Service Desks Get Up Close and Personal

“Lending a helping hand” is something that the library has always set out to do when patrons come to the service desks, but when that help expands to assisting patrons in the stacks and in the study areas, a new approach to customer service is born. It’s called Atkins Help, a task that comes second nature to staff at the Research Services and Circulation Desks.

Equipped with an electronic tablet and the question, “May I help you,” the service desk staff are roaming the library looking to help anyone with a need. “The purpose of Atkins Help is to remove any barriers that may exist with our desk services. The roaming service is intended to be an extension of what the Research Services and Circulation Desks offer,” says Library Assistant, Barry Falls.

Falls, who began testing the service in early October, boots up his iPad and walks the floors of the library identifying patrons who appear lost, confused or need help navigating around the library. As Falls roams, he is able to assist patrons on the spot by answering questions, looking up call numbers, providing directions as well as offering other helpful information for patrons—just about everything he does at the Circulation Desk.

Being available is one way to describe the roaming service, up close and personal is another. “By working at the Circulation Desk I’ve noticed that some people are hesitant to go to a desk for help. They may feel that their question is too embarrassing to ask at the desk when people are in line behind them. The roaming service offers a way to curb that. This option allows us to add a personal touch to our customer service, a way people can approach us one on one,” says Falls.

See Up Close and Personal on page 2
Digital Initiatives and Library Administration Welcome New Staff

From Buffalo, NY, Derek Norton is the new Business & Technology Application Analyst. Derek began working at Atkins on December 3rd.

Chesney Klubert comes to us from Mooresville, NC. She is the new Administrative Support Specialist. December 8th was her first day.

Test Your Knowledge
Answers:
- Teacher’s College
- Two
- Attorney Julius Chambers and his firm represented the plaintiffs in Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education

Up Close and Personal continued from page 1

November
5  David Hill
7  Michael Winecoff
8  Denelle Eads
9  Chuck Hamaker
13  Brad Arnold
15  Ann Davis
23  Tina Wright

December
6  Dornette Scott
6  Liz Siler
11  Marilyn Schuster
15  Nancy Reynolds
25  Katie Dickinson

And it’s not just Falls reaching out to patrons, they come to him too. Falls says, “Since I’ve been testing this service I’ve been recording the type of interactions I have with patrons. I approach patrons 68 percent of the time, the other 32 percent of the time patrons are coming to me asking questions. I expect that percentage to change once Atkins Help is a fully-branded and implemented especially once the roaming team is identified by T-shirts and name tags that were designed by Maggie Ngo.”

As Falls and other staff explore the various possibilities and advantages of having roaming services, they have collected information that will help with designing this service which is targeted to start in mid-spring. According to Falls, certain times of the day as well as the location of where roamers will concentrate are being taken into account. “I’ve noticed that most successful interactions occur in the late morning and early afternoon. There is also an increase during the 15 minutes between the end and beginning of classes,” says Falls.

The kind of service that the roamers will offer is also being considered. “We hope to use this service to lighten the load during exam week. During that time, the Circulation Desk gets so busy. Having a wireless barcode scanner with us to check out books on the spot would be really ideal,” says Falls.
Getting to Know Atkins Library

Notable Names

Rachael Winterling
I am the Usability Assistant in the Digital Initiatives Department.
I have worked for Atkins for four months.
I am originally from Weaverville, NC which is outside of Asheville.
In my free time, I like to paddle board, road and mountain bike, long board, run, read, and craft.
Many people don’t know that I was a college athlete. I ran cross country and track at Wingate University.
The last book I read was One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest by Ken Kesey
When I was younger, I wanted to be a small animal veterinarian.
If I had three wishes they would be to have a cure for Alzheimer’s disease, to be able to travel the world to experience different cultures, and happiness for my family and friends.

Tricia Kent
I am a Library Technical Assistant working in Special Collections. Counting my years as a graduate assistant, I have worked at Atkins Library for almost 28 years.
I am originally from Oil City, Pennsylvania by way of Washington, D.C.
In my free time I do a lot of work to raise funds for organizations like Special Olympics and MiraVia. I enjoy working as a costumed story teller and have recently been studying Canon Law for another volunteer job. I also play “Mama Buzz” with our sons, the “Bring Back the Buzz” guys, and attend many Hornets’ games!
Many people don’t know that I was an Archaeology major at George Washington University. While in D.C., I found an unidentified 3000 year old Peruvian mummy left in a drawer at the Smithsonian.
The last book I read was Dominicana by Robert Curtis, OP. I hope to soon see The Hobbit: The Battle Of The Five Armies - in costume at the midnight show!
When I was younger, I always wanted to be an archaeologist.
If I had three wishes they would be for my parents and Aunt Vickie to still be alive so that my sons could hear their amazing stories.

Beth Scarborough
I am the Information Desk Evening Supervisor.
I have worked for Atkins for six years and six months.
I am originally from Anderson, SC.
In my free time, I like to take long, brisk walks, read, watch movies, travel, enjoy time with friends and family and research family genealogy. I have recently found articles on my great -great grandfather through the Library of Congress' Chronicling America Newspaper Digitization Project.
Many people don’t know that I love old movies. I particularly enjoy comedies featuring Jean Harlow, Melvyn Douglas, Cary Grant, Robert Montgomery and Irene Dunne.
The last book I read was Epilogue: A Memoir, by Will Boast. The last movie I saw was The Bishop’s Wife -- one of my absolute favorites!
When I was younger, I wanted to be a writer.
If I had three wishes they would be to be able to live comfortably the rest of my life, to travel as much as possible and that people be able to coexist without violence.

Alison Bradley
I am Head of Research and Information Services.
I have worked for Atkins for eight years.
I am originally from Voorheesville, NY.
In my free time, I like to read.
Many people don’t know that I am terrified of clowns.
The last book I read was The Fashion in Shrouds, by Margery Allingham.
When I was younger, I wanted to be a grown-up.
If I had three wishes they would be a nap, a vacation, and world peace.
In Her Own Words
Debbie Myers Reflects on her time at Atkins, nearly 24 years

I will retire at the end of this year with 23 1/2 years of service to the University. I started my "temporary" job as a part-time Reserves Desk clerk in July 1989. I thought of it as a summer job, but when the summer ended, I just didn't want to leave! Later that year, I became a full-time temp, and the following July, a permanent employee after landing the newly-created position of Personnel Assistant in Library Administration.

As the Personnel Assistant, I got to meet every employee in the Library and Information Services. I really enjoyed the work, especially meeting each new employee when they started their employment. I also gained a working knowledge of every position in the library, not only the job titles, but what each person actually did.

A couple of years later, when I considered changing jobs, I was especially drawn to one position, that of Equipment Manager in the mysterious department called Media Services. The person who held the job was openly unhappy with it, but to me it looked like a great, fun job with a lot of potential for future growth. When the incumbent resigned, I applied, but was certain that I would not be hired; I knew that a co-worker had also applied, and she was better qualified.

Luckily for me, she withdrew her application at nearly the last minute so I got the job! To prove I could do the work, I had to show that I could thread film onto a 16 mm film projector. This was especially ironic, as the first big project that I was given was to discard the film collection.

At that time, Media Services was located in the Old Atkins building. As the Manager of Audiovisual Equipment in all the classrooms on campus, as well as the circulating collection, I worked a lot with faculty and staff in other academic departments, but rarely with those in the Library. For a couple of years it seemed that we were a part of the library in name only, as we had little interaction with other library departments or staff. When the Great Renovation began in 1996, our unit was minimally affected; we didn't have to move anywhere and there was a brick wall between us and the jackhammers!

Finally the big day came when we all moved into the beautiful, newly renovated library. For a semester or two, we operated out of a temporary location that served as my office, equipment storage, and the equipment checkout desk. Finally, we opened our new service desk and joined Information Commons. Equipment checkout was handed off to Circulation, and my little sub-unit was transformed from Equipment Distribution to Presentation Support. (We wanted to call it Technology Support, but this name was rejected as sounding like it might belong to ITS. A few years later I printed a giant sign that said "Technology Support," and hung it over the service desk. Shortly after that, the name change became official).

Since becoming a permanent employee, while occupying only two positions, I have been a part of six library departments, worked at four public service desks in six locations; occupied 13 offices, reported to 11 direct supervisors, and enjoyed the leadership of 7 University Librarians. I also supervised dozens of student assistants, too many to count.

I have enjoyed every single day of my employment here! (OK, so some days were more enjoyable than others, some supervisors more supportive than others, some co-workers more pleasant than others, and some patrons more polite than others. I tend to recall the best, and forget all about the 'others.')

—Thanks!
Debbie Myers