

LIBRARY DOES ITS PART FOR STUDENT SUCCESS



Photo: Roger Aziz

The Library is generally regarded as the jewel in Dawson's crown, a serene and beautiful room with vaulted ceilings and ornate fixtures, but wired for the 21st century. It is often the place where visitors are taken to show off the superb marriage of new and old that exists within the College walls. The reaction of awe is consistent, whether it is expressed by a parent or a premier.

Perhaps less known is the work of the librarians to bring a level of knowledge to all students, across the board, for using this impressive facility. Below, in the words of librarian Faigy Grzeda, is an effective initiative launched by the Library to improve student use of the facilities and thereby improve student success.

The Mission

This semester, the librarians, in conjunction with the Humanities Department, developed a plan to introduce library resources and research skills to every Humanities 103 class. Our goal was to teach every first-year student basic competency in database and library catalogue searching. We believed that this would greatly contribute to the success of our students and it was in keeping with our Strategic Plan priorities.

The Background

In the past, the librarians gave library orientation presentations to several English and Humanities classes in the first semester, in response to individual faculty requests. We also gave more advanced research technique workshops in most of the Research Methods, Integrative Seminars, and Integrative Activity classes. As a result, although we had taught many students basic research skills, there were still many we had not reached. We were concerned that this latter group would go on to university without ever having used an academic library!

The Process

When we proposed our idea to Michael Smith, Chair of the Humanities department, in July, he was very positive and enthusiastic. We were somewhat overwhelmed by the sheer magnitude of the task of booking the classes and scheduling the librarians. However, with the much appreciated cooperation of the teachers, and our own dedicated focus on "delivering the goods", the process has proven to be quite successful.

The Outcome

As a result, a Library presentation has been given to every Humanities 103 class offered this semester. We have had very positive feedback from many teachers, claiming that the quality of the work handed in was greatly improved as a result of these sessions. We are optimistic that the success of this initiative will provide our students with the tools to succeed in their research projects in the future.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES WIN AWARDS FOR POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

The *Association québécoise des étudiants ayant des incapacités au postsecondaire* (AQEIPS) which aims to lend a helping hand to students with disabilities pursuing postsecondary studies have given scholarships to two recent Dawson graduates.

Natalie Martiniello, who graduated from Creative Arts, Literature and Languages and is now employed at Dawson at the Adaptech project, and Rosie Arcuri, who is now studying Psychology at Concordia, both received scholarships.

AQEIPS offers nine scholarships per year in recognition of the exceptional social engagement of its members, such as the *Centrale des syndicats nationaux et la Fédération nationale des enseignantes et enseignants du Québec* (CSN-FNEEQ), and the *Fédération étudiante universitaire du Québec*, which sponsored these two awards.

The scholarship program was designed to support financially students with disabilities as they often incur additional costs in their day-to-day lives.