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5-26-2015

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Recommended Citation

Smith, Edwin B., "Ambassadors promote library with events, projects" (2015). *University of Mississippi News*. 6983.

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Ambassadors promote library with events, projects



Students take a break from studying for finals at the UM Library to pet puppies and dogs brought to visit. Photo by Nathan Latil/Ole Miss Communications

A small group of UM students has organized Library Ambassadors, a voluntary program that is raising awareness of the University Libraries' resources.

"The goals of the Library Ambassadors are to facilitate communication between University Libraries' administration and student body, to represent and promote the library at campus events, and to advocate for and raise awareness of library programs and services among the student body," said Melissa Dennis, assistant professor, outreach and instruction librarian, and co-faculty adviser of the organization. "The

ambassadors also help create innovative and effective promotional materials for the libraries and their services."

Library Ambassadors' activities and events, which take place at the J.D. Williams Library, include poetry slams, Pet-a-Pup, art night and feedback night.

"It's a student-driven organization," said Amy E. Gibson, professor, head of instruction, information literacy librarian and the other faculty co-adviser. "Pet-A-Pup is where we work with the Cedar Wind local dog club to bring in dogs and their owners, training for volunteer credit. These are service dogs, and the students love to come and pet them during finals week. It's a successful two-day event drawing in hundreds of students the weekend kicking off finals week each fall and spring semester."

Currently, five students are members of the organization, but any student can join at no cost.

"Simply join in OrgSync, and we will send you event information," Dennis said. "Members are expected to participate in events. We also have sign-up tables at orientations."

Officers of Library Ambassadors said they are glad they chose to participate.

"In high school, I helped out in my school's library even though I was not a student library worker," said Jessica Marshall of Madison, president of Library Ambassadors and a senior biology major. "When I came to Ole Miss, I wanted to find some way to become a part of the library here, and becoming a Library Ambassador was a great way to do that."

Marshall's duties consist of planning and leading meetings, staying in contact with library administrative advisers, being a liaison between other organizations and community groups, and setting up and creating the organization's events.

"The greatest accomplishment of our organization, I believe, is our success in our events," she said. "We have come up with events that are fun, entertaining and memorable. It's amazing to hear that students and Oxford community members alike enjoy and appreciate what we do," she said.

Aisha Knight, Library Ambassadors secretary and a junior biology major from Corinth, agreed with Marshall.

"I chose to become an ambassador because Library Ambassadors was passionate about (the same) matters I was," Knight said. "When we see a major turnout for Pet-a-Pup, the poetry slam and other events each year, we prove success isn't always measured in the number of members you have."

To learn more about UM Library Ambassadors, visit its Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/UM.library.ambassadors>.

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