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**The Effectiveness, Reasons and Problems in Current Awareness Services in
an Academic Library Towards Crafting An Action Plan**

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ABSTRACT

Information is a very essential component in research but it can only be used when provided with access. Researchers are overwhelmed with overflowing information and they are sometimes prone to plagiarized articles, predatory journals and fake news articles. Moreover, they experienced information explosion due to rapid developments of information and communications technologies. Thus, library researchers need to be informed with updated publications and other information resources. Librarians then should be more proactive in providing them access such as the current awareness services (CAS) which is one of the important library services for fast and easy retrieval and dissemination of information. Quantitative and qualitative methods of research were used to determine the level of effectiveness, reasons, and problems encountered in the current awareness services of Saint Mary's University Learning Resource Center. Results revealed that the level of effectiveness on current awareness services was high because it was used to: 1) update users for the current information 2) provide quick information needed by the users 3) help researchers in the pursuit of their studies; and 4) provide awareness/assistance to the faculty and students. The problems encountered in the implementation of CAS were focused on up-to-dateness, regularity of postings, attractiveness and design, quality of information and location of the bulletin board; and design, up-to-dateness, quality of information, provision of copies of the library publications.

Keywords: Library services, Information dissemination, Library management, Library marketing and promotion, Information repackaging service

Introduction

Information is the life-blood of research. It is one of the foundations for study, learning and research. With the broad and overflowing information, users attempt to keep themselves updated with new publications and librarians are expected to create and innovate ways of helping and preventing their users not to be drowned in overflowing information (as cited in Guzman et al., 2015). Librarians then should be more proactive in providing them access using Current Awareness Services (CAS) (Naqvi, 2013). This service is done through the publication of the accession list of new books, the browsing section for new books, production of table of contents of periodicals, bulletin board displays and the like. It keeps users aware on the current trends and developments inside and outside of the library. It also helps in pursuing studies, promoting excellence, and broadening knowledge of users according to their interests.

Adebayo (as cited in Uzohue and Yaya, 2016), mentioned CAS as the most dynamic, challenging and practical use service in providing excellent and current information that may help users obtain new knowledge for future improvement and development. Moreover, Shafique (as cited in Uzohue & Yaya, 2016) explained that CAS is one of the library services that make the access to library resources faster and easier. Likewise, Luhn (as cited in Prasher, 1997), described CAS as an important function of management in managing current information in updating the members of its organization which can lead them to the attainment of excellence while Johnson, Osmond and Holz (2009) described it as a system for reviewing newly available document, selecting items relevant to the needs of everyone by

routing print journals, distributing photocopied journal tables of contents, and simply browsing professional publications

On the other hand, Bell (2012) suspected that most academic librarians are no longer familiar with the art of current awareness and that may be an unfortunate shift in their practice. Moreover, Sharma et al. (as cited in Naqvi, 2013) indicated that there is a growing dissatisfaction among users due to non-availability of needed documents and lack of provision of services could be boiled down to some extent by rendering at least CAS or current contents of information about the latest addition to users.

In Saint Mary's University (SMU), the academic librarians update users through current contents and current list of serials, magazines, journals and periodicals distributed in every department of the institution. In addition, they use bulletin boards, bibliographies, circulation of new journals and handbooks or flyers in informing the users on the trends and developments in the library. Despite the challenges, the ULRC maintains its current awareness services to its primary users and aimed to link users and library for awareness of new learning materials and services for easy retrieval of knowledge and information. Thus, the main thrust of this study was to determine the level of effectiveness, reasons, and problems on the CAS of Saint Mary's University Learning Resource Center (SMULRC) which will be the basis for the delivery of the service. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions: 1. What is the level of effectiveness of CAS at SMULRC in terms of: a) materials posted in the bulletin board; and b) library publication?; 2. What are the reasons in using CAS in SMULRC by the: a) students and b) faculty?;

3. What are the problems encountered by the respondents on the CAS at SMULRC?; and 4. What action plan can be proposed to improve the CAS at SMULRC?

Literature Review

Librarians always have an undying concern on library services such as the current awareness services. They repackage information to be able to utilize for successful current awareness service and give privilege to users accessing library and information centers (Okoroma, 2014). CAS is the most used library service supporting research activities (Uzohue & Yaya, 2016). It is done by distributing photocopied content pages of all newly added library materials such as journals as well as the simple browsing of professional publications in the library (Johnson, Osmond & Holz, as cited in Guzman, et al., 2015). Other ways of implementing CAS were through bibliographies, journal circulation, bulletin board display, new titles list, circulation of journal titles and content pages, newspaper clippings, bookmarking relevant internet sites, and current awareness bulletins (Agcaoili & Resurrection, 2006). It is an effective device alerting users on the latest development in the library to help them be continuously aware of new information (Uzohue & Yaya, 2016).

Since academic libraries are mandated to enhance the teaching skills and research mission of an institution, library services must have to be promoted especially CAS (Namugera, 2015) to help researchers and students be aware of the recent news and information and help them save their effort and time of scanning

and browsing journals, bulletins, newsletters, and websites (Ali, 2006). Current awareness services are used in keeping track of the forthcoming events, support researches and publications for high quality researches (Fourie, as cited by Rossouw & Fourie, 2007) and to influence the progress of a research work and ensures that all current information is made to be available at the right time and in convenient form (Dongardive, 2013). CAS provides researchers the information they needed in the scientific and technical disciplines to be able for them to assimilate relevant information that can be essential in advancing their own research and their knowledge on their field (Butler, 1993). Users can easily retrieve new information locally or internationally in an easy process, access more current contents of resources, connect to the wide-range of information for their researches (as cited in Akussah, Asante, & Adu-Sarkodee, 2015). Therefore, libraries can make information available to all users with the use of CAS (Sodhi, 2005).

Fiji National University proved also the effectiveness of CAS using the combination of both techniques, displaying the new arrivals, distribution of library bulletins and newsletters, and routing periodicals as they simultaneously disseminate the lists of their latest additions, periodicals, on-demand topical bibliographies, and contents page services through e-mail (Naqvi, 2013). These strategies upgrade the effectiveness of both traditional and online CAS. The effect came out good because students and staff in the university were seen to have developed high awareness level about the library's website, e-mail, tour schedules, and new acquisitions (Guzman, et al., 2015). Thus, in conducting such service, information centers play important roles in the age of information overflow.

Information centers serve the right information effectively and efficiently to satisfy their client's information-related needs. A big help from professionals who categorized its functions in sub categories and current awareness service is one such part of sub categories to make clients conscious of the new information that should be advantageous for them (Verma & Arora, 2016).

There are always barrier in seeking information maybe because of Information explosion or overload of information. Hence, CAS is still needed through all its imperfections (Barr, 2006). The problem in the conduct of an in-depth current service is mainly related to the problems of capturing as precisely as possible the user's intentions or needs. Bulletin boards also played an important role in extending the implementation of CAS. However, time commitment and management has also contributed to low level of awareness and follow through among students (Diaron, 2003). The bulletin boards must have strategic locations to contribute to the services' usefulness (Guzman et al., 2015). Amidst this situation, they still continued using CAS and found another strategy to make it more user-friendly.

Methodology

The study made use of quantitative methods of research in determining the level of effectiveness and reasons in using CAS while qualitative method was used in drawing out the problems encountered by the selected faculty and students at Saint Mary's University Learning Resource Center during the school year 2017-2018. The study was limited to materials posted in the library bulletin boards and

library publications. The primary respondents were randomly selected as shown in Table 1. Their responses were analyzed using appropriate statistical treatment.

Table 1.
Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Variables		Frequency	Percentage
Type	Faculty	25	6.63
	Students	352	93.37
	Total	377	100
Sex	Female	200	53.05
	Male	177	46.95
	Total	377	100
School	SAB	95	25.20
	SEAIT	96	25.46
	SHANS	93	24.67
	STEH	93	24.67
	Total	377	100

Legend: SAB – School of Accountancy and Business
SEAIT – School of Engineering, Architecture and Information Technology
SHaNS – School of Health and Natural Sciences
STEH – School of Teacher Education and Humanities

Results and Discussions

Section 1. Level of Effectiveness of Current Awareness Services at Saint Mary's University Learning Resource Center.

A. The Level of Effectiveness of Current Awareness Service Through Bulletin Boards. The use of bulletin board is the most traditional way of implementing CAS at Saint Mary's University Learning Resource Center. The common library bulletin board is located at the Main Library entrance while the other small bulletin boards are located in each section of the library.

Table 2

Level of Effectiveness of Current Awareness Service in Terms of Materials Posted in the Bulletin Board

Current Awareness Services Through Bulletin Boards	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description
1. Newly acquired library materials	2.70	0.61	High
2. New services of the library	2.61	0.62	High
3. Online or/and electronic resources	2.59	0.72	High
4. Current periodicals from the Periodical Section	2.75	0.65	High
5. News updates are also given emphasis	2.63	0.65	High
6. Library updates such as new library circular or memo	2.67	0.64	High
7. Monthly, Quarterly, Annual library attendance	2.68	0.70	High
8. Accession list of new learning resources.	2.74	0.62	High
9. Visual appearance of the bulletin board	2.70	0.63	High
10. Relevance of content or information from the bulletin board	2.81	0.60	High
11. Adequacy of information from the bulletin board	2.72	0.61	High
Total	2.69	0.39	High

Legend: 1.00-1.49 (very low), 1.50-2.49 (Low), 2.50-3.49 (High), 3.50-4.0 (Very High).

The overall mean was 2.69 qualitatively described as “highly effective”. This rating can be attributed to the functions and responsibilities of librarians stated in their job description as “He prepares and maintains a file of the instruction-related information needs of the faculty plans and implements various current awareness services”. It has been observed that library bulletin boards were revised monthly with updates weekly to inform the faculty and students on the new library services, announce the top borrowers for faculty and students per course and department, post local and world issues and news updates, and display photos of new learning resources available. In spite of these, the service still needs improvement.

This finding is supported by the study of Popoola (2008) in Nigerian universities that CAS was effective because the faculty had developed a high awareness in relation to the availability of information in the library and its services and they were more informed of the new trends about the library

bulletins/newsletters, user education programs, meetings/social interactions, and public relations.

To introduce CAS more effectively, library bulletin board display should catch the user's news of interest, calendar of events, recent events' summary, annotation of lists of new books, table of contents, abstracts of newly acquired library materials, and the like.

B. Level of Effectiveness of Current Awareness Services through Library Publications. Library publications are considered as other means of implementing current awareness services because they create awareness on the latest updates and promote the library both printed and online version.

Table 3
Level of Effectiveness of Current Awareness Services Through Library Publication

<i>Current Awareness Services Through Library Publications</i>	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description
1. Library newsletter in updated	2.75	0.71	High
2. Library website is updated	2.52	0.66	High
3. Table of Contents of Periodicals are posted in the OPAC	2.65	0.59	High
4. Table of Contents of Periodicals is disseminated to faculty	2.58	0.61	High
5. Library flyers on how to use online resources are distributed	2.30	0.69	Low
6. Library handbooks are distributed to first year students	2.54	0.78	High
7. Bibliographies are distributed by request	2.50	0.65	High
Mean	2.53	0.45	High

Legend: 1.00-1.49 (very low), 1.50-2.49(Low), 2.50-3.49(High), 3.50-4.0(Very High).

The overall mean was 2.53 with a verbal interpretation of “*high*” level of effectiveness. Table 3 revealed that most of the items were rated with “high level of effectiveness” particularly on items numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 6 and 7. It is interesting to note that the only item with “low level of effectiveness” was on *distributing library*

flyers on how to use online resources with a mean of 2.30. The rating could also be attributed to the work performance of the librarians on the delivery of CAS through library publication because it was written as part of their job description: This implies that users are highly informed on the new learning resources through library publications such as the ULRC newsletter, handbooks, manuals and flyers. Flyers are distributed every time there are new materials, events or anything in the library so that faculty and students would be updated about it. Same thing is being done to circulars which are posted in the library bulletin boards to give updates, notices, and announcements about the library. Newsletters are also posted to inform students on the things that are going on in the library such as activities that are held or will be held. List of new journals is also distributed to all the administrative and academic deans every time the library has new acquisition. And lastly, library handbooks are distributed to all freshmen containing all the aspects of the library such as: library organizational chart, the policies, rules and regulations, different sections in the library etc. Mohamed (as cited in Abdullahi & Mamza, 2014) explained that current awareness service is one of the effective systems in the area of reference service to address user needs.

The findings of Naqvi (2013) proved the effectiveness of CAS using the combination of both techniques, displaying the new arrivals, distribution of library bulletins and newsletters, and routing periodicals as they simultaneously disseminate the lists of their latest additions, periodicals, on-demand topical bibliographies, and contents page services through e-mail. These strategies upgrade the effectiveness of current awareness service linking the two kinds: the

traditional and online CAS. Furthermore, Holton and Chi (2012) stated that they used current awareness service in supplying customers with news and current information. They have seen that many customers were overwhelmed by the facts and updates of national, international and social information they have received. It is also one way of keeping up-to-date information for the users by regularly and methodically scanning current special of list publications. Face to face contact with users can also be achieved by using CAS (Kumar, 2004).

The faculty members developed high awareness in relation to the availability of information in the library and library services. They were more informed of the new trends about the library by seeing the presented information in the bulletins/newsletters, user education programs, meetings/social interactions, and public relations (Popoola, 2008).

Section 2. Reasons for Using Current Awareness Service at Saint Mary's University Learning Resource Center.

A. Reasons for Using Current Awareness Services By the Students.

Table 4 presents the reasons for using current awareness service drawn from the responses of the students.

Table 4
Reasons of Using Current Awareness Service at SMULRC by the students

Reasons for Using CAS		1.0	2.0	3.0	4.0	5.0	6.0	7.0	8.0	9.0	10.0	Rank
1. Update users on the current information	f	46	35	43	37	49	24	15	36	35	32	
	%	13.1	9.9	12.2	10.5	13.9	6.8	4.3	10.2	9.9	9.1	5
2. Helps researchers in the pursuit of their studies	f	44	47	32	48	21	46	38	23	30	23	
	%	12.5	13.4	9.1	13.6	6.0	13.1	10.8	6.5	8.5	6.5	4
3. Provides quick information needed by the users	f	45	53	47	46	32	26	33	34	17	19	
	%	12.8	15.1	13.4	13.1	9.1	7.4	9.4	9.7	4.8	5.4	2
4. Tracks down the current trends and developments in their fields of interests.	f	16	22	28	33	47	41	36	38	50	41	
	%	4.5	6.3	8.0	9.4	13.4	11.6	10.2	10.8	14.2	11.6	9
5. Provides general information	f	70	50	37	40	28	37	24	23	16	27	
	%	19.9	14.2	10.5	11.4	8.0	10.5	6.8	6.5	4.5	7.7	1
6. Informs teachers and students on the new materials and equipment	f	23	16	35	27	39	41	32	39	46	54	
	%	6.5	4.5	9.9	7.7	11.1	11.6	9.1	11.1	13.1	15.3	10
7. Provides awareness / assistance to the faculty and students.	f	23	43	26	24	45	35	52	37	40	27	
	%	6.5	12.2	7.4	6.8	12.8	9.9	14.8	10.5	11.4	7.7	7
8. Provides current contents to promote professional growth.	f	14	18	36	49	27	37	51	51	35	34	
	%	4.0	5.1	10.2	13.9	7.7	10.5	14.5	14.5	9.9	9.7	7 & 8
9. Helps in obtaining high quality learning skills through current information	f	35	34	35	31	35	38	38	41	42	22	
	%	9.9	9.7	9.9	8.8	9.9	10.8	10.8	11.6	11.9	6.3	9
10. Reduces time, effort and money in obtaining information	f	39	33	31	19	30	28	30	30	40	72	
	%	11.1	9.4	8.8	5.4	8.5	8.0	8.5	8.5	11.4	20.5	10

As seen in the results, the primary reasons of students in using CAS were to: provide general information (rank 1), provide quick information needed by the users (rank 2), help researchers in the pursuit of their studies (rank 4), and update users for the current information (rank 5). These findings were supported by Jax and Houlson (1988) which indicated that CAS is intended for identifying current information gaps that can be eliminated, contribute to qualitative research improvements, and increase relevant information keeping abreast of their field. Likewise, Okoroma (2014) explained that information repackaging using CAS also helps in saving time of the customers in finding bulky information and can also save money as fees used in retrieving information. It is further corroborated in the study of Satyanayarana and Raizada (1967) which mentioned that one of the major aims

of CAS is to provide information as quickly as possible through the interest of users.

B. Reasons for Using Current Awareness Services By the Faculty.

Table 5 shows the reasons for using Current Awareness Services drawn from the responses of the faculty.

Table 5

Reasons of Using Current Awareness Service at SMULRC by the Faculty

Reasons for Using CAS		1.0	2.0	3.0	4.0	5.0	6.0	7.0	8.0	9.0	10.0	Rank
1. Update users on the current information	f	3	3	4	3	5	1	1	2	0	3	
	%	12.0	12.0	16.0	12.0	20.0	4.0	4.0	8.0	0	12.0	5
2. Helps researchers in the pursuit of their studies	f	2	1	0	3	5	4	3	3	2	2	
	%	8.0	4.0	0	12.0	20.0	16.0	12.0	12.0	8.0	8.0	5
3. Provides quick information needed by the users	f	3	1	4	3	2	4	3	0	2	3	
	%	12.0	4.0	16.0	12.0	8.0	16.0	12.0	0	8.0	12.0	3 & 4
4. Tracks down the current trends and developments in their fields of interests.	f	0	0	1	2	2	3	4	6	7	0	
	%	0	0	4.0	8.0	8.0	12.0	16.0	24.0	28.0	0	9
5. Provides general information	f	3	2	3	0	4	4	1	2	1	5	
	%	12.0	8.0	12.0	0	16.0	16.0	4.0	8.0	4.0	20.0	10
6. Informs teachers and students on the new materials and equipment	f	4	3	0	1	2	3	4	2	6	0	
	%	16.0	12.0	0	4.0	8.0	12.0	16.0	8.0	24.0	0	9
7. Provides awareness/assistance to the faculty and students.	f	2	4	1	6	2	2	1	5	0	2	
	%	8.0	16.0	4.0	24.0	8.0	8.0	4.0	20.0	0	8.0	4
8. Provides current contents to promote professional growth.	f	1	3	6	4	1	1	4	1	1	3	
	%	4.0	12.0	24.0	16.0	4.0	4.0	16.0	4.0	4.0	12.0	3
9. Helps in obtaining high quality learning skills through current information	f	4	3	4	1	2	1	2	2	5	1	
	%	16.0	12.0	16.0	4.0	8.0	4.0	8.0	8.0	20.0	4.0	9
10. Reduces time, effort and money in obtaining information	f	3	5	2	2	0	2	2	2	1	6	
	%	12.0	20.0	8.0	8.0	0	8.0	8.0	8.0	4.0	24.0	10

The primary reasons in using CAS were to provide quick information needed by the users (rank 3 & 4), provide current contents in promoting professional growth (rank 3), provide awareness/assistance to the faculty students (rank 4), update users

for the current information (rank 5) and help researchers in the pursuit of their studies (rank 5). These were supported by the study of Rossouw and Fourie (2007) which indicated that CAS provides immediate access to information for the end-user work station and for legal professions. This is corroborated by the study of Uzohue and Yaya (2016) which stated that CAS is intended to alert library users by informing them on the current events made available through different strategies done by the librarians and keeping up to date with the latest information is an intensive and competitive advantage in seeking authoritative, reliable, relevant and accurate information.

In general, both faculty and students agreed that their reasons for using CAS were to: 1) update users for the current information 2) provide quick information needed by the users 3) help researchers in the pursuit of their studies; and 4) provide awareness/assistance to the faculty and students. This is also affirmed in the findings of Ali (2006) which reported that CAS is done in the library to help researchers and students become aware of the recent news and information and help them save their effort and time in scanning and browsing journals, bulletins, newsletters, and websites.

Section 3. Problems Encountered on Current Awareness Services at Saint Mary's University Learning Resource Center.

A. Problems Encountered on CAS through Bulletin Boards. The respondents were asked to share their ideas and insights about their issues and concerns on the library bulletin boards and they revealed the problems in Table 5.

Table 5.
The Verbal Responses of the Respondents on the Problems Encountered on CAS Through Bulletin Boards

Categories	Verbal Responses of the Respondents
Attractiveness	<p>“the bulletin board must be eye catching so that students can enjoy viewing it and will catch their interest in reading its content”</p> <p>“sometimes the visual appearance is dull and the information is not emphasized, not attractive and not noticeable so make it more pleasing”</p>
Design	<p>“emphasize more about the information posted in the bulletin board. put background color not dull colors”</p> <p>“sometimes I cannot read the letters”</p> <p>“the design is not really attracting, contents are too verbose and the colors used in the design are dull”</p> <p>“the designs for the bulletin board are not catchy”</p> <p>“the bulletin board is not well – organized”</p> <p>“too many posts that sometimes current posts are covered up”</p>
Location	<p>“lack of endorsement/accessibility. Need to be more vibrant”</p> <p>“location of the bulletin board”</p>
Quality of Information	<p>“Bulletin board should contain more information, i.e. current events”</p> <p>“inadequate content and lack information; sometimes contents are not interesting”</p> <p>“lack of current information or events”</p> <p>“limited information posted”</p> <p>“current, new, and relevant information are not much highlighted”</p> <p>“not obtaining a high quality to inform students”</p>
Regularity of postings	<p>“dissemination of information”</p> <p>“they should post those newly acquired books for the students to be informed and be aware of the updates and changes regarding their course and subjects”</p> <p>“they don’t post everything in the bulletin”</p>
Up-to-dateness	<p>“unupdated, should be bulletin board be updated weekly or monthly”</p> <p>“sometimes, updates in the bulletin board are late”</p> <p>“information posted are not updated”</p> <p>“in the few times I passed by the bulletin boards, I have observed that there were no updates if there were new books acquired or available for use and only the students and faculty top users were posted.”</p> <p>“I don’t usually take notice of the new posts in the bulletin board”</p> <p>“lack of information and not updated all the time that trivias are fun but I really don’t get w/c is more emphasized in the bulletin not focused in important info’s we need to know”</p>

In summary, the common problems encountered by the respondents regarding library bulletin boards were its attractiveness, design, location, quality of information, regularity of postings, and up-to-dateness. The respondents mentioned that the bulletin board was not attractive at all, the design needed more emphasis, and the location should be in a conspicuous place where it can be easily seen by the community. They also emphasized that information posted should be well-planned

and well-organized, and updated regularly. This is further corroborated by Guzman et al. (2015) that bulletin board's strategic locations contribute to the services' usefulness. Diaron (2003) indicated that time commitment and management of bulletin boards had contributed to low level of awareness among library users. However, in the case of the study of Fourie and Veldsman (2011), there were no promotions on the use of CAS.

B. Problems Encountered on CAS through Library Publications. The respondents were asked to share their ideas and insights about their issues and concerns on library publications of the ULRC and they revealed the problems in Table 6.

Table 6.
The Verbal Responses of the Respondents on the Problems Encountered on CAS Through Library Publications

Categories of Library Publications	Verbal Responses of the Respondents
Design	"unnotice some info's not needed, no major emphasis" "sometimes it not noticeable" "some of the books are not well-arranged according to numbers or publications"
Improvement	"the years of the books is not properly organized and author must be in one area" "needs a little improvement in giving and providing information" "needs improvement in informing students" "needs improvement"
Provision of copies	"not all are aware of any issues and not all are given access due to limited copies" "dissemination of information" "they did not give flyers to us during are first year life on how to use online resources or others" "during our first year life they did not give anything library handbook or library flyers"
Quality of information	"not notified, no flyers was distributed ever since first year" "current trends should be included" "they must information to help the students to improve their competitiveness"
Up-to-dateness of information	"some publication are not updated" "the updates about the book editions" "library publication should be updated to support academic needs" "all old theses should be discarded from the shelves especially that citation in researches and theses are require updated pieces of information" "books, flyers and journals are mostly not updated hence does provide up-to-date information"

Overall, the common problems encountered by the respondents regarding library publications were its design, up-to-dateness and quality of information, and provision of copies. There should be an orientation about the services of the library because some users are not aware because of lack of communication, inadequate interaction and dissemination of information between users and librarian; thus, for this reason, marketing strategies must be done (Roberts, as cited in Namugera, 2014).

Section 4. A Proposed Action Plan for the Improvement of CAS at SMU LRC.

Considering the results of the survey on current awareness services of SMULRC, the proposed Action Plan on Current Awareness Services is forwarded:

KRA:	Action Plan on Current Awareness Services at SMULRC
Project Title:	Enhancement of Current Awareness Services of SMU Learning Resource Center
Outcome:	Effectiveness and Efficiency of CAS at SMULRC

Rationale

Current Awareness Services (CAS) is a service that consists of current information that keeps users aware of the latest developments inside and outside the library. It plays a significant role in Saint Mary's University in support to its vision

of forming persons exemplifying excellence, innovation, and Christ's mission. Saint Mary's University Learning Resource Center's Current Awareness Services aimed to link clients and library for awareness of new learning materials and services for easy retrieval of knowledge and information to all clients.

Hence, as part of an evolving University, the role of the library is very important. Its tasked is to:

1. Uphold professional growth and development of professional librarians particularly in the delivery of current awareness services.
2. Promote awareness of faculty and students on the current trends and information from the library.
3. Enhance the regular updating of information from the web sites, web-OPAC, and others.

General Objective

The action plan generally aimed to facilitate the Current Awareness Services of Saint Mary's University Learning Resource Center particularly in promoting higher educational learning to students and faculty.

Specific Objectives

The following are the specific goals of the Current Awareness Service Action Plan:

- a) Increase knowledge and awareness among faculty and students
- b) Enhance provision of library publication among faculty and students

c) Enhance postings of materials on bulletin board

Proposed SMULRC's Current Awareness Service Action Plan

Below is the detailed description of the proposed Current Awareness Service Action Plan arranged in terms of objectives, strategic activities, person involves, time frame, performance indicator and proposed budget.

In the action plan, several target strategic activities to enhance the current awareness service at SMULRC particularly on materials posted in the bulletin board and library publications are forwarded. The target activities will focus on three categories such as Training, Promotion and Research Support. Category 1 which is the training will conduct activities such as in-service training on making bulletin board display, training on making library newsletter, manuals, etc. and training on the use of web application tool for CAS. Category 2 which is the promotion will promote new resources and services through FB, twitter, and other means as well as update regularly the information on the web-based promotional tools. And the last category is the research support on a particular activity of disseminating new learning resources through library web sites, web-OPAC, etc. and posting on time the new learning resources through the Accession List of New Books.

Table 7.
A Proposed Current Awareness Services Action Plan for SMU LRC

Areas	Objectives	Strategic Activities	Person Responsible
1. Training	To improve the current awareness services of the ULRC through trainings	<p>Conduct in-service training on making bulletin board display.</p> <p>Conduct workshop-training on making library newsletter, manuals, etc.</p> <p>Conduct hands-on training on the use of web application tool for CAS</p>	Library Director and Library Staff
2. Promotion	To innovate the promotion of new learning resources through the use of web applications	<p>Promote new resources and services through FB, twitter, and other means</p> <p>Update regularly the information on the web-based promotional tools.</p>	Library Director and Library Staff
3. Research Support	To enhance the dissemination of learning materials in support to research	<p>Disseminate new learning resources through library web sites, web-OPAC, etc.</p> <p>Post on time the new learning resources through the Accession List of New Books.</p>	Library Director and Library Staff

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the findings, the CAS in terms of materials posted in the bulletin boards and library publications of SMULRC is moderately effective though there is still much to improve its practices. The study found that CAS at SMU LRC was reported to have high level of effectiveness which signifies that users are well informed on the new learning resources and services. This is a good sign that librarians are performing their tasks in Current Awareness Services Program of Saint Mary's University Learning Resource Center through the publication of the accession list of new books, the browsing section for new books in the ULRC, production of table of contents of periodicals dissemination to its respective readers,

and the like.

The primary reasons of the student-respondents for using CAS were: 1) to update users for the current information 2) to provide quick information needed by the users 3) to provide general information 4) to help researchers in the pursuit of their studies 5) to provide awareness/assistance to the faculty and students while the primary reasons of the faculty-respondents for using CAS were: 1) to update users on the current information; 2) to help researchers in the pursuit of their studies; 3) to provide quick information needed by the users; 4) to provide awareness/assistance to the faculty and students; and 5) to provide current contents in promoting professional growth.

However, the respondents still posted problems on CAS in terms of materials posted in the bulletin board and these were the texts of the items posted were not readable, lack of information posted, late in posting updates, and the attractiveness and neatness of the bulletin board. For the library publications, they mentioned that there were no flyers and handbooks distributed, sometimes the list of the new materials in the library are not disseminated on time, lack of materials in the library, publications were available but not in their proper location, and lastly, they were not aware of the said service.

When asked to indicate their recommendations on how to improve the current awareness services of the ULRC, the following were recommended by the respondents: 1) they should organize and update on time the bulletin board; 2) bulletin board should also be attractive yet simple to attract the attention of the community; 3) they should also make a website in order to update faculty and

students online, a system that would be accessible anytime, to distribute flyers, handbooks and list of the new materials in the library; 4) updating of materials such as books; and 5) campaign and orientation about the library and the service in order to be fully understood by the faculty and students. Dadzie (as cited in Akussah, Asante & Adu-Sarkodee, 2015) mentioned that users can easily retrieve new information locally or internationally in an easy process, access more current contents of resources, and connect to the wide-range of information for their researches through CAS.

An important function of the librarian through Current Awareness Services is to bring to the attention of the members of the academic community on the availability of the latest information at the library. This can be done through the publication of the accession list of new books, the browsing section for new books in the ULRC, production of table of contents of periodicals dissemination to its respective readers, and the like. Thus, it is recommended that librarians should focus on: 1) the current awareness services particularly on the promotion of newly acquire learning resources; 2) the problems encountered by the faculty and students; and 3) the enhancement of the current awareness services through the implementation of the proposed action plan. These services should be continuously performed by the librarians and make the necessary innovations in the delivery with the use of information technology applications in order to attract more users to visit the library.

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