

Intensifying Management Ability For Quality Assurance

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Viet Nam National University - Ho Chi Minh City is one of the 2 high quality centers of professional education and scientific research in Vietnam, the VNU-HCM has started many projects to promote its quality; one of those is to create a new library – the Central Library (VNU CL) - with modern technologies, new ways of services and especially, and focus on electronic resources. Since its opening, faculty staffs and students have got more opportunities to strengthen their knowledge. Looking back to 7 months of operation, we realized some good results we've made and the problems that need to be adjusted to improve the services.

VNU Library System Overview: VNU-HCM library system consists of:

- The VNU Central Library
- The Library of the University of Technology.
- The Library of the University of Natural Sciences
- The Library of the University of Social Sciences and Humanities
- The Library of the International University
- The Library of the Faculty of Law and Economics
- Some libraries of research institutes and centers

Although the libraries have good relationship, the cooperation in order to maximize library services is still a problem.

Overview of VNU CL:

- o *Founded:* May, 2005
- o *Space:* 9,000 square meters
- o *Seats:* 1,000
- o *Patrons:* 6,000
- o *Staffs:* 25, among them 1 got MA in librarian science, 10 got bachelor degree in librarian science, 2 got bachelor degree in computer science.
- o *Equipments:* The VNU CL has been equipped modern facilities:
 - RFID chips and equipments for managing documents and patrons
 - Library Management Software (Virtua)
 - Networked PCs
 - IP television system, video on demand system.
- o *Resources:* 15,000 print copies, 500 titles of journals, 14 online databases, 300 CDs

Some essential measures applied at the VNU CL for the purpose of quality assurance:

1. Fostering Librarians' professional ability: Most librarians got bachelor degree of Library Sciences. However, they still need more skills and experience in running a modern library. To adapt that demands, we have organized short-term training courses on following subjects:
 - Managing a modern library: 2 weeks training course at La Trobe University for 6 librarians;
 - Improving library skills: 2 weeks training course at Chulalongkorn University for 6 librarians and at Thammasat University for 2 librarians.
 - Improving the librarian competence in Reference service, cataloging, MARC 21, AACR2: courses led by experienced instructors from the USA and local.
 - Training courses on using online databases.
 - Training courses on using the Library Management Software (Virtua – product of VTLS) conducted by experienced specialists of iGroup Asia Pacific Ltd.

Those courses have helped our staffs to strengthen their practical knowledge and to operate the library effectively. Please notice that our VNU CL has started only for 7 months – since May 2005.

2. Training for Users: To help the patrons in using the services effectively, we organize regularly training sessions for users. Every patron must participate in a 3 hour training course before receiving patron cards and using the library services. Main content of the training is basic knowledge and practice skills in using equipments, accessing the VNU CL Website, using library OPAC, searching databases and some techniques in searching useful information from the Internet.
3. Feedback: To satisfy the patron needs, we apply some measures to communicate with our patrons.
 - Providing notebook for patron comments
 - Setting up good connection with university members and faculties for receiving recommendations.

Up to this time, we have received hundreds of comments from the patrons and have adjusted some policies and ways of services to accord with the reality.

Obstruction to be overcome:

1. As mentioned above, the VNU libraries are being separated from each others. This is a big problem in terms of quality assurance. To overcome that situation, we are now carrying out a scientific research for the purpose of synchronizing the activities of all libraries as a whole, making good conditions so that every patron of any member library can use services of the others conveniently. This research is being done by all directors of member libraries, highly supported by VNU-HCM President Board and will be completed at the end of 2006. We believe that the result of this research and its application into practice will strongly influence the quality assurance of VNU-HCM libraries.

2. Besides the research, fortifying the user skills in information searching is our high concern. User training sessions will be held weekly at the VNU CL.
3. Our other attention is to improve English language competence for our staffs since English is very important for librarians.

Conclusion:

With the setting up of a new library (The VNU CL), the quality assurance of the VNU-HCM libraries is now becoming better. However, there are still some weakness. We are making all efforts to overcome the obstructions mentioned. We hope to receive support and experience sharing from the board of leaders and members of AUNILo.