



TWENTY YEARS OF ACADEMIC LIBRARIANSHIP IN GHANA: THE UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES LIBRARY'S EXPERIENCE

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Abstract

This paper traces the history of the University for Development Studies (UDS) Library from its inception in 1993 to its present status after twenty years of existence. The important role the UDS Library has played in the enhancement of information provision in supporting teaching, learning, research and knowledge dissemination of the University and the assistance to the surrounding communities, the region and the nation as a whole are highlighted. Challenges encountered and how they were surmounted are also discussed extensively. The paper relies heavily on historical documentation and recollections of personal experiences of people associated with the University and the Library. Achievements chalked have been discussed and recommendations proffered on the way forward.

Introduction

Academic libraries worldwide, in a bid to support teaching, learning, research and knowledge dissemination are at the forefront of providing information services to their users who mainly consist of students, lecturers and researchers. This situation is not much different from what pertains in Africa. Over time, scholars have emphasized the crucial role academic libraries play in scholarship and research in institutions of higher learning. This important role of academic libraries is further emphasized by Bappah (2011) who indicates that many times academic libraries are referred to as the heart or nerve centres of institutions of higher learning where all academic activities revolve.

An academic library, Chowdhory (2006) states is a library that is attached to an academic institution above the secondary level, serving the teaching and research needs of students and staff. The basic function of the academic library is to assist and support the study and teaching that goes on in the academic institution (Chowdhory, 2006).

The University for Development Studies Library in Ghana is one such academic library which was set up to attend to the information needs of faculty and students when the University for Development Studies was set up twenty years ago.

The University for Development Studies (UDS) was established in May 1992 by PNDC Law 279 to blend the academic world with that of the community in order to provide constructive and meaningful interaction between the two for the total development of Northern Ghana, in particular, and Ghana as a whole. It began academic work in September 1993 with the first batch of thirty-nine (39) students admitted into the Faculty of Agriculture.

The University's principal objective is to address and find solutions to the environmental problems and socio-economic deprivations that have characterized northern Ghana in particular and are also found in some rural areas throughout the rest of the country.

The University for Development Studies has steadily grown over the years, and now operates four (4) satellite campuses spread out in the three (3) Northern Regions of Ghana. That is Wa Campus (Upper West Region), Navrongo Campus (Upper East Region) and Tamale and Nyankpala Campuses (Northern Region).

Presently there are both bachelors, and graduate programmes in the Social Sciences and Sciences run by the eight Faculties and two Schools of the

University. The current student population stands at about twenty thousand (University for Development Studies, 2012).

As stated in the vision of the University, it is "to be a home of world-class pro-poor scholarship"; the University therefore strives to ensure that there are intellectual and pragmatic inputs into the developmental processes of the poor, disadvantaged and the marginalized areas and people of the country and beyond.

Accordingly, the combination of its location and its vision makes the University for Development Studies ideally placed to be partnered with any organization (s) in addressing environmental challenges. The University also equips its products with requisite knowledge to enable them to live and function in any deprived community.

UDS is unique compared to other public universities in Ghana in the following ways:

1. Its location and multi campuses are spread out in rural northern Ghana where the incidence and depth of poverty is high.
2. Its vision is pro-poor aimed at addressing the conditions and structural causes of poverty.
3. The UDS has four (4) campuses, eight (8) Faculties, two (2) Schools including a Medical School, and three (3) centers of excellence spread over three regions in the northern part of Ghana. There is also a School of Research and Graduate studies which coordinates post graduate programmes.
4. The UDS also runs a community-technical interface programme. This is a combination of the academic and community-based field practical work known as the Third Trimester Field Practical Training Programme (TTFPTP), which is an essential part of the curriculum.

This write-up is an up-date of an earlier paper titled "University for Development Studies Library: The first seven years" which designates the set-up of the UDS Library from May 1, 1992 when the Librarian

assumed duty to April 30, 2012 when twenty years' of academic library management had been carried out.

Methodology

The paper analyzes the development of the UDS Library by using historical documentation and interviews with key people such as the first University Librarian who happens to be presently at post and other staff of the University and the Library who started with the Library from its inception. Through these interviews, personal experiences and events from the developmental stages of the University were recounted by the interviewed people. The interviews consisted of open-ended questions and this made it possible for the researchers to gather as much information as was needed. The information gathered from these interviews were cross-checked with documented evidence. Fortunately, the Library kept track of challenges it was confronted with in the various sections of the Library and the successes it has achieved in information provision in supporting teaching, learning and research as well as community development, especially of communities surrounding the university and this therefore made the cross-checking easy.

Purpose of the Study

This study aims at tracing the history of the UDS Library from its inception in 1993 to its present status after twenty years of existence. The paper further seeks to avail to its readers the important role the UDS Library has played in the enhancement of information provision in supporting teaching, learning, research and knowledge dissemination of the University and the assistance to the surrounding communities, the region and the nation as a whole.

All facets of the Library are examined and developments made documented, all in a bid to expand the frontiers of knowledge and to act as a guide to academic libraries of new emerging universities.

University Librarian

The Library plays a crucial role in the achievement of the objectives of any university. The International Federation of Library Associations

and Institutions (IFLA, 2000) asserts this by positing that university libraries are indispensable to the functioning of universities and the achievement of their academic missions. As a result, academic library management involves many functions and processes that are all directed towards the attainment of the objectives of the academic institution (Chowdhury, 2006). It is therefore important that the person appointed to the position of University Librarian of any university library should be experienced, dedicated, and competent and one who has a long term vision and can do the job. This becomes more pertinent when establishing a new library from the scratch. Thompson and Ibrahim (2001), using references from third generation university libraries in Nigeria observe that the caliber of the person selected to head a new University Library could affect the growth of the library positively or negatively.

The UDS management holding the view that experienced people were needed to establish the structures that were required to be in place before the first batch of students were admitted identified the present Librarian who was then at the University of Cape Coast. He was subsequently seconded to build the UDS Library from May 1993.

The person thus appointed to this position, Alhaji Ibrahim Kwabena Antwi was a pioneer staff of the Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University Library, Bauchi in Nigeria, where he rose to the status of Deputy University Librarian in 1989 and acted as University Librarian from 1990 to 1991. He had also been a Visiting University Librarian to the University of Education, Winneba in 1998, and had worked as a staff of key university libraries both in Ghana and Nigeria. He had previously worked at the Balme Library of the University of Ghana, Legon and at the time of his appointment, was a staff of the University of Cape Coast.

Since his appointment, Alhaji Antwi has successfully built the structures needed for the operations of a University Library and has as well established a multi campus library system involving four campus libraries spread over three administrative regions in Ghana.

His dedication to librarianship and his mission at UDS saw him facilitating a number of workshops in

UDS (Antwi, 2013) and various other tertiary institutions on fundamentals of getting published in scholarly journals.

Alhaji Antwi has been involved in consultancies for polytechnics at Ho, Wa and Sunyani, all in Ghana.

In recognition of his dedication, hard work and immense contribution to the advancement of UDS Library and consequently the University as a whole, the University Council gave him a two year extension of his contract after his retirement in 2011 to continue the good work he had started.

Thus, the calibre and experience of the person appointed was deemed impeccable and it was such a person the future of the Library was entrusted to.

ACCOMMODATION

The Library provides services to the four campuses on which the faculties are sited. The campuses are Nyankpala where we have the Faculties of Agriculture (FOA), Renewable Natural Resources (FRNR) and Agribusiness and Communication Sciences; Navrongo where we have the Faculty of Applied Sciences (FAS), and Faculty of Mathematical Sciences (FMS); Wa where we have the Faculty of Integrated Development Studies, (FIDS), Faculty of Planning and Land Management (FPLM) and School of Business and Law and in Tamale where we have the School of Medicine and Health Sciences, Faculty of Education and the Graduate School.

With prudent management and careful planning, the UDS Library Complex which started in a temporary structure and which could seat only thirty users at a time now has two purpose built libraries, one at the Tamale campus and the other at the Nyankpala Campus; a refurbished workshop was converted into a library with a seating capacity of three hundred at the Navrongo Campus, and another purpose built library with an estimated seating capacity of one thousand is under construction at the Wa Campus. It is envisaged that this project will be completed by December 2015 and become a fully operational library by the beginning of the 2015/2016 academic year. With the completion of all these structures with their requisite supply of

furniture and equipment, it is envisaged that the entire library will seat over 3,000 patrons at a time.

It is worth mentioning that the Tamale and Navrongo campuses' libraries are fully air-conditioned, thus providing an ideal environment for reading even during the long, hot dry seasons. Plans for the air-conditioning of the Nyankpala and Wa campuses' libraries are underway.

The desire of the Library Management at ensuring that the University maintains a simple, flexible and functional library is gradually coming into fruition.

Collection Development

The Library was set up from the scratch and it has a written collection development policy. The total number of books accessioned by May, 2013 was 44,000 volumes representing an annual growth rate of 2000 volumes. These include books purchased and those received through exchanges and donation.

Through the Teaching and Learning Innovation Fund (TALIF), an initiative of the Government of Ghana and the International Development Association (IDA) of the World Bank Group, the Library was able to significantly improve its collection in 2008. The TALIF project enabled the Library to purchase books to the tune of two hundred thousand US dollars. This has so far been the single biggest purchase of books since the set-up of the Library.

There have been other smaller purchases of books and other educational materials over the years. These are often based on recommendations from the respective faculties. It is worth mentioning that emphasis is placed on newer faculties and faculties with weaker subject coverage with regards to the collection.

The collection was further enhanced by a donation of 35,000 volumes of books by Beaverton Rotary Club of the USA to the UDS Library and schools within its catchment area in 2012. This also happened to be the single biggest donation to the Library by any organization or individual. From this donation, about 3,500 volumes were found appropriate and were thus duly processed and added to the stock of the Library's holdings. The Library has over time been able to attract substantial

donations from individuals and organizations within and out of the University.

In spite of the significant purchases made from the TALIF purchases, the acquisitions records available indicate that donations still constituted more than fifty percent of the collection. As stated earlier by Thompson and Ibrahim (2001), a library which cannot obtain a majority of its publications from its budget is not likely to develop a balanced collection since donations should only complement collection building efforts

Presently the Library subscribes to reputable and regular academic journals published in Ghana. This is an improvement on the situation after seven years when there were no journal subscriptions at all.

It is worth mentioning that the collection is further boosted by providing users access to online academic databases like EbscoHost and Emerald through the UDS Library's membership of the Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Ghana (CARLIGH); the UDS Library's membership of CARLIGH enables the Library have access to over 7,000 journal titles in different databases. Users also have access to ScienceDirect through a donation by the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT). There are other subscriptions to databases such as AGORA, HINARI, OARE and TEEAL.

Information Literacy

The UDS invests substantially in the Library so as to ensure the continued provision of vital support to the research, teaching, learning and outreach roles of the University (Barr, 2012). This investment can only be justified if the Library ensures that the resources are used and that the contributions the Library makes to the University are fully appreciated. Barr (2012) asserts that demonstrating value is key if libraries are to be able to continue to claim their share of institutional funding.

Thus the Library needs to ensure that its resources are fully utilized by faculty, staff and students. This is in line with the optimal aim of any academic library which is to acquire, organize, preserve, and disseminate information to its users. To ensure the effective use of these resources, there is the need for information literacy programmes for its users. Such programmes prepare and equip library users to make effective use of the resources.

The Library has therefore posted a copy of its “Library Guide” as well as a list of available and accessible academic e-resources on the Library link of the UDS website (www.uds.edu.gh). This “Library Guide” is primarily to assist freshers and other first time users of the Library on available services and facilities as well as to facilitate ease of use of the Library’s resources.

At the commencement of every academic year, there is a one-week orientation of students. The University Librarian or his Representative is expected to address students on services of the Library, their relevance and ways of using them to maximize studies. Because there are presently four campuses, Campus Librarians on the respective Campuses perform this function on behalf of the University Librarian. The students then undertake a guided tour of their Campus Library, during the tour, services available, the importance of the catalogue, the use of the e-resources and all other pertinent issues that might crop up are explained to them. The students are then formally registered so they can have unimpeded access to all services and resources of the Library.

There used to be a compulsory credit earning course on English Language and Communication Skills for all fresh students of the University. Section Three of that course was on Information Retrieval and it was taught by the Library. The purpose was to prepare the freshers to be better users of the University Library and other information sources and to also equip them with life-long learning and information seeking skills. During the past three academic years however, this portion of the course has not been taught because of constraints of time, over-loaded courses and excess credit-hours.

Attempts are however being made by the Library to mount an information literacy course to all freshmen and women of the University. It is envisaged that as a result of the afore-mentioned constraints, this course will initially be a non-credit earning course until such time that the constraints are overcome.

Library Cooperation

No single library, no matter its size can fully and adequately meet all the information needs of its

clientele. This situation has been further compounded by the digital revolution which has greatly increased the possibilities for resource sharing and changed the shape of those activities among libraries (Ossai, 2010). Academic libraries of today have therefore become increasingly dependent on shared technical expertise and external sources of information.

In a study on cooperative ventures among academic libraries in Nigeria, Anasi and Hussaini (2012) identified potential areas of cooperation among academic libraries as exchange of personnel, interlibrary lending, and joint financing of mutually beneficial projects such as access to electronic resources.

It is in recognition of this that the UDS Library Management from the onset decided to cooperate with other academic libraries, nationally and internationally. The intention for the cooperative ventures was to complement the inadequate resources of the UDS Library.

The UDS Library is an active and paid - up member of the Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Ghana (CARLIGH). By virtue of its membership of CARLIGH, the UDS Library benefits from training, in the form of workshops, for its staff, joint financing of licenses to different electronic resources as well as other mutually beneficial ventures.

The Librarian and one of his Senior Assistants are members of the Committee of University Librarians and their Deputies (CULD). Membership of CULD ensures that the Library has a platform on which it shares and learns from the experiences of other leaders of other public university libraries in Ghana. The relevance of this is seen in the words of Moropa (2010) when he intimates that academic libraries, like their parent organisations exist in a dynamic environment. They are largely dependent on the situation/status of the university and diverse changes have an impact on them.

The UDS Library has benefitted greatly through cooperative ventures. This has enabled the Library to receive valuable publications through either donations or exchange. Cooperation has also enabled the Library to have access to a reputable online resource like ScienceDirect, which is a

donation to the Library by the Royal Netherlands Institute (KIT). Staff have also benefitted by way of attending workshops and seminars mostly organized by CARLIGH and CULD as well as attachments to older, more established university libraries for the acquisition of needed expertise.

Inter-Library Lending and Document Delivery

In the opinion of Kargbo (2001), the academic library is a centre of learning which exists primarily to serve the needs of members of its own institution. In fulfilling this primary function, the aims and objectives of academic libraries include co-operating with other libraries in and outside the country through exchange and inter-library loans.

Inter-library Lending and Document Delivery (ILL&DD) service is one of the services provided by the UDS Library complex. With this service, the UDS Library contacts specific libraries within and outside Ghana to borrow materials that are not available within UDS for her users. Some libraries in the UK and Denmark are in collaboration with the UDS to provide photocopies of materials in this regard.

Status of Librarians

Ghanaian university librarians, like their counterparts the world over are expected to contribute to the attainment of the vision, mission and overall goals of the mother institution. As a result, librarians perform functions which are both academic and professional, all aimed at enriching the academic programmes of the university. In that vein, librarianship should have been considered wholly as an academic profession. This is because librarians basically deal with the selection, collection, organization, and transmission of knowledge. In Nigeria, as in many other universities worldwide, this debate has long been resolved. Salaam and Onifade (2009) confirm this when they state that the question of whether librarians in Nigerian universities should be accorded academic status has been settled in Nigeria since 1993.

In Ghana however, this question is yet to be resolved despite the fact that Lamptey and Agyen Gyasi (2010) indicate that academic librarians have similar requirements for promotion and enjoy

similar remuneration like the other academic staff in the faculties or research institutes. Academic assessment is based in general on research output, which is based in turn on publication.

Antwi (1993), who has conducted some studies on the status of librarians in universities in Ghana has reported that there is no uniformity in the status accorded librarians in Ghanaian universities and that the status accorded librarians differs from one university to the other. For example whereas librarians at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology and the University for Development Studies are accorded full academic status, their counterparts at the University of Cape Coast, University of Education, Winneba and University of Mines and Technology are deemed professional and are as such not accorded academic status. The situation is made more complex where at the University of Ghana, only librarians with higher academic qualifications (MPhil and above) may apply to be accorded academic status, all other librarians are considered as professional staff.

This situation, though murky, shows a vast improvement over what pertained ten years ago.

The Library Staff

The staff strength of the Library at the end of December 2013 was 82. The Library has increased its operations immensely. It is presently operating at Nyankpala, Tamale, Navrongo and Wa Campuses respectively. It is also providing more services than it has ever done before. The staff at post now include nine librarians, 21 Para-professionals (two Para-professionals are on study leave), 20 junior Library Assistants, (three on study leave), two Bindery Assistants, one Printing Assistant, two Administrative Assistants, two Typists, one Messenger/cleaner, three Campus Guards, two Drivers and 11 Labourers.

Staff Development

With the emergence of the digital environment, libraries are being pushed to build the capacity of their staff to operate in the digital environment if they are to continue to remain relevant to their respective institutions. As Ajidahun (2007) indicates, the presence of staff development determines the success of any enterprise and the absence of it could spell doom for such an institution. Salaam and Onifade (2009) also buttress

this when they state that to excel in the evolving digital environment, university libraries in Nigeria have no alternative to capacity building. Staff development, Yesufu (2000) opines, enhances productivity and serves as a useful means of upgrading the human intellect and skills for productive employment. In view of this, Management of the UDS Library has made staff development a priority from its inception.

Staff development can take diverse forms. IFLA (2000) states that staff development may be in the form of pre-professional education, in-service training or as continuing education. More often, it is given in short courses and workshops, or at professional meetings.

The Management of UDS Library have adopted short courses, workshops, attachments, professional seminars and in-service training on one hand and continuing education on the other in its staff development efforts. Various staff of the Library have been sponsored nationally and internationally to attend different workshops and seminars.

By virtue of being a member of CARLIGH and the Ghana Library Association, staff have attended diverse workshops organised by these bodies. Membership of CULD has also ensured that staff are able to attend the biennial professional seminars organised by CULD. Almost all Senior staff and Senior Members have attended one or the other workshop or seminar, nationally and internationally. The Management of the UDS Library have also used attachments to older, more endowed academic libraries for staff development. This is especially so, when a specific organisational need is established. Staff identified as having the potential to easily acquire the needed skills and expertise are sent to understudy systems and personnel in other academic libraries with the requisite staff and facilities. This, Eze (2012) affirms is one of the effective ways of developing staff.

More significantly however is the continuing education opportunities given to staff. This has accorded a number of staff the opportunity to rise through the ranks to become Senior Members. Almost all staff desirous of continuing their education are sponsored to do so, albeit on a quota and rotational basis.

These diverse training programmes have had a profound impact on staff development such that they have acquired skills and expertise to cope with the changing needs of users.

Representation on Boards and Committees

The University Librarian of UDS is by the statutes of the University a member of the Academic Board and also a member of the Executive Committee of the Academic Board. He is also a member of the Library, Publications and Bookshop Boards and also a member of the Vice-Chancellor's Management team which meets weekly to appraise developments within the University.

To ensure that the Library keeps abreast with developments at the faculty level, the Librarian or his nominee is also represented on all Faculty Boards within the University. This ensures that faculties are also informed about new developments in the Library. This representation of the Library at the Faculty level is unique as it makes it the only public University Library in Ghana with representation at the Faculty level. This is a progressive development which needs to be replicated in other public University libraries in Ghana.

The Library participates in the governance of the University through the Committee system. The University Librarian as well as other senior staff of the Library serve on different committees in the University. Through this, it becomes possible for the Library to influence policies. The Library uses such opportunities, when necessary to articulate its needs, programmes and challenges (Thompson and Ibrahim, 2001).

Library Publications

Academic libraries need to ensure that the contributions they make to the university are fully appreciated. As a result, the UDS Library has two major publications – the *Library Guide* which aims at assisting users maximize the resources of the Library and the *Library Bulletin* which was to highlight major developments in the Library.

The UDS Library Guide was first produced in April, 1995 and it has since then been updated and produced annually. Registered users were each given a copy of the *Library Guide* at the beginning

of each academic year. Since the 2010/2011 academic year however, it has been online and print copies are no longer available for distribution to registered users. It is currently available at www.uds.edu.gh

The **Library Guide** provides instructions for finding and using information and other resources in the Library. This is in line with the maxim that no library service is complete without its guide which provides information about the resources and the way to make optimal use of them (Thompson and Ibrahim, 2001).

The second publication of the Library was the **Library Bulletin** which was first published in March, 1995 and was intended as a bi-annual publication. Copies of the issues were distributed to registered library users. The focus of this Bulletin was to provide bi-annual updates on the activities, facilities, and resources added in the previous year within the Library to keep the UDS community informed. Unfortunately however, this noble intention has been defeated since publication of the **Library Bulletin** has ceased basically because of staffing difficulties.

Electronic Support Unit

The Library now subscribes to many journals, both physical and electronic and has an Electronic Support Unit with a mandate to manage and maintain all electronic resources within the Library. The Unit also enables users to access TEEAL and other databases for free. The online databases available are AGORA, Emerald, JSTOR, EBSCOHOST, SCIENCEDIRECT, OARE, AJOL, HINARI, as well as a few open access databases.

The Library now has full Internet connectivity which allows library users make maximum use of the numerous databases the University subscribes to, thereby enhancing teaching, learning and knowledge dissemination. The connectivity is via wireless access which allows users to connect to the Internet without using network cables.

The Unit also provides photocopying and binding services for users to make copies of documents for the purposes of research, private study, criticism or review. The Unit is considering allowing wireless

printing where students can send print jobs from the portable computers by using WiFi technology

Besides the above, the Unit has the onerous duty of ensuring that all systems and equipment are maintained so as to adequately serve the purpose for which it was set up.

Institutional Repository

The Library has just established an Institutional Repository (IR) which is to serve as a platform for lecturers and the entire University community to upload their publications and other research work which will enable others to know what activities are going on in the University and thereby sharing knowledge with the outside world. This will go a long way to market the institution. Presently, a policy document regulating the management and operations of the IR has been approved by the Library Board and the Academic Board. The IR can be accessed at www.udsspace.uds.edu.gh. A Repository Management Committee has been set up to oversee the operations of the IR.

Library Automation

The past two decades have witnessed an unprecedented growth in information technologies and this phenomenon has greatly impacted on the information seeking behaviour of people (Khiwa, 2010). As a consequence of this, the work of academic libraries has also changed dramatically as they are forced to meet the changing needs of users. Academic libraries have had to automate their services and resources through appropriate ICT applications in order to remain relevant. The purpose of an automation project is to ensure that users of the Library have free, unimpeded access to a vast array of information resources.

Automation of a library basically aims at improving management of that library's resources, and Arkorful (2007) opines that although library automation is necessary and essential, it is however a very expensive and cost intensive enterprise.

It is as a consequence of these developments that the Management of UDS Library decided to automate its libraries. However, because of inadequacy of funds and the fact that some of the campus libraries were in temporary structures, it

was decided that the automation project should start at the Navrongo Campus Library.

The Library therefore through the Teaching and Learning Innovation Fund (TALIF) commenced the automation of the Navrongo Campus Library in June, 2010. This was completed and handed over in April 2011. The automation of the Navrongo Campus Library has so far resulted in the full automation of the cataloguing and circulation operations. This automation has brought a new facelift to the entire Navrongo Campus Library. As part of this project, a new circulation desk has been installed, an automated security system has also been installed and is functional and all books at the Navrongo campus Library have been provided with barcodes and captured into the system. Though not fully operational as a result of a few hitches, the aim of improving access to the Library's resources has been met.

Plans are now far afoot to automate the other campus libraries using KOHA, an open source software.

Scholarly Publishing

Academic libraries' role in promoting scholarly publishing in their mother institutions cannot be overemphasized since the state of scholarly publishing in any institution is said to be reflective of the rate of knowledge generation and research output. Taking cognizance of this, the University Librarian has actively participated and sometimes created the appropriate fora for staff of the University to get more involved in disseminating the outcome of their research through scholarly publishing. He has been actively involved in the organization of different seminars within the University and even nationally for mostly young lecturers and researchers.

He has also edited and been a member of Editorial Boards for a number of journals. He has encouraged his staff to publish and get involved in editorship of journals.

Above all, he has successfully instituted a bi-monthly seminar series for his staff. This forum creates a platform for staff to present their research work for improvement so they can get published in reputable journals.

Ghana Library Association's Programmes

The Library has played a leadership role in championing the cause of the Ghana Library Association (GLA) especially within the Northern Regions of Ghana, which happens to be the Library's catchment area.

The UDS Library has always been a paid up member of the Association and staff have been encouraged and sometimes sponsored to play active roles in the activities of the GLA. Staff of the UDS Library have always held Executive positions at the Regional level of the GLA. By so doing, the UDS library has helped in sustaining the GLA and its activities in the three Northern regions of Ghana. Presently all three appointed Regional Representatives of the GLA for the three Northern Regions are all staff of the UDS Library.

Training of Local Personnel

The Library in its bid to affect communities within its catchment area has trained and continue to train personnel who are in charge of community libraries within its catchment area. Such people are often identified by the local community. The UDS Library trains them over a period of three to six months on the rudiments of librarianship at no cost. Several communities have benefitted from these training programmes and personnel who are so trained are effectively manning the community libraries.

Problems

Recruitment, education and retention of librarians

There are numerous challenges facing academic libraries in Africa, Ghana and by implication the UDS library. The recruitment and retention of quality leadership in academic libraries is one of the core issues bordering many academic libraries currently in Ghana. The UDS library has only ten qualified librarians and six para-professionals. The rest of the staff are either graduates in other courses or non-degree holders. Ensuring that the training of new librarians and the retraining of existing librarians with the requisite skills and knowledge to manage new roles in this digital information age should be the main focus of academic libraries in Ghana. This is especially important in the teaching and library promotion roles since academic libraries now have to compete with other online information

providers. Many of the academic libraries in Ghana, UDS inclusive sponsor many staff to undertake continuing education programmes, yet they do not have any succession plan to ensure that there are well trained and highly competent people to take over from the leaders who would be retiring soon. Another problem related to this involves the relevance of the post-graduate programmes in librarianship in the country and the lack of diversity in the profession.

Role of the library in the academic setting

Even though the UDS Library organizes some information literacy instruction for its users as part of its role as a place for intellectual stimulation and the focal point of activity in the University, this is not adequate and more needs to be done by way of institutionalizing information literacy programmes in the academic curriculum of the University. This has become especially important because the university community, both students and faculty, do not fully realize the vital role the library plays in their academic successes. Again, there are now computer labs on the various campuses which are equally serving as information access points to users as such they turn more to those places than the Library.

Remote services support to students

The UDS Library is currently unable to effectively support its users because it is not fully automated and as such it is not online. As a multi-campus university, it is essential that users on the various campuses are able to access information from any of the campus libraries irrespective of their location. This has limited the Library in its information provision efforts since the Library is incapable of providing appropriate information instruction, services and resources to these users to meet their information needs.

Library funding

Considering the current state of the Ghanaian economy, funding of higher education and consequently academic libraries is reducing by the day. This obviously has an impact on academic library programmes and resources. Academic librarians would therefore need to be proactive so as to enable them acquire funding or sponsorship from outside the university or even the country. Without

such creative thoughts and actions academic libraries would not be able to provide their users with access to information resources which cost is rising precipitously. This therefore means that academic librarians would have to show the value they bring to their respective institutions to enable them convince university management for higher financial allocation to the library.

Conclusion

This write-up traces developments that have taken place at the UDS Library from the inception of the University to date. From a very humble beginning, the Library has grown over this short period of twenty years into a complex library spread over four campuses. Great strides have been achieved especially in the areas of staff development, accommodation, collection development and provision of access to digital resources. However, these strides made so far have not been without challenges. Numerous challenges have bedeviled the efforts of the Management of the University Library in their bid to transform the Library into a world-class information centre. Many of the challenges can be overcome, however there is the need for a clear vision and dedicated leadership to continue the good work that has already been started if the UDS Library is to maintain its relevance in this era of technology and resource – sharing.

Recommendations

Arising out of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- There is the need to have a recruitment and staff development policy which should be strictly adhered to.
- The UDS Library must continue to demonstrate to the entire university community that the Library continues to be the central point to their academic efforts by providing value added services.
- Automation of all Campus Libraries of UDS would make the Library stay relevant to its users.

- The UDS Library also needs to continually promote the values, skills and leadership of the library profession throughout all the campuses to ensure that people appreciate the pivotal role the Library plays in the achievement of the University's vision.
- There is a need to source for alternative funding to ensure that funding gaps are met.
- The University of Ghana's School of Library Studies needs to restructure some of its programmes to enable its products fit into this technological era.

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