

Research studies indicate that there is a positive correlation between library usage and student performance.¹ The former encompasses materials either accessed online, or physical items checked out from the library. This suggests that there is an active and integral role that the faculty and staff of FIU Libraries have in the retention and graduation rates of our students. As the SUS moves towards the implementation of performance based funding, FIU must leverage all of its assets – that includes the Libraries – to achieve its goals. The Libraries can play a significant part in achieving the university’s goals that pertain to improving graduation rates and achieving organizational efficiencies.

The reach of FIU Libraries extends throughout every academic program and some research institutes across the university. It does so by means of the resources it either acquires or produces, and through the various information services provided such as our information literacy instruction program or our interlibrary loan service. Limited to our robust print, electronic and digital collections alone our students, faculty and staff access to well over four million items of information in our Librarians. If we include our resource sharing services - i.e., Interlibrary loan, document delivery, etc. - the amount of resources accessible to our users becomes almost limitless. Our Library faculty serve as subject liaisons and each academic program throughout the university has its own library subject liaison providing discipline faculty with a direct conduit to the resources they need in their discipline area. We continue to invest in web-based resources that extend access to information beyond the walls of our building so that our on-campus and at a distance users have equitable and ubiquitous access to the information they need when they need it.

The importance of information resources and information literacy skills and the Libraries’ role in the teaching and learning processes occurring across our university graduates should be underscored. The significance of the latter is illustrated by successful collaborations that pair critical thinking and information literacy skills development such those at the University of Cincinnati and Washington State University.² The Liberal Education and America’s Promise (LEAP) initiative by the Association of American Colleges and Universities includes critical thinking and information literacy in its Essential Learning Outcomes.³ Currently, the FIU Libraries is working towards fully integrating in the university’s QEP, Global Learning for Global Citizenship.⁴ The success of this venture places FIU in a position to be able to explore a new pedagogical framework within its core curriculum to produce university graduates that are “critical thinkers who can communicate effectively.”

The Libraries has been actively promoting scholarly communications and specifically open access publishing for some time. This initiative has stemmed from our investment in an institutional repository (IR) that has primarily been used to preserve and provide digital access to our graduate theses and dissertations, but has the capability and the capacity to become a means for the university to facilitate the production of knowledge from faculty as well. Recently, the Libraries has worked with a number of academic schools to transition their print materials to an online environment that will promote the access and reach of these FIU publications on a global scale.⁵ This is a scalable product that could eventually be used as our university press. Imagine the branding potential and promotion power this content management system could provide should the university adopt it as its primary portal to university research and publications. Consider the operational efficiencies that this CMS could provide to the university (and to faculty) in the production and preservation of research publications.

Unlike any other campus entity, the FIU Libraries is uniquely positioned as the epicenter of the teaching, learning and research that occurs at our university. Through the delivery of services and collections, it interconnects our faculty, students, staff and external stakeholders - our university

community. As an institution, we should seek ways to leverage this asset as means to achieving our performance goals and to assure that we remain a *Worlds Ahead* institution.

¹ Bell, S. J. (2014). Retention Matters, But It's Not the Only Thing That Counts. *Information*

² Washington State University. Washington State University's Critical Thinking Project. Retrieved from <http://wsuctproject.wsu.edu/>. Accessed on March 11, 2014; University of Cincinnati, Critical Thinking International, Inc. Retrieved from <http://www.criticalthinkinginternational.org/>.

³ Association of American Colleges & Universities, "*Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP)*". Accessed on March 7, 2014. (<https://www.aacu.org/leap/>).

⁴ Bright, K., Askew, C., Dottin, C., Driver, L. & Pearson, G. (2013). A Proposal to Embed the Development of Critical Thinking & Information Literacy Skills into the FIU QEP Global Learning Curriculum: A Collaboration with the FIU Libraries. Retrieved from <https://library.fiu.edu/about-us/publications-resources>.

⁵ See http://digitalcommons.fiu.edu/peer_review_list.html.