

# Information Fluency in the Service of Community

## An ACS Grant Interim Report

steve phelan  
3/14/03

### Fall Meetings

#### **FRIENDS of the WEKIVA RIVER**

In September and October I met with the Friends of Wekiva River (FOWR) at Rollins two more times to gather all the materials for the archives, to evaluate their historical value, and to discuss the manner of the deposition of their records and studies to the Olin Library. Professor Zhang, the Director of Archives, took us on a tour of the Archives and Special Collections; board members were impressed with the security system and saw some of the techniques of preservation for photographs and other rare documents. Rare items from the Olin's Florida Collection were also on display.

These meetings culminated in discussion of a contract for the library deposition and the formulation of a set of principles to present to the full meeting of the Board in December. It was decided to make 1995 the cutoff for this initial deposition. Materials since that time are still largely in use and can be considered in subsequent years (on a five or ten year basis) when the collection is updated. The idea is to keep the size of the collection the same, and hence to add new materials when they supercede older ones. At the December 5th meeting, the FOWR Board unanimously approved the goals and proposals of our tentative agreement (see Appendix A). In the late spring when the collection is fully prepared for transfer to the College, a certificate of gift will be signed (Appendix B).

#### **WORKSHOP LUNCHEON**

In late October the four workshop presenters met over lunch to set forth the syllabus and especially to coordinate the schedule of workshops and the uses of the IT facilities. Blackboard has worked as a valuable intranet software package to bind the teacher planning and later the student project work. In this luncheon workshop, all we really needed to do was get everyone attuned to the Blackboard system for communication, discussion, and presentation of course materials. This was especially helpful for Bill Belleville, the off-campus workshop leader, and has made further meetings unnecessary.

Shortly after this meeting, Professor Zhang loaded up his extensive materials for IF workshops, complete with electronic tests to insure that students (and workshop co-leaders) were getting the instruction. This process has continued into the first half of the course and will be our best record for ACS colleagues to consider who wish to learn from our processes and mistakes.

#### **COURSE RECRUITMENT AND ENROLLMENT**

In the week before spring registration I sent the 35+ Honors students eligible to take the course a two page email describing how this years version of the course would be more

focused on Florida and the Wekiva River with full descriptions of the extended IF workshops and the opportunities for community service. Students were given links to the course syllabus on my web site and the FOWR web site where a previous Honors class had produced eight fine disciplinary studies. In the initial pre-registration we were excited because twenty-five students selected the course (they had another option to fulfill this requirement besides our class), but in the final analysis, only nine were able to fit this course into their schedules. This is largely a matter of my selection of a two o'clock time that would allow for field trips in the late afternoon.

### **COURSE PREPARATIONS**

Prior to the beginning of the term I completed the bibliography of studies, the list of file folders, and the list of audio/visual material for the students to take in hand (Appendix C). We purchased a new cabinet to match those in the archives front room, a set of filing boxes for the studies, and some acid-free folders to replace the old ones, sometimes rusty from paper clips with 20-years of oxidation. We have made the studies secure by pasting in security strips that will set off the alarm system at the Archives door.

For materials respecting the course, but not a part of the archives materials, I created a substantial reserve shelf at the circulation desk. This list has been growing throughout the term as events unfold, conferences and public meetings are attended, and valuable new materials are found (Appendix D).

Spring Term: The Course Begins

### **PRELIMINARY SURVEY OF INFORMATION FLUENCY SKILLS**

Early in the term we had the students fill out a questionnaire about their previous training for each of the workshops. Most of the students had some experience and were therefore not beginners, but we were able to identify which workshops should be geared toward the advanced skills and which needed special attention. One surprise of this survey was that the variety of six different majors in the course did not provide special education in the use of databases and on-line resources specifically for the major. The results of the survey were posted on the Blackboard for all to see.

### **WORKSHOPS AND THE PACE OF THE COURSE**

As the syllabus shows, the course has a path of substance conducted mostly in the Tuesday afternoon classes and a path of technology built up over the sequence of eleven Thursday workshops. With hindsight it is now evident that the problem of exposition of the concepts of the River Community, the history of Florida river literature, and the Wekiva River itself needed more time to gel and the some of the IT workshops would have been better postponed until the students had their own topics and materials to use for their projects as they were learning web page production, scanning, and power point.

The students were overloaded with materials from the FOWR and its archives in the first few weeks and after viewing the documentary film made by Bill Belleville and Bob Giguere began to formulate topics in their major fields relating to the Wekiva. With some discussion with me in conferences and some feedback from other FOWR members via email a solid set of topics was created by week six (Appendix E).

Most of these topics seem to relate well to the audience of homeowners and their associations, so that it seems quite likely now that the course projects will focus on a PR campaign for FOWR. A variety of materials will be developed specifically to engage the homeowners in the history of their own development. This will include what the builders, the FOWR, and the county commissioners wrangled over before the development ever took shape. This material will have a salutary effect because it will show that the FOWR has been working to create something more attuned to the river community than the Not In My Back Yard outrage that is usually the first way citizens get involved in local government.

#### **FINAL REPORT AT THE END OF MAY**

On May 16<sup>th</sup>, for the first time in its history, the FOWR will hold its annual banquet on the Rollins Campus; and if all goes well the document committing the archives to the Olin Library will be signed and celebrated. The students will have gone home for summer, but I will be presenting the array of materials and web site projects which the students have produced. Their web site and the Blackboard course work will then be opened to ACS members who wish to see how the IF course has gone and what it has produced. All this will be explained in our final report at May's end.

#### **Appendices**

- [Appendix A](#)
- [Appendix B](#)
- [Appendix C1](#)
- [Appendix C2](#)
- [Appendix D](#)
- [Appendix E](#)