According to “A Student’s Guide to Evaluating Libraries in Colleges and Universities” from the American Library Association, “Your selection of a college or university should include an evaluation of the library and its services and resources. Identifying and evaluating a good library are important in determining the level of educational opportunities an institution will provide you during your academic career.” (This guide can be viewed at http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/acrl/issues/marketing/studentsguide.cfm.)

The guide recommends that students consider whether the facilities, the collection and the services were adequate for their needs. I firmly believe that an academic library’s collection should be very well rounded, the facilities well organized and easy to use, and the librarians prepared to provide user instruction for the students, in order to be adequate for the community. After visiting the Flaxman Library at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, reading this guide made me really understand how important it is to a student’s academic experience to uphold certain library standards. To prove if a library was adequately serving the population I decided to quantitatively measure the success or failure of this library in a statistical manner based on its circulation and interlibrary loan statistics. These statistics helped to pin point areas in which the library needs to make improvements.

A visit to the Flaxman Library at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago is a good example of an academic library that mainly caters to the specialty majors of the school and does not have a well-rounded collection that is needed to properly research subjects other than art and literature. A student may want to have the experience of a prestigious art education, yet it may be worth while for one to attend a school that is more
well rounded, with more options for business and science coursework, and books in the
library, to better prepare one for the reality of life. Being managed in conjunction with
the Art Institute of Chicago, the libraries are a wonderful community resource for those
doing academic research related to the Fine Arts. Additionally, this library can be visited
for an interesting case study in order to understand how to integrate different cataloging
and classification systems into one program. However, upon visiting the Flaxman Library
I could clearly see that it needed to come up with a strong plan to improve the quality of
their library and meet the needs of an increasingly interdisciplinary 21st century
curriculum that the school is offering.

I visited the Flaxman Library and the Flasch Artists’ Book Special Collection on
October 11th. During this visit I spent time interviewing Holly Dankert, Head of
Readers’ Services. For such a small circulating collection, I discovered a lot of complex
organizational issues that the School of the Art Institute must contend with. These issues
include managing a main academic library with multiple special collections, their
budgets, advisory boards, staff, cataloging and classification systems, historic
preservation, as well as user instruction for the students.

The School of the Art Institute of Chicago is one of the oldest independent art and
design schools in the country. Since 1882 the School of the Art Institute of Chicago has
been run under this same name in conjunction with the museum, The Art Institute of
Chicago. Prior to 1882 the school had been called the Chicago Academy of Design and
the Chicago Academy of Fine Art. Today the school offers Bachelors degrees in visual
and critical studies, interior architecture, art education, studio art, art history and
criticism, and writing. The school offers Masters degrees in architecture, art
administration, art education, art therapy, art history and criticism, art journalism, design, fashion design, and historic preservation. Information on its academic programs can be found on the school’s website at http://www.saic.edu. According to its website the School of the Art Institute’s total enrollment for 2010 was 3,246 students (2498 undergraduate students and 748 graduate students).

The libraries are managed by the Art Institute of Chicago and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago through multiple advisory boards. According to Holly Dankert, there is one board for both the museum and the school and a separate board just for the school. The School of the Art Institute has a separate budget for the Flaxman Library, but the school and the museum do share resources like databases. The Art Institute of Chicago runs the Ryerson and Burnham Libraries through the building at 111 S. Michigan Av. More information can be found on these libraries at http://www.artic.edu/aic/libraries/. These libraries and archives are for art and architecture. It is a non-circulating collection and is open to visitors to the museum.

The Flaxman Library is managed by the School of the Art Institute and has both circulating and non-circulating collections. This is the main academic library for the students. It is on the 6th Floor of 37 S. Wabash Av. There are special collections on the 5th floor of this building as well as in other buildings. A map of the location of all of the special collections is in the appendix. The Flaxman Library’s Main Collection is open Monday-Thursday from 8:30 AM – 10:00 PM, Friday from 8:30 AM – 6:00 PM, and Sunday from 12:00 PM – 6:00 PM. The main website for the Flaxman Library is http://libraryguides.saic.edu.
According to Holly Dankert, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago has had its own library since 1971. It began as a reading room within the Ryerson and Burnham Libraries. It moved to a space on Columbus Dr. before it relocated to the 6th floor of the building at 37 S. Wabash in 1989 to become the Flaxman Library. It was named the John M. Flaxman Library because of a donation from the Flaxman family in honor of its son that died shortly after graduation. The Flaxman Library then expanded to the 5th floor in 2005.

Within the management of the Flaxman Library there are seven special collections. A guide to the library and special collections can be found at http://libraryguides.saic.edu. This web page is well organized and provides an excellent overview of the library and special collections for those interested in visiting the collections. The Joan Flasch Artists’ Book Collection houses a non-circulating collection of over 4,000 artists books. These are limited edition, one of a kind and hand made objects. The MacLean Visual Resource Center maintains the Madison Digital Image Database of over 90,000 images that are used within classroom lectures. The Randolph Street Gallery Archives houses the archives of an art gallery that was open between 1979 and 1998. The Film Study Collection contains over 700, 16 mm films. The Fashion Resource Center is a collection of 20th and 21st Century designer garments. Individuals need to pay for tours of this collection. The Roger Brown Study collection is a collection of Roger Brown’s art. The Video Data Bank is a collection of contemporary videos. It is a non-profit organization, run by the school, which allows both rental and purchasing options for museums and schools across the country. Its website is http://www.vdb.org.
During my interview with Holly Dankert, she provided me with some wonderful fact sheets that included statistics and financial charts, as well as floor maps for the Flaxman Library. Some of these fact sheets are available in the appendix of this report.

The Flaxman Library has 8 full-time librarians, 5 full-time non-librarian staff, 3 part-time non-librarian staff, and 18 student workers. The staff is non-unionized. Ms. Dankert feels that they do not need to have a union. Total expenditures, according to the Flaxman Library, for the fiscal year 2010 were $1,367,503. 68% of the expenditures covered staffing. While 22% covered information resources expenses, like purchasing new material, and 10% went to other expenses like fees and supplies. During my interview with Ms. Dankert, she stated that the library had to cut the budget by 5-10% in 2008. Since then it has not increased it. She feels like the current budget is not adequate in supporting the library.

The main collection of the Flaxman Library is cataloged with the Library of Congress Classification System. The Flaxman Library has a collection of 84,000 books, 7,700 DVDs and VHSs, 400 magazine subscriptions, 70 licensed databases, and 1670 Reference books. These books in the main collection include circulating and non-circulating books. According to the Flaxman Library, 56.2% of its collection is on the visual arts, 12% is on language and literature, 8.8% is philosophy, religion, and psychology, 5.8% is history, and 5% is technology. The remaining 12% of the collection is social science, economics, sociology, geography, science, medicine, music, general reference, and education. A full breakdown by percentage is available in the appendix.

A full list of databases can be found at the website https://startit.artic.edu/kb/resources/webproxy/databasel list_bysubject.html. This list
appears to cover all subjects, and is well rounded and adequate for an academic library. The Flaxman Library and the Ryerson and Burnham Libraries share this web site. However, when I walked around the room of bound periodicals I noticed that the only non-art and cultural periodicals available to the students to browse were *Wired* and *Scientific American*. This does not include the periodicals in storage, which include the Psychiatric journals. A lack of bound periodicals is more acceptable than a lack of books on certain subjects given the amount of full text articles that are available through databases that will be adequate for academic research. However, it did still surprise me. Additionally, students have access to the Springer E-Book collection through the Flaxman Library.

With these statistics one can see the collection is not well rounded and lacks a lot of material in math, science, social sciences, and education that academic libraries usually have in the collections. The reference section is astonishingly small and only covers a small area of four shelves. According to the Flaxman Library, 27,800 books are in storage do to a lack of circulation. With that in mind, the collection probably should be weeded so that the library can expand the collection in areas that are needed like education and science.

To try to grasp the idea of how important a well-rounded collection is to the students who patron academic libraries, I decided to compare the ratio of students to interlibrary loan rates at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and Columbia College Chicago. Columbia College has an up and coming reputation as an excellent choice for an art school, but has a wider range majors, a larger library, and a much larger enrollment than the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. According to the Flaxman Library a total
of 66,350 items were checked out in 2010 and 13,447 items were borrowed through interlibrary loan. Analyzing these statistics one can see that the students at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago borrowed books at a rate of 20 items per student. They borrowed books through interlibrary loan at a rate of 4 items per student.

According to Columbia College’s website they had an enrollment of 11,922 students in 2010. According to Columbia College’s Library’s Annual Report for 2009-2010, its collection contains 299,815 books and 1251 serials. The library had a total circulation of 77,347 items, and a total of 4241 items borrowed through interlibrary loan. Analyzing these statistics one can see that the students at Columbia College borrowed books at a rate of 6.5 items per student. With only 4241 books borrowed through interlibrary loan, thousands of the students at Columbia College did not need to utilize the interlibrary loan service. Thus, they found the library to have an adequate collection for their needs.

Although the students at Columbia College borrowed fewer books then those at the School of the Art Institute, these rates show that the collection at the Flaxman Library is not adequate enough for the students since they borrowed material through interlibrary loan at a rate of 4 items per student. That really is a lot of gas being used to deliver books to the school, when our goal should be to lower our environmental impact in addition to providing an adequate collection for the students. During an interview with Holly Dankert she remarked,

“We struggle with being a special library and an academic library. We are an academic library, so we need to provide resources for students. The curriculum is more focused on the visual arts, so that is what we focus on, 56.2% of the items are visual arts and architecture, and 12% are language and literature.”
The school could lower its rate of interlibrary loan if it increased the number of books in its collection that could be useful for those getting Masters degrees in Arts Administration, Art Therapy and Art Education, such as books related to business, psychology, medicine, sociology, and education.

In addition to analyzing the Flaxman Library’s collection for adequacy, I was interested in examining the facilities to see if it was well organized, user friendly and if the librarians were well prepared to market their services and provide user instruction for the students at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. During my interview with Holly Dankert, she stated,

“We are bursting from the seems at this place. We need to convince them that we need to be more supported in terms of space and size of the staff.”

A larger space and proper weeding of the collection would help the librarians to develop the collection in the areas that they lack, but the school is land locked with no room to move to and agrees that they lack the adequate budget they need to build the collection.

If you take a look at the floor map for the 6th floor (see the Appendix), you can imagine how small the library is. Picture yourself coming in from the elevator bank and walking to the right to find a sizable collection of new magazines and journals to browse and welcoming chairs to read them in. This is one of my favorite parts of the floor as an artist. The magazines and journals are really impressive and I could picture myself sitting there for hours just taking in the images and writing related to up and coming artists for inspiration. Yet, just across from the circulation desk is an odd mix of books on display. There was no labeling and I felt I would want to just put them back in the proper order in the main stacks. Some looked new, but others were quite old. I would prefer to see a sign that labeled the purpose of their placement, such as “Reader’s Choice” or the best in a
specific genre. It seemed disorganized. Then make sure to see the area marked “REF” for the reference shelves. This really is quite small and an inadequate collection for an academic library, especially one that does have a masters degree program. You can clearly see that the storage room is comparable in size to the main stacks. Although the reference section is small, there is a sizeable amount of non-circulating books shelved alongside the main circulating collection that any other school may set aside in a separate section of the library. I thought that it was odd to have the non-circulating section mixed in with the circulating books and so I asked Holly Dankert about this. She stated,

“I like that the non-circulating items are mixed in. It facilitates browsing. No one browses the reference collection. The things that are non-circulating are not reference, but expensive items that we choose not to circulate. We do bill the students if they do not get returned, which is why they are non-circulating, based on cost and availability.”

In examining the non-circulating items, I did notice that some of these items were duplicates of a circulating item. If one were checked out, there would be another copy still in the library.

The Flaxman Library does try to cater to some of the students’ non-library related needs. Graduate students have their own studio spaces but undergraduates do not, so the library has drafting tables in addition to regular reading tables. This allows the students to complete their studio artwork there. The students can also check out skeletons to draw from or look through pamphlet files for photographs to draw from or information on alumni and faculty artists that have slide portfolios on file.

Since the library obviously has room for improvement, I asked Holly Dankert about how they plan and assess for the library’s needs. She remarked that the library has never had a strategic plan but the library is thinking of working on one with the school as
a whole. They also do not use a specific assessment tool to assess and plan for the library. She was not able to provide me with their Annual Report.

However, from her remarks the librarians do seem to aggressively market their services, special collections, and integrate user instruction into the classroom. One interesting note is that the Flaxman Library does not have an option to speak with students through an Instant Messenger system on the Internet the way many academic libraries do. This helps to increase the amount of students that visit the library to speak with librarians in person.

Holly Dankert described the library’s marketing plan in her interview,

“We have created a new liaison program to assign librarians to programs on campus. The school is interdisciplinary and does not have a big budget. It’s the role of the librarians to reach out to departments to keep in touch with the students and faculty. It’s slow building, though.”

Being that marketing and staying in touch with the students has become an important role for the librarians, she feels that they really do have a large amount of students that visit the Flaxman library and Special Collections. The librarians regularly teach classes in which they provide students with instruction on how to use the library and find materials. Holly Dankert described their user instruction classes during the interview,

“We try to do active learning things to talk to a class about the catalog and the space, then send students out to find certain things. We talk to them about finding the materials and the issues they had to help them learn how to use the library.”

Marketing and user instruction is an area that the library seems to be excelling in. They are happy with the amount of students that visit the library. The circulation statistics for this library are really high compared to the rate of circulation per student at Columbia College.
Another interesting organizational issue that I would like to touch on is the cataloging and classification systems that are used for the Flaxman Library and Special Collections. Given that the Special Collections are like archives they use a separate cataloging and classification system than the Flaxman Library, which uses the traditional Library of Congress Classification Numbers, Subject Headings, and MARC records. The Flasch Artists’ Book Collection is the most interesting to me in that certain items in the collection do have records in both the collection’s own catalog and the Flaxman Library’s catalog, while other items that are not traditional books are only in the Flasch catalog. Each of the special collections is cataloged separately, but Holly Dankert only spoke to me about the system for the Flasch Collection and the Flaxman Library. The catalog for the Flaxman Library is located at http://libraryguides.saic.edu/home. The catalog for the Joan Flasch Artists’ Book Collection is located at http://digital-libraries.saic.edu/cdm4/index_jfabc.php?CISOROOT=/jfabc and anyone is allowed to visit the collection on the 5th floor.

The items in the Flaxman Library are classified with the Library of Congress Classification Numbers, while the Flasch Collection is classified with an acquisition number. A good example of an artist that has books in both collections is Gerhard Richter. Atlas by Gerhard Richter is a normally published book of his artwork that is in the Flaxman Library. Its classification number is the Library of Congress Classification Number, N6888.R49 A4 1997. War cut by Gerhard Richter is a limited edition artist book that was published in an edition of 2400 copies. Since it is a limited edition book it is in the Flasch Collection, but its record can be found in both catalogs. It is classified with the acquisition number of 13.41. According to Holly Dankert, this number is
derived from the year and order in which an item was purchased and added to their collection. They have come up with this concept on their own and did not base it on an already established classification system. Items in the Flasch Collection are kept in file folders, in file cabinets, and in the order of the acquisition number.

An untraditional object like a pill bottle containing clear pills with words is one of the more artistic handmade objects in the collection. This is “Pharmacy of Crippling Hope” by Jessica Poor, acquisition number Z6.10. An object like this has not been uploaded into the Flaxman Catalog and can only be seen in the Flasch Collection’s catalog.

The second difference in the two cataloging systems is that the Flaxman Library encodes its catalog’s database as MARC and is connected to the I-Share catalog system. MARC stands for Machine Readable Cataloging. Each MARC record is easy to find in the catalog by selecting the link for “Staff View.” Each field in the database is encoded with a numerical system. For example 050 means Library of Congress Call Number. 100 are the Main Entry: Personal Name. 245 are the Title statement. 260 are the Publication, Distribution, etc. 600 are the Subject Added Entry- personal name (Chan, 2007).

The Flasch Collection encodes its catalog’s database with Dublin Core with the Content DM program the library purchased from CARLI. This is an XML program code, which is similar in appearance to HTML. Examples of what it looks like are available on the Dublin Core website at http://dublincore.org/documents/dcmes-xml/. Instead of the number system of MARC Dublin Core appears as:

```xml
```
This example from the Dublin Core website, shows that it is easier to identify the meaning of the fields by simply looking at it since the numbers do not have to be translated.

The last main difference in the classification and cataloging systems of the library and the special collections is the metadata that is used for the subject headings, which provide access points to search for material in the catalog by the subject category.

According to Ms. Dankert, the library catalogs its items with extra metadata categories in addition to the traditional Library of Congress Subject Headings that is recommended for libraries to use. This metadata is easily searchable through the Flasch Collection’s catalog by selecting the link to “Browse by Search Term.” These options include material, printing method, and binding method, among others. They have devised this set of metadata to fit their collection. Library of Congress Subject Headings are still incorporated into these records, too. This separate set of metadata makes it easier for the visitor to find an item by the type of production method that they are interested in studying.

As a library science student I found the organization of the Flaxman Library’s cataloging and classification systems to be very interesting to study and learn from, and the possibility of managing seven large special collections within an academic library an excellent idea for fostering learning within their community. However, I still want to encourage the School of the Art Institute of Chicago’s administration to look at the library through a critical lens in order to make much needed improvements to its library. Holly Dankert, the Head of Reader’s Services, herself, felt that the budget and space were inadequate for the library’s needs. When looking at the circulation statistics of the rate of
20 items per student being checked out during a school year, it is evidence that the librarians are successful in marketing the library’s services and inspire the students to check out the collection that they have through their user instruction programs. However, looking at the rate of interlibrary loan statistics of 4 items per student per year, I am convinced that the library does not have an adequate collection for its academic community. Collection development and providing a space for the collection is an area that needs to be improved on. Waiting for a book to come in through interlibrary loan takes time and could cause a student to finish an assignment late. This is a collection that is not acceptable for the needs of a 21st century Masters degree program that must provide students with the ability to easily research business, science, medical, and educational subjects. Without a proper strategic plan the library may not be successful at this. Whether or not a library adequately provides the students with a proper learning environment at ones university is not something that most students think about unless they are library science students reading the American Library Association’s website and its article entitled “A Student’s Guide to Evaluating Libraries in Colleges and Universities.” If Ms. Dankert is just one librarian that does not have a specific assessment tool that she uses to evaluate and improve the library, perhaps other academic libraries do not either. This is an area that the ALA can market more to all academic librarians through its programs in order to actively improve the quality of libraries in the United States.
Appendix (Source for the following documents: Flaxman Library, SAIC)
Flaxman Library

6th floor
Circulation statistics (2010)
66,350 items checked out
16,000 renewals
3,125 reserve items checked out

Interlibrary loan (2010)
13,447 items borrowed (11,048 I-Share)
4,649 items loaned (3,246 I-Share)

Library Staff
8 full-time librarians
5 full-time non-librarian staff
3 part-time non-librarian staff
18 student workers (varies)

Library Collection
84,000 books in main collection (27,800 of these are in storage)
7,700 DVD/VHS
400 magazine subscriptions
70 licensed databases
1,670 Reference books

Popular reference books

Popular databases
JSTOR
Art Full Text
Project Muse
Film and Television Literature Index
FLAXMAN LIBRARY EXPENDITURES

FISCAL YEAR 2010

$1,367,503

- 68% staffing
- 22% information resources
- 10% other operating expenditures

STAFFING
includes: wages, salaries, FICA, benefits; for regular, temporary, and student workers

INFORMATION RESOURCES
includes: books, audio-visual, serials, digital; purchased & licensed content; copyright clearance fees; preservation costs

OTHER OPERATING EXPENDITURES
includes: consortia, fees, memberships; supplies; etc.

TOTAL 100%
FLAXMAN LIBRARY COLLECTIONS BY SUBJECT

FISCAL YEAR 2010

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CLASSIFICATION

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<th>Description</th>
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<td>N</td>
<td>Visual arts</td>
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<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>Language, literature (including film literature)</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
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<td>C - F</td>
<td>History</td>
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<td>T</td>
<td>Technology (including engineering, handicrafts, photography)</td>
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<td>H</td>
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