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Library Fire Alarm Improves Protection

By Tracey Clark

An alarm to provide early warning, additional emergency exits and exit signs were installed in the library for increased fire safety this summer.

Damon Hickey, Associate Director of the Library, was approached by Jennifer Park, a student and library worker, who voiced her concern over the lack of safeguards this summer.

Academic Dean Sam Schuman, library officials, the Business Office and the Maintenance Department discussed various ways in which they could increase the library's protection from fire.

Only fire doors and a few emergency exits existed prior to the start of the Fall semester.

To install a comprehensive alarm system the building would have had to undergo a complete rewiring. In light of the addition and exhaustive renovation of the existing library building planned for three years from now, the allocation of funds towards a complete rewiring at present was considered unjustified.

A comprehensive system will be installed at the time of the addition and renovation.

Hickey calls the system "fairly basic." It involves "smoke and heat detectors in the upper level stacks, and the stairwells leading to the stacks and the attic." The detectors trigger the alarm which sounds through the same section and in front of the building.

There are no detectors nor any alarms in certain sections of the library including Southeast Poetry Center and the Media Center. Those places, Hickey said, were not first priority and could only have been accommodated by a complete rewiring.

"It was easy to rewire (the sections) now protected." Further, "the bookstacks are the most combustible, most confusing in case of fire."

While the Southeast Poetry Center has more than one access and the Media center has an elaborate series of fire doors one of the rooms on the third floor has only one access. This elevated it to a place of primary importance. Study carrels there were removed to effect greater student safety.

The first and second level Eastern-backed rooms have been made dual access for increased

safety. In the past all the windows in these rooms were sealed shut to prevent theft and reduced heating and air conditioning costs.

On each floor one window has been opened and marked as an emergency exit. On the second floor a throw-out chain-link safety ladder has been installed. When either of these windows are opened they also trigger the alarm.

The alarm, Hickey said, "is similar to what's in the dorms." There is some concern that the alarm will not be penetrating enough. The alarm sounds only in limited regions of the library.

During the first two weeks of school the alarm was going off daily due to a faulty detector. Those false alarms indicated to Hickey that "there are parts of the stacks where you can't hear the alarm."

Elizabeth Place-Berry, whose office is on the second floor of the building, isn't sure she would "hear it in my office. I haven't noticed it yet."

Hickey said, "I don't think it's everything we'd like to have in a system, but it's sufficient." It is a system, he said, that can only be



This window is 2nd floor of library now serves as a fire escape.

Photo by Andrew Stuart

enhanced by user awareness.

Library assistants have been instructed in a specific procedure in case of the alarm sounding. Hickey believes this will make up for some of the system's shortcomings.

"My grandfather would always check to see if there was a fire escape before he checked into a hotel: I think if students would make the effort to know what their exits are they will be adequately protected."

New Terminals Installed VAX Access Improves

By Andrew Stuart

Many additions and changes were made in Guilford's computer system during the summer. There are now twenty-two VAX terminals which provide direct public access and five printers with keyboards.

There are terminals in many new locations. These locations were chosen to give the greatest access to the most students.

Most of the new locations are hallways where the terminals may be used at any time, classrooms and the computer lab are sometimes reserved by groups, thus restricting the times during which students can use the terminals.

Within notable new locations are the hallway outside the Chemistry Department in King where there are three terminals, and room 233 in King in the Psychology Department where there are four videos and two printers.

The majority of the terminals are on-line now; however, there are some which are not. These terminals, Charlie White, director of Computer Services, said ought to be hooked up within the

next few weeks.

Although the computer system functions twenty-four hours a day the terminals become inaccessible at midnight because the library now closes at midnight rather than 2 AM, it is necessary for students to plan more carefully when they will use the computer.

A feature of the VAX system which has been greatly enhanced is its protection against lightning and power surges.

In the past, it was not uncommon for students on the terminals to lose hours of work in a thunderstorm due to lightning. New circuitry has given the system a great deal of added protection, though it still is not invulnerable to electrical surges.

White expects continued growth in the VAX system over the next few years but could not say anything specific.

The Computer Study Committee is wrestling with the problem of the VAX becoming overloaded in the next few years because of on-going additions of software to the system. A \$25,000 scientific data base was donated to Guilford in the form of a grant this year.



These 3 terminals on 2nd floor of King provide new access to VAX.

Photo by Andrew Stuart