Library Services

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In 2014 Cal Poly received the Excellence in Academic Libraries Award from the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL). The award recognizes Kennedy Library’s staff and programs for the delivery of exemplary services and resources that further the educational mission of the institution.

Kennedy Library supports Cal Poly’s mission by promoting open and informed inquiry, fostering collaboration and innovation, supporting the unique needs of every student and scholar at Cal Poly, and contributing to the cultural life of San Luis Obispo.

Kennedy Library selects and delivers quality information in all formats, provides active learning environments, promotes the skills that are needed for student success, and collects and preserves unique collections.

Services

The library offers consultative and instructional services delivered by expert library faculty based in each of Cal Poly’s colleges as well as in areas that serve the entire academic community, such as digital scholarship and special collections. In addition, the library provides students with print and electronic access to selected course materials through its course reserves service; and rapid access to books and articles held by other regional libraries through its interlibrary borrowing service. Reference assistance is provided at service desks and via instant messaging. Kennedy Library opens at 7 am on weekdays and is open until 2 am Sunday through Thursday.

Instruction

Librarians partner with faculty to help students develop research skills relevant to all disciplines. They work with students to ensure they acquire and practice the skills they need to succeed in a complex information environment. This includes finding quality information and using it to communicate skillfully through a variety of media. The librarians and a team of peer-to-peer student assistants teach more than 400 courses each year and provide web-based resources to supplement in-class teaching.

Technology

In partnership with Information Technology Services, the library offers students, faculty, and staff many free services including access to the campus high-speed wireless network, laptops, iPads, Kindles, cameras, camcorders and tripods, scanners, and 300 computers with more than 120 software applications. Oversized and specialty (CAD) printing services are also available for a fee from the campus print and copy service located in the library. Student technicians are on staff to help.

Assistive Technology

Kennedy Library provides general-use assistive technology/collaboration stations throughout the building, featuring a range of assistive software applications including screen readers, dual displays and height adjustable tables. Kennedy Library partners with the campus Disability Resource Center and has its own Accessibility Advocate.

Electronic and Print Resources

Kennedy Library provides access to 32,000 electronic scholarly journal titles, as well as to major online indexes and full text databases. These electronic resources are available to Cal Poly students, faculty and staff any time and anywhere. The library also has a physical collection of more than 500,000 print volumes, and a significant number of other items, including maps, government documents, senior projects and master’s theses.

Special Collections and Archives

Special Collections include more than a hundred unique collections in many formats, including manuscripts, correspondence, business records, architectural drawings, photographs and online collections. Collection strengths include architectural records and drawings, fine printing and graphic arts, regional and California history. Featured holdings include the Julia Morgan papers, the San Luis Obispo Environmental Archives, and the Central Coast Farm Labor Organizing Collection. The University Archives has material that documents the history, growth and development of Cal Poly, including campus records, publications such as Cal Poly’s yearbook, El Rodeo, photographs, plans, blueprints, and ephemera dating from the founding of the university in 1901 to the present.

DigitalCommons@CalPoly

One of the first and largest institutional digital archives in the California State University system, DigitalCommons@CalPoly promotes discovery, research and cross-disciplinary collaboration by collecting, preserving and providing online access to scholarly work created at Cal Poly. DigitalCommons@CalPoly archives faculty research and student scholarship including theses, graduate internship reports and senior projects. The service also provides access to documents created by Cal Poly administrative offices, departments and programs. Members of the Cal Poly academic community are invited to contribute completed scholarship for long-term preservation and worldwide access through DigitalCommons@CalPoly.

The Data Studio

The Data Studio, which opened in 2012, supports the discovery, exploration, creation, and sharing of data. With dedicated computers, large screen monitors, and GIS and statistics tutors on-site, the Data Studio provides an ideal environment for students to experiment and develop their skills in manipulating and visualizing data.

Facilities

Kennedy Library offers a variety of seating and study spaces on five floors, with ample natural light and views of the surrounding hills. In addition to twelve large collaboration rooms, the library offers seven group study rooms and two dedicated graduate student study rooms; all are equipped with large screen monitors and whiteboards. The library has more than 2000 seats and 300 computer workstations, specialty printing and copying services and a café. The library’s atrium features a landscaped patio and shaded seating on four upper balconies. Kennedy Library is visited more than 1.4 million times a year and has been voted “Best Study Spot” by students since 2006.

Events and Exhibits

Kennedy Library offers numerous lively ongoing events and exhibits including Cal Poly Science Cafe, which inspires interdisciplinary and interactive experiences; Conversations with Cal Poly Authors, which celebrates books published by Cal Poly faculty; and Data Studio Presents, a series of talks and events related to data resources and
tools. Exhibits are produced in partnership with Cal Poly students and faculty, as well as members of the Cal Poly community, and often feature unique holdings of Special Collections and Archives.

Partners
Kennedy Library is proud to partner with programs that support student learning. Among the partners located in the library are the Academic Skills Center; the Center for Teaching, Learning and Technology; Julian’s Café and Patisserie; Student Ombuds Services; Cal Poly Print and Copy; Research Scholars in Residence; and the University Honors Program.