


12-2015

## Connections, December 2015

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## December 2015

### RWU @ NERCOMP

DECEMBER 15, 2015 3:51 PM

Linda Beith from the Department of Instructional Design and Technologies recently presented on active learning spaces created at RWU at a recent Northeast Regional Computing Program (NERCOMP) event. The Active Teaching and Learning Spaces: Design, Development, Technology, Pedagogical Uses and Outcomes event was held on Friday, November 13, 2015 in Norwood MA. The all-day event featured five presentations from regional institutions, including the RWU presentation.

Linda's presentation was entitled Designing Learning Spaces to Support Active Learning and featured new and redesigned classroom spaces in GHH, MNS, and SAAHP as well as the new Mary Tefft White Cultural Center and multiple formal and informal group study spaces housed in GHH, the Library, GSB and Engineering buildings.

For more information on this event, including downloads of the presentations offered, please see the [NERCOMP event site](#).

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### RWU supporting Scholars at Risk

DECEMBER 11, 2015 1:23 PM

by Abby DeVeuve, Connections Intern

Students at Roger Williams University continue to work to make an impact on a global scale through the Advocacy Seminar, an experiential based course that stems from the university's relationship with Scholars at Risk (SAR), an NGO based in New York. The Advocacy Seminar bonds a student collaboration between RWU and SAR, based on the shared belief that intellectual freedom and freedom of speech is hallmark of a just society. As students whose higher pursuits are based on our rights to free expression, we believe it is our responsibility to support other thinkers and writers around the world who are having theirs denied.

To carry out this mission, every year the RWU/SAR students pick a case of a scholar that has been imprisoned for speaking his or her mind or writing about his or her ideas. Recently we worked on cases from Ethiopia and China, and we are currently on our 7th case. This year our team is working on the case of Mohammad Hossein Rafiee Fanood, a 70-year-old retired Tehran University chemistry professor. He was previously arrested in February 2001 on charges of "legal subversion," and spent six months in solitary confinement. He was sentenced to four years' imprisonment, but this sentence was never implemented. Because more than 10 years had passed, it can no longer be implemented. However, in 2015, his house was searched and his computers were seized. He was arrested in June 2015 without a warrant and is currently serving a six-year jail sentence on charges related to his blog posts and published articles. On his blog, Dr. Rafiee wrote about his support for the Nuclear Deal, but also called for improved human rights and the release of political prisoners—such criticisms of the government are taken very seriously in Iran. The charges against him include membership with an illegal group, propaganda against the regime through giving interviews to media outlets hostile to the Islamic Republic, issuing statements that threaten national security, and the use of television satellite equipment. Dr. Rafiee, and the entire Iranian population, do not benefit from the same freedom of speech enjoyed in the United States. He cannot criticize the government or talk about human rights in Iran without facing consequences from the government.

Dr. Rafiee is currently detained in Section 8 of the notorious Evin Prison. This section of the prison holds inmates that include drug traffickers and Somalian pirates. Poor prison conditions, including the lack of hygiene, inadequate medical provision, and poor nutrition, are affecting Dr. Rafiee's pre-existing health conditions including a heart problem, high blood pressure, a thyroid condition and a chronic allergy. Dr. Rafiee's daughter, Maryam, is concerned about her father's well-being, and is disturbed by the fact that the Iranian government does not appear to be following its own legal procedures in detaining her father.

The team working on Dr. Rafiee's case is led by Professor Adam Braver and currently consists of majors in Creative Writing, English Literature, Legal Studies, and Architecture, and welcomes students of any major to join. We are currently building the case by researching the Iranian legal and prison systems, learning more about Dr. Rafiee's situation, and speaking with members of other organizations working on Dr. Rafiee's case such as the American Chemical Society. We recently skyped with Maryam and learned more about the events leading up to her father's imprisonment and about a letter she drafted to be signed by scientists and sent to Iran. This letter was disseminated to science professors on the RWU campus to ask for their support of a fellow scientist and his right to freedom of speech and expression of ideas.

So what is next for the Seminar? After sufficiently having researched the case, next will begin our advocacy efforts. RWU SAR students focus on raising awareness within the RWU community through letter writing campaigns and social media. Advocacy efforts extend outside the campus through social media and trips to New York City to visit the SAR headquarters and to Washington, D.C. to gain the support of the U.S. government.

Please look for our current social media campaign on our Facebook page, RWU SAR: Scholars in Prison, and be sure to like the page for updates on Dr. Rafiee's case.

All students can participate in another ongoing campaign in which we are flooding the jail with mail by sending postcards to the prison where Dr. Rafiee is detained. The postcards let Dr. Rafiee's jailers know that his case has gained international attention. They also send the message that people care what happens to him and are watching for any further human rights violations. The more awareness we raise about Mohammad Hossein Rafiee Fanood's situation, the greater pressure Iran may feel to reconsider their hardline position.



 Tweet

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## Dr. Deekle goes to Washington

DECEMBER 4, 2015 1:02 PM

by Peter Deekle, Former Dean of University Libraries



Current and ongoing terrorism has prompted concerns for national security and military action. Meanwhile, however, human rights continue to be threatened in many countries. Reflecting this threat, *Scholars at Risk* began in the Human Rights Program of the University of Chicago in 1999. Since then, scores of universities have joined the Network and helped to defend hundreds of scholars around the world. Roger Williams University is among those network members, associated with its annual advocacy for intellectual freedom and, particularly, the case of individuals abroad who have been endangered because of their beliefs and scholarship. Since my Fall 2015 retirement as library dean I have been consulting with the National Peace Corps Association (NPCA) and also attended the House of Representatives Human Rights Commission briefing on Iran, chaired by Representative James P. McGovern, on October 29, 2015.



Stephen McInerney from the Project on Middle East Democracy moderated the briefing panel, featuring commentary by Dr. Ahmed Shaheed, UN Special Rapporteur on Iran, Dr. Roya Boroumand, of the Abdorrahman Boroumand Foundation, and Dr. Hadi Ghaemi, of the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran. All the panelists commented on the value of the pending nuclear arms agreement as a potential opportunity for the Iranian government to focus more attention internally on domestic issues and human rights. This prospect will be dependent in part on the outcome of next year's parliamentary elections. However, there was reported evidence of a continuing abuse of individual religious minorities, scholars, and other non-political persons, resulting in prolonged incarceration, restricted access to lawyers, assassinations, and an execution rate likely to exceed 1000 in 2015 (highest in the world). Commentators reported a systemic drug abuse problem, contributing to 70% of the current prison population. As Western economic sanctions ease and more business interests are encouraged, the panelists urged Western governments, including the United States, to maintain regulations recognizing compliance with ethical practices and the support of human rights.



I questioned whether academic or non-governmental institutions were increasing their collaboration with external international organizations; Drs. Shaheed and Boroumand stated that such outreach is circumstantial, at best, and largely involves individuals rather than entire agencies. Free press and scholarship remain under close scrutiny, and journalists are particular targets at present.



Since the 2009 uprisings in Tehran, a continuing crackdown on press freedoms has been evident. The recent case of detained and convicted [Washington Post](#) journalist, Jason Rezaian (who holds both US and Iranian citizenship) was cited first by Chairman McGovern and later by all three panelists as evidence of this condition, and the continuing strength of the Revolutionary Guard. Iran has sentenced detained Jason Rezaian to an unspecified prison term following his conviction in October on charges that include espionage.

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## Extended Library Hours

DECEMBER 3, 2015 2:23 PM



The Library has extended hours on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays until the end of the semester.

- December 4th – Extended Hours 7:30 AM to 12:00 AM
- December 5th – Extended Hours 10:00 AM to 12:00 AM
- December 6th – 10th Regular Hours 10:00 AM to 2:00 AM

December 11th – Extended Hours 7:30 AM to 12:00 AM

December 12th – Extended Hours 10:00 AM to 12:00 AM

Good luck on Exams and Final Projects!

The Library will be closed on the following dates in December: 19th, 20th, 24th, 25th, 26th, 27th, and 31st.

See you next semester!



## Visions for the future of the RWU Library

DECEMBER 2, 2015 12:59 PM

By Barbara Kenney, Instructional Services and Campus Initiatives Librarian

In late October, library staff gathered to reflect on issues of space, technology, student support, and collaboration in the newly configured Library Learning Commons. With multiple services and service points throughout the building, we considered better signage to indicate where various services are located, and the possible addition of amenities such as coffee and food service, along with seasonal activities to help de-stress from the inevitable exam pressures. We were encouraged to "think big" following the lead of our University's Vision Project, and to imagine the ideal library, both for our patrons and for our staff. Collaboratively, we developed vision statements as a first-step in creating a plan to continue building a Library Learning Commons that supports the academic and social needs of all our users in innovative and exciting new ways.

Some of the ideas generated were:

- To create more collaborative workspaces
- To become the academic and social center for the campus
- To have more flexible furniture to accommodate different activities
- To include students in the decision-making process for library enhancements
- To eliminate all physical barriers to access

The Library Learning Commons is by definition a collaborative space. It houses IT Services, Instructional Design, Student Accessibility Services, the Center for Academic Development, and Library Services. The recently redesigned Mary Tefft White Cultural Center is now a flexible learning space with technology that allows for stronger collaborations among student teams and workgroups, while still facilitating lectures and academic programs. With all this, we still envision more...like a "maker space" with 3-D printers and technological help that supports creativity and innovation.

The idea of the library being a transformative space was woven throughout our envisioning process. We're creating spaces that inspire and support invention, collaboration and hands-on learning, with programming that motivates our campus constituents to be engaged learners at every stage of their development.

# How can we improve your library experience?

Coffee Cart

1 votes

20%

More Study Rooms

1 votes

20%

Charging Stations

1 votes

20%

More Group Work Space

1 votes

20%



## Printing in the Library

DECEMBER 1, 2015 12:39 PM

Please refer to these helpful printing tips when printing in the library.  
Students – Good luck on your exams and final projects for this semester.

# PRINTING IN THE LEARNING COMMONS

## PRINTING FROM DESKTOPS



Select print at the computer you are working on and wait for login screen

Go to Print Release Station on First Floor and enter the same login information

Click "Print" to release your job



Enter your username and password

EXAMPLE:  
Username: jsmith124  
Password: js9876RWU

Select your job and click print. Swipe your ID card at the account ID screen

\*Double sided printing is the default. This can be changed in the Print Settings

# PRINTING IN THE LEARNING COMMONS

## WIRELESS PRINTING



Connect to wireless  
network: Students1

Go to:  
[hawkprint.academics.rwu](http://hawkprint.academics.rwu)

Click continue when  
prompted about  
certificate error

Enter your  
username and  
password

Browse to upload  
your document

Click print!  
Go to Print Release  
Station on the first  
floor of the Library to  
release your job



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Roger Williams University