaves audiences with a sense of comfort and warmth.

The library has also held its quarterly faculty research in the room. These lectures began in the spring of 2006 with a lecture by physics professor Dr. Jorge Talamanca on the relationship between weather patterns and Valley Fever. In the fall, Dr. Alecia Rodriguez spoke about the rise of the Khu Khuz Khan in the Kern County in the 1920s. In the winter, Dr. Jose Reyna discussed the evolution of Tejano music (see article). On May 2, Dr. Doris Hall, of the Criminal Justice Department, will discuss her research into extreme domestic violence. Dr. Hall is a member of the Kern County Domestic Violence Death Review team.

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as well as internationally. There were 225 proposals submitted to the conference and this was one of only 20 percent accepted.

In Batista's, Zhong and Alexander's in-person presentation was held by about 300 people. In addition, they were invited to present their findings at the ACRL Virtual Conference which was webcast to attendees around the country. The virtual conference community will stay active for one year for further discussion. The presentation was well received by conference attendees who noted the importance of their data and research findings to both academic libraries and the entire academic community. The paper is published in the ACRL Conference Proceedings. Zhong and Alexander are working on a second follow-up article that should be completed this year.

A CSUB Campus Development Grant funded Zhong and Alexander's conference participation. Zhong also was awarded an ACRL National Conference Librarian Scholarship and a Professional Development Grant from the Faculty Teaching and Learning Center at CSUB.

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Library patrons again have access to top-of-the-line technology in the Stern Library reference area.

"We always put student learning first," Library Dean Rod Hersberger said. "We arranged an internal loan to replace our outdated computers in the reference area and it's been a boon for our patrons."

Technical staff installed 56 new computers at reference work stations this month. The computers are all Dell 745s, each with two gigabytes of memory and flat panel monitors.

The computers that the new ones replaced were nearly six years old and were unable to meet the demands placed on them by the students.

Earlier this year, the library established a security system for the reference area computers. Now public users are required to obtain a free guest pass from circulation before they can access the computers. The reason for establishing the security was to ensure that student users had priority on the computers.

Prior to establishing the security system, students had to compete with public users for computers.

"Our concern was that students were not getting full access when they needed it," Dean Hersberger said. "Now they are."

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a unique perspective to his lecture because he has not only been a music scholar, but is a musician as well. In 2003 he released an album with Santiago Jimenez Jr. He also has dozens of academic articles and books to his credit. When he began his work on the ethnomusicology of South Texas, there were few, if any, sources, he said.

Professor at home behind both a guitar and a lectern

Dr. Jose Reyna provided an in-depth lecture on the history of Tejano music in the December Reading Room on January 31. It was the third lecture in a series sponsored by Stern Library that gives professors an opportunity to discuss their research with an audience of people from the community and campus.

"These faculty research lectures have been well received," said Curt Asher, the librarian who organized the series. "It's a forum that opens the accomplishments of our professoriate to a wider community."

The CSUB professor played clips of music he had collected of historical performers and described the ways in which the widely popular Chicano musical tradition has evolved. Tejano music originated in south Texas and is the product of a variety of musical influences, Reyna said.

Dr. Reyna teaches Spanish at CSUB and is chair of the department of Modern Languages and Literatures. He brought continued on page 3.

Jae Reyna discussed Tejano music at one of the library's recent faculty research lectures.