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The University Authors Recognition Reception at Boise State University: A Celebration of Scholarship

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by Julia Stringfellow and Michelle Armstrong

Albertsons Library at Boise State University recently held its seventh annual University Authors Recognition (UAR) Reception. The reception was first held in 2006 to honor university faculty and their scholarship. Taking place usually the last week of February, the reception provides a great opportunity for faculty and staff across campus to come together to learn about and celebrate one another's scholarship.

As with any high-profile university event, planning began early and collaboration was done throughout campus. The UAR committee began working on this project in the fall of 2011 and was comprised of both librarians and staff from different units in the library. To facilitate the preparations for the reception, a Google site and checklist of things to do was created. Since the Library always makes a point of trying to include the University's administration in the reception program, one of the first tasks completed was to finalize the date of the reception. By doing this, the Provost, College Deans, and even occasionally the University President are able to attend.

Another important task completed was the creation of the UAR bibliography. The authors recognized for the 2012 reception published works from September 2010 through August 2011, and included books, book chapters, articles from peer-reviewed journals, conference proceedings, and other creative works. Boise State's institutional repository, [ScholarWorks](#), was a very helpful tool in creating the bibliography of authors' works. Using the publication information already gathered by repository staff was very efficient and far less time-consuming than how the bibliography was assembled in the past. Previously the bibliography was developed through an open call to faculty for publication information and extensive research by the committee to track down recent faculty publications. In addition to the bibliography, an author's gallery was created using faculty [SelectedWorks](#) sites. These are webpages created by repository staff that showcase a professor's individual publications.

As a result of these efforts the bibliography is now on [ScholarWorks](#). As a virtual collection, the main URL will be kept and the filters for creating future bibliographies will be updated each year. The bibliography brings to light the diverse kinds of scholarship, from works on Second Life to climate variability. Using the open-access format of ScholarWorks to showcase the bibliography greatly increase the accessibility of the author's works and shares it with a larger community. The bibliographies on ScholarWorks from past years will be archived and continue to be accessible on the ScholarWorks website.

The many details of the event also included making decisions about displays for the reception. The library typically purchases two copies of all new books by Boise State authors. One copy goes in the main collection and circulates, and the second copy is housed in the Special Collections department and does not circulate. Since these books in the main collection are almost always checked out, it was decided that a physical display of authors' books for this reception would come from Special Collections. The display was set up in high-traffic areas of the library a few weeks prior to the reception and then moved to the reception location the day of the event. The committee also wanted to create a display featuring the latest trends in technology. Since the library has incorporated many ebooks into its collection, a display using iPads as ebook readers featuring faculty-authored books was also developed for the reception.

Since the UAR committee makes a special point of trying to be inclusive and find ways to honor all faculty and staff authors, a third display was designed to show individual authors honored in the reception and provide information on them. Given that there were over 300 university authors, the committee needed a display that would go through the authors fairly quickly and cover everyone. To do this, a PowerPoint presentation was created with a slide for each author that included their picture (when it was available), their department, and a quote from their publication. Two computer monitors were set up at the reception, one showing half of the author slides and the other showing the rest. Each slide displayed for ten seconds. The committee members who created the slides made a special point of selecting quotes that emphasized why the scholarship was important. Although it took a great deal of work, this personal touch was especially appreciated by attendees.

The committee spared no detail in planning for the reception. Work with the university's catering department was done to ensure food and beverages would be at the reception, and university flags representing each college were also reserved to be part of the decorations.

Student musicians from the Music department were requested to play during the reception. Announcements on the library's blog and in the university's online newsletter also appeared to spread the word about the reception.

The day of the reception involved many last-minute preparations before the reception began. Displays, decorations, and tables and chairs were set up. The reception started at 3:30 and went through 5pm. The total count of attendees was over 115, one of the highest numbers for the event. Faculty and staff from different departments on campus were able to visit and learn about each other's research and scholarship. Authors watched the author slideshow and enjoyed seeing their own slide. The ebooks display was also a big hit with many faculty as they were able to view their colleagues' books using the iPads. The program during the reception included each College Dean honoring the faculty authors in their department and a group picture of authors from each department was taken. After the program, many people stayed and continued to visit.

The reception has proved to be very successful in honoring university scholarship. It is a popular annual university tradition that brings librarians, faculty, and staff together. Librarians who serve as liaisons to academic departments are able to talk with the faculty from their department and share new resources the library provides. By hosting the bibliography in an open access format, the library helps increase the discovery of the incredible scholarship produced at Boise State. From the perspective of the library, the event was an accomplishment in finding another way to serve the university community and honor their accomplishments.

Photograph from the reception courtesy of Jim Duran.

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