

2-22-2011

Monitor Newsletter February 22, 2011

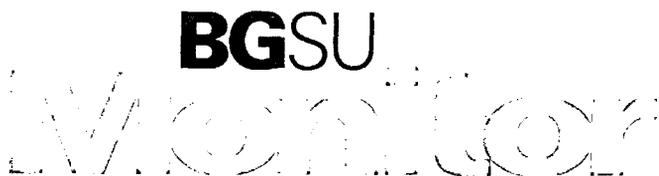
Bowling Green State University

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Recommended Citation

Bowling Green State University, "Monitor Newsletter February 22, 2011" (2011). *Monitor*. 1824.
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FEBRUARY 22, 2011

B O W L I N G G R E E N S T A T E U N I V E R S I T Y

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Library evolves to provide University service

Today's academic library is a place of competing demands, and new dean Kay Flowers says a challenge lies in supporting them all with limited resources. Flowers joined BGSU last semester.

She emphasized the importance of upholding the value of the old while being responsive to current needs in a rapidly changing information world—as the Carnegie Foundation puts it, “fostering the joy of discovery while building on parts of the past.”

Flowers sees the academic library as a place where intersections of disciplines can take place and break down the old model of intellectual silos. “The library is one of the places where interdisciplinarity is celebrated,” she affirmed.

With so many recent changes, the situation in higher education is volatile, she said. Academic libraries typically receive 4 to 5 percent of a university's budget, and must spend a lot on resources and on staff for training users. “We have to rethink our position in the University and rethink our service offerings to stay in line with the needs of faculty and students,” she said.

“There are many elements to the library, but two big pieces are shifting,” Flowers said. “The first is the research collections. The special collections are aimed at supporting researchers (and Bowling Green has really remarkable special collections). Many things are online, but in a lot of cases the researcher really wants to be able to physically hold and examine that special item.”

Researchers require access to scholarly journals, and a big challenge for libraries everywhere has been the skyrocketing cost of subscriptions. Flowers compared the cost of one journal to the price of a new Kia automobile. In this area, OhioLINK has been an invaluable aid in controlling costs among institutions.

“The second dynamic area is the large regular collection aimed at undergraduates. While the library looks pretty much the same as it did 40 years ago, today's students are different. Students coming in this fall were born in 1993, the year the Internet became usable. Such users find the traditional paper stacks less useful. Many choose a digital option just because it is more convenient, not more appropriate.”

However, “you can't ignore what has gone before,” Flowers said, noting that not everything has been digitized and there have been instances of dire consequences from researchers not looking far enough back for information. “Also, digitizing is expensive,” she pointed out. “Not only are students different, but teaching is different today as well. Faculty are assigning more group work, and employers want people who can work in a team.”

This means that, in addition to the very important quiet study areas, the library needs space conducive to this kind of collaborative work, with white boards for idea mapping and tables where students and even faculty can spread out. Flowers would like to see more of that in Jerome Library.

With so many competing and compelling missions, the library must work hard to find the right balance. “Our future is tied to the future of our institution and our students. The library is right in the middle of it all.”

B O W L I N G G R E E N S T A T E U N I V E R S I T Y

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'King's Speech' aims lens on people who stutter

Though most people who stutter do not have to lead a country at war as did Britain's King George VI, even everyday conversation can be daunting for them. The popular film "The King's Speech," with its many award nominations and wins, has drawn new attention to speech disorders.

Dr. Rodney Gabel, communication sciences and disorders, offers therapy and support to people who stutter through a number of specialized, intensive clinics at the University — the only such programs in the region. He has also conducted research on how people who stutter are perceived by others.

"We've found there is still strong misunderstanding about the causes of stuttering, along with stereotypes of people who stutter," he said. A board-recognized expert in fluency and fluency disorders, Gabel welcomes the attention the film has brought to people who stutter and the opportunity it offers him to share "positive, correct information about stuttering" with the public.

For one thing, "Stuttering is not an anxiety disorder. Stress can exacerbate the problem, but it does not cause it. Today we consider stuttering a physiological problem that may have a genetic basis. You can think of it as a sports paradigm: you can learn to produce movements and do them well in private, but in the stress of competition you may not be able to perform them as well. When you've lived a long time with stuttering, anxiety develops from struggling with it and makes your speech muscles a lot more tense and difficult to control. Nevertheless, anxiety does not cause a person to begin stuttering."

And although today's therapies do not include such activities as singing or abdominal exercises, "the film was a historical view of our field. They were working with the best information they had at the time. Today we focus on producing speech in a controlled way."

One thing has not changed, he said. "My colleagues and I were impressed with how the movie shows the importance of a really good, close alliance between a client and clinician and of having an involved, trusting relationship. People who stutter like the relationship between the king and his speech therapist, who believed in his client and in his potential."

For more information on Gabel and the services offered through BGSU's Speech and Hearing Clinic, visit

<http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/mc/monitor/08-28-06/page23076.html>

<http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/mc/monitor/08-28-06/page23075.html>

