

5-2011

Serving Hands: A Profile of the Access Services Department

Susan Hamilton

University of Notre Dame, Kresge Law Library

Follow this and additional works at: http://scholarship.law.nd.edu/law_lib_pubs



Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Hamilton, Susan, "Serving Hands: A Profile of the Access Services Department" (2011). *Law Library Staff & Faculty Works*. 16.
http://scholarship.law.nd.edu/law_lib_pubs/16

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Law Library History & Publications at NDLScholarship. It has been accepted for inclusion in Law Library Staff & Faculty Works by an authorized administrator of NDLScholarship. For more information, please contact lawdr@nd.edu.

Serving Hands: A Profile of the Access Services Department

AT RIGHT: Head of Access Services Carmela Kinslow (second from left) with full time staff members (L to R) Anita Lutz, Mary Cowsert, and Janet Rose.



ACCESS SERVICES: THE CIRCULATION DESK AND SO MUCH MORE

Located within the Access Services Department is the Circulation desk, an impressive focal point of the department and the first thing a patron sees upon entering Notre Dame's Kresge Law Library. As the welcome and information center where all patron services are coordinated, the primary goal is to create an atmosphere that is warm and welcoming while providing the best possible public service to faculty, students and other patrons. The professional care with which the Circulation desk staff serves the patrons is largely due to the policies established by Associate Librarian Carmela Kinslow. As Head of Access Services, she oversees all of the department's operations, and the full-time staff composed of Mary Cowsert, Anita Lutz, and Janet Rose, along with numerous part-time student assistants. Carmela encourages her staff with an Italian adage, "one hand washes the other and together they wash the face," meaning, the work cannot be done alone. It takes the whole department working in tandem, jumping in wherever needed with a spirit of serving hands and professional dedication, to meet the needs of the law school community and carry out Notre Dame's mission to create "a sense of human solidarity and concern for the common good that will bear fruit as learning becomes service to justice." The department strives to work as a unit with many shared responsibilities. Each staff member is trained in all areas of public service and the numerous electronic programs, from specific software to online databases, that support it. The Notre Dame Law School faculty, students, and special borrowers, (i.e., local attorneys, the non-law Notre Dame community, and general public) comprise the many patrons that are served by Access Services.

Although the official department title is Access Services, it is oftentimes known as "Circulation," referring to the main desk where items are checked in and out, directional information is given, referrals to other departments are made, and queries answered; but Access Services entails much more than that. As its name implies, there are many public services available at the Circulation desk. Not only does this department handle checking out books and re-shelving them, they also request and receive materials through Interlibrary Loan (ILL) that are not available in the library or elsewhere on campus. They give directions, know what is in the collection and where the holdings are located, provide maps of the building to direct people through the library, inform patrons about the borrowing policies governing circulating and non-circulating materials, supply document delivery and practice exams, loan DVD's, computer laptops, and video-cameras, manage study room access, and more. Access Services also determines the rules governing those activities and items, sets library hours, and regulates and keeps statistics on collection and library space usage.

Mary Cowsert, in direct support of Carmela Kinslow, is the Daytime Supervisor and manages all the activity conducted at the Circulation desk. She is also responsible for special projects and hiring and training the student staff. Working closely with Mary are Access Services Specialist Janet Rose and Evening and Weekend Supervisor Anita Lutz, who together provide service at the Circulation desk 96 hours per week, including weekends and many holidays. The faculty can submit requests 24/7 through the "[Law Circ](#)" email or in paper form. Fulfilling photo copy requests, assisting students looking for materials to support their theses or research papers, and document delivery are all normal daily and weekend services.

"We greet everybody who comes by and over time we get to know people by name. We wear name tags so that they are able to know us, too, which is beneficial. A patron can say, I spoke to Mary, Janet, or Anita. Knowing the staff by name makes our service more personable."

- Mary Cowsert

Continued on next page . . .

The student workers are trained in document delivery, shelf reading and shelving according to the Library of Congress call number system. Some of these are law students who cover the desk two nights a week from 5:00-10:00 p.m. (providing coverage for Anita's days off) as well as on the weekends. There are always two people assigned to the Circulation desk, whether full-time staff members or students, so that when document deliveries or retrievals need to be made outside the law building; one person will always be available to provide service at the desk.

PROVIDING SERVICE THROUGH THE RENOVATION YEARS

Prior to the Biolchini Hall renovation completed in 2010, the collection was primarily housed on "makeshift flooring" constructed of metal struts and frames between floors. Some areas were very dark and one could hardly see at all. Mary reminisced that "[S]ometimes people went downstairs [to find something] and you never saw them again. So, we gave the patrons twenty minutes ... if they didn't come back, we went looking for them!" In time, the collection filled the entire space and much of it was stored off-campus in warehouses. A sizable portion was also housed in the basement of the Hesburgh Library, and "student workers got quite a work-out retrieving materials from these locations."

The Circulation desk in the old law school building was very small, cramped, and difficult to find, as patrons had to go up stairs and through several doors. There were three communally shared and tightly spaced desks tucked in front of the Reserve bookshelves, and squeezed between a photocopier, fax machine, laminator, and file cabinets. Although congested, this configuration functioned well for many years.

Prior to renovation, space availability throughout the library was a continual concern. As the computer lab expanded and the number of books increased, the collection had to be moved multiple times to accommodate. There was not adequate seating for the students, fewer carrels and desks, and only four study rooms. As a whole, the library was cramped, difficult to navigate, and not amenable to patrons with disabilities. Happily for all, the law school expansion resulted in a new law school building full of new classrooms and the old building was renovated to house a greatly expanded Kresge Law Library.

During the renovation period library staff were divided between the new Eck Hall of Law and a small part of the old building. The Access Services and Technical Services departments occupied three floors of the old building's southern wing with the Administration, Research and Technology departments housed in the newly constructed Eck Hall. In anticipation of the renovation, the librarians had determined which holdings faced the greatest demand and these were kept close by for easy retrieval throughout the renovation. With most of the library's holdings offsite, this period was difficult for everyone, especially the faculty and students accustomed to immediate access to collection holdings. Service was maintained via many retrievals and an increase in interlibrary loans.

The Access Services staff, during this interim period, was located in what is now the open landing between the student commons and the library entrance on the second floor. Because windows were there, Mary noted, "[We] didn't feel closed in, and we had a lot of contact with students; much more so than we had before. ... Not only those coming to the library but everyone who came up the stairs to go on to the law school or on their way to the commons area to have a bite to eat, study, or meet their friends. We were closer to the faculty in delivering materials to them. We saw people non-stop, and for the outgoing Circulation staff that was a real plus. During this transitional period I think the administration did a wonderful job providing for all of us as best they could. We in Circulation were blessed." However, not all remembrances of this period were positive. As Anita said, "There was a lot of noise during the construction. Behind my desk in the ante room to the current library is where they mixed the paint. Sometimes the vapors came through the wall." Janet noted further that "[W]e missed a sense of personal space, located on the landing between the Commons area and the old building under construction. However, we can't complain because we really had a lot of space compared to some people. We each had our own desk but those desks were side-by-side



ABOVE:
Anita at
one of the
desks in

the old law library (top photo) and the temporary Circ desk set up at the top of the stairs during renovation, in front of what are now the main doors to enter the library (middle and below photos).



with a walk way between them just about the size of a person. We look back in amazement and realize that three of us worked there plus our student workers. It was just a really small space!”

With the Biolchini Hall renovation there have been many welcome changes, from technology upgrades and increased work and study space to improved lighting. Anita said, “[I]t was a shock going from tiny little spaces to this big building. The new building is a real blessing.... In our new space we feel that planes could land on the runway approaching the Circulation desk. People not only see us as they come through the doors to the library they see the reference area immediately to their right. The layout is very good.” There are two independent offices now, one for the Daytime Supervisor, the other for the Head of Access Services, and two private work stations behind the Circulation area for the support staff with several additional spaces to accommodate student workers. It provides ample room for student training, interlibrary loan support activities, course reserve processing, and faculty special projects.

When the print collection was moved back into the renovated Kresge Law Library in the summer of 2010, it was the first time in decades that the entire library collection was housed under one roof. Titles that had been in storage at Hesburgh or in boxes off-site (in some cases, for decades) finally returned to the shelves! Mary coordinated the massive effort to shift and shelf-read some 300,000 volumes throughout the four floors to get everything back into order and ranges labeled with call numbers so patrons can locate materials in the stacks, a project that consumed many staff and student hours for more than eleven months. With all this new space there is also more access to the books since people can travel more easily between shelves, and there is sufficient width for wheelchair access at every level.

THE MANY HATS WORN BY ACCESS SERVICES STAFF

Interlibrary Loan (ILL) is a major service offered solely to the Notre Dame Law School community by Access Services (other members of the ND community have access to ILL services via Hesburgh Library). The process consists of a two-fold function: borrowing and lending. Carmela Kinslow oversees the entire service but she is the primary person involved with the borrowing aspect, assisted by Anita Lutz and a student worker. ILL borrowing is very active, providing the faculty with materials and information for their research, teaching needs, class resources, faculty publications, and journal notes. The bulk of ILL borrowing is devoted to the law school journals. In order for journal articles to be published they must meet the Harvard Blue Book standard for citation format and accuracy, which involves citation verification from books or other media submitted in PDF format or photocopied. Students are responsible for the editorial process, but ILL services support them in this endeavor by acquiring the sources that are not available in the law library, at the Hesburgh Library or in PDF format online.

During the 2009-2010 academic year, the monthly borrowing average was 125 titles borrowed from and 104 items loaned out to other libraries. According to Carmela Kinslow, the demand for interlibrary loan has greatly increased over the years. It is cyclical in nature, with the greatest number of requests during the academic year, dropping about 50% in the summer. Request for materials not available at Notre Dame can be [submitted electronically](#) or in person at the Circulation desk. Before engaging ILL services, Access Services staff search the law library catalog and other campus libraries for the desired material. Anita notes that “when these fail, the search usually begins with WorldCat [a large database containing the majority of books published in the United States that exist in circulating libraries today] because it generally identifies the different versions or editions and provides a descriptive publication profile, which is important to a student trying to cite a source but especially so when there are multiple prints from two different publishers in the same year.” If a title is not found locally, ILL staff look for another institution with the title in their collection. When an institution agrees to lend the material, confirmation of the agreement is electronically noted by the lender in OCLC, the Library of Congress (LOC) online catalog database, which includes LOC holdings as well as those of all the worldwide libraries that subscribe to it.

Janet Rose is primarily responsible for lending our library holdings to soliciting libraries. She is also responsible for the fees and photocopy expenses. Lending materials to other universities in Indiana is facilitated by the INFO Express Delivery Service for Indiana Libraries; a free delivery system to libraries throughout the state. Janet says, “[W]e are constantly working with our sister universities, the Valparaiso Law Library, IUSB, etc. As with other lending universities, the Kresge Law Library has restrictions on materials that govern what can be loaned, for how long, and under what conditions. Restrictions may state: ‘can only lend if it is for library use only,’ or in the case of a rare book they may say, ‘use only in-house.’”

Every aspect of ILL, an ongoing process with a very quick turnover, is a joint departmental activity with Janet, Anita, Mary, and Carmela filling in when needed in each other’s absence. “We make sure that when the materials arrive we process them, get them to the pa-



INTERLIBRARY LOAN

“Items come in from all over the world and are inspected to assure that what was received is what was requested. That often involves looking at the date of the book, verifying the edition, finding the desired citation, and then notifying the patron upon receipt. When the patron is done with the material we ship it back. It is a complex procedure because we have so many of them.”

-Anita Lutz

Continued on next page . . .

tron as fast as possible, and when they are done with them we see to it that they are returned to the lender. Most other universities do the same for us," Janet says. With the upcoming installment of ILLIAD 8, Access Services staff is excited that the ILL service will be even more streamlined and greatly enhanced.

"We used to limit the use of a room to 2 hours, but now as a result of student requests the time was extended to 4 hours."
 -Mary Cowser

STUDY ROOM RESERVATIONS

Since the renovation study rooms have expanded from 4 to 27 with occupancy capacities ranging from 2 to 6 people. These rooms, available for four hour loan periods, are also excellent spaces for practicing oral deliberations and mock interviews. Reservations can be made in person or online via the [Study Room Reservations](#) page. Mary says that "the study room schedule is always up on our terminal [behind the Circ desk] and we look at it non-stop the whole time the library is open." When there are no conflicts, reservations are confirmed. Due to the high

demand, students must make reservations within a 7 day period, giving enough lead time to ensure room availability when needed. Approval for room reservations placed twice in one day or in advance of a 7 day period, such as Career Services, which can reserve study rooms a year in advance for interviews, comes under the discretion of the Department Head Carmela Kinslow.

DOCUMENT DELIVERY

Document Delivery is provided up to 10:00 p.m. to faculty, staff, and visiting scholars. It includes photocopying desired materials in addition to delivering and retrieving requested materials within the law school and elsewhere. Document Delivery requests for

law school materials are received via email from professors in the Business School, the Kroc Institute, and the English Department, but most deliveries and retrievals are conducted with the Hesburgh library, and on occasion the Architecture library, with courier service to the Legal Aid Clinic located on Howard Street. Access Services is very conscientious about document delivery here on campus with a stated goal of a 24-hour turnover, but usually turn around time is far less than that.

Did you know...?

Proxy cards you can use at the Hesburgh library are available at the Circulation desk for use by journal students.



Hesburgh library proxy cards are available at the Circulation desk to journal students, librarians, and student workers conducting Document Delivery service. Formerly, the journal students had to check books out from the Hesburgh library using their personal ID cards. Now with the proxy card they can check out books and not be personally responsible for any fines, late fees, or recalls. By using a proxy card the journals are responsible for the materials checked out and the Access Services department is the contact for the Hesburgh Library rather than the individual students.

The law library receives numerous books as gifts at the Circulation desk from several sources. Not only do the professors donate books from their personal libraries but so do individual patrons, as well as publishers who constantly send books that students can use in their classes. All the incoming materials not retained in our collection become part of the Kresge Law Library Gift Program with [Better World Books](#). Anita Lutz maintains the "gift list" and gives it to Sandra Klein (the Collection Development Librarian) for retention or discard decisions before shipping them out.

GIFT PROCESSING

STATISTICS

Every question, request, and service provided by Access Services is noted as a statistic and compiled into an annual report. Books are charged

out through the Millennium system which automatically tabulates that data, but statistics are also gathered separately for ILL borrowing and lending, shelving, document delivery, the number of journals requested, materials checked in, and all directional queries including the location of books, the computer lab, restrooms, and the water fountain. Even head counts are gathered by student workers while making "walk-arounds" throughout the building three times a day to record usage of the library spaces. Carrel checks are also a regular procedure for the Access Services staff, to look for books that are not checked out and reported as missing from the shelves. When students cannot find a book and they notify Circulation staff, searches will be done for them throughout the library, including carrel checks. Missing books are tracked and attempts are made to locate them for a year before being considered for replacement, unless they are copies belonging to the Reference, Reserve, or "Core" collection in the Main or East reading rooms. Anita Lutz compiles all statistical data on a spreadsheet that goes to the Library Director Ed Edmonds after Carmela Kinslow evaluates the content.

LOST AND FOUND

There are two locations for Lost and Found items. One is held behind the Circulation desk in Access Services and the other is at the Office of Student Services in the Law School. Hats, key chains, umbrellas, etc., dropped off at the Office of Student Services eventually come to the Circulation desk if they are not picked up by their owner. However, items of greater value (e.g., laptops and cell phones) stay in the Office of Student Services for retrieval. During the evenings and weekends the Circulation desk is the only Lost and Found location open.

Continued on next page . . .

COURSE RESERVES

Faculty place textbooks and course materials on Course Reserve for student use.

The normal loan period for such materials is two hours. However, the length of time can be extended to 24 hours or even 7 days depending on the number of copies available and the number of students needing the material. The length of time faculty chooses to place items on Reserve varies; sometimes the placement is permanent or just for a semester. Items are usually placed on Reserve in lieu of the students having to buy the materials.

Mary Cowser is responsible for all the materials on Course Reserve. Many items aside from those that faculty members have asked to be placed on Reserve are also available in the Reserve Room, which is located behind the Circulation desk. For example, hard copies of practice exams and more than one hundred-forty popular movies are available. The movies, on VHS, DVD or Blu-Ray, are loaned for three days and include titles such as *Bee Movie*, *The Chase*, *To Kill A Mockingbird*, *My Cousin Vinny*, *Citizen Kane*, and many more, as well as the most popular title of all: *How to Take a Law Exam*. Also available on DVD are faculty members' taped classes and the National Institute of Trial Advocacy (NITA) video collection. Trial Advocacy exhibit posters produced by the NITA are also held in the Reserve Room for moot court and trial competitions. Exhibit posters can be checked out for a semester on a first come, first serve basis. There are several copies since multiple students work on the same case, and in all there are about 125 different posters.

As you can see, those in the Access Services department wear many hats, and perform a veritable juggling act while striving to keep all their patrons happy and informed about library resources and policies. Mary Cowser acknowledged that, "You have to be a special kind of person to be able to work in public services; one who is patient, friendly, outgoing, understanding, and compassionate." Janet, in turn, asserted that "[O]verall I think we have a good group here. We seem to work well together in terms of teamwork with Mary and Carm overlooking everything." Anita admitted, "[G]enerally, we hear nothing but good things about us; that we are pleasant and easy to deal with and that we try to help everyone in any way that we can."

-Susan Hamilton

Library updates directly to your inbox!



Have you noticed something new in your inbox from the Kresge Law Library? In April, we began publication of the *Law Library E-News*, delivered straight to your inbox. Every other week (content permitting) we will be sending out announcements and other information from the law library via this e-newsletter format. We know you all lead busy lives, so each issue will simply be a summary of a few important points, with links to more information if you need it. Be sure to check the e-news out for important information like study room

reservation policies ([April 19th issue](#)), past exams available for review ([April 19th issue](#)), and announcements of new library materials ([April 5th issue](#)). In addition to receiving these messages in your inbox, all issues will be [archived online](#).

Haven't received an e-newsletter yet from the library?

Please [e-mail us](#) and we'll make sure we have your e-mail address on our list!

10 Things You Can Find Behind the Circ Desk

... that you may not have even known about

1. **Books on "Course Reserve"**
...Handpicked by your professors and available for short loans or copying only.
2. **Loaner laptops**
... Available for check-out year-round and especially popular during exam times for Bluebook exams.
3. **Practice exams**
... Ask to see a list of past exams from various faculty members you can use to help prepare for your finals.
4. **Popular movies on DVD**
... looking for a study break? "The Mighty Ducks" and so much more are available for 3-day loans! See a list of DVDs available [here](#).
5. **Video cameras**
... want to film something of your own? Digital camcorders are available for check-out as well.
6. **Trial Advocacy exhibit posters**
... for your next moot court competition, these might come in handy.
7. **Scanner**
... capable of converting a print article into PDF format in a matter of seconds. Need I say more?
8. **Father Mike Talent Shows**
... looking for inspiration or just a good laugh? Check out past performances from the Father Mike Show on video!
9. **Lost and found**
... Missing something and think you may have left it in the library? Just ask!
10. **Fax machine**
...Thought you had to walk over to LaFortune to send a Fax? Think again!