**CHUSS Graduate students Skilled on Library Information Access, Retrieval and Use Courtesy of the CERTL**

Over 20 Graduate PhD students from the College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHUSS) at the stage of thesis writing have under gone a one day training on how they can access, retrieve and use information from the university databases.

The library information literacy workshop was organized under the auspices of the Center of Excellence in Research, Teaching and Learning (CERTL) at Makerere University Main Library on Friday 29th October, 2021.

The training was facilitated by Makerere University Librarian represented by the Deputy Dr. Ruth Nalumaga and the technical team including the Reference Librarian Mr. Patrick Sikikome, the head of Periodicals and E-resources Ms. Caroline Kousinge and the Head of ICT Services Mr. Timothy Sentamu, Other facilitators were Ms. Atim Patience and Ms.Martha Lyaka.

Library information is one of the courses offered to students through the Graduate school. However, what CERT has done is an abridged version where all the information is touched so that students can access the information because some of them have done the course but could have forgotten.

The aspects covered included; An overview of the library facilities and resources; Searching strategies; Searching the library catalogue and; Searching the library databases. Other aspects covered were: Identifying predatory journals; Managing MS, Word files and Generating the Table of contents; Reference Management and Citation and Plagiarism Chocker and Paraphrasing.

The one day workshop was opened by the University Librarian represented by the Deputy Dr. Ruth Nalumaga who also facilitated some courses.

DR. Nalumga underscored the importance the writing workshop in enhancing the understanding of what constitutes important and reliable information for the graduate students’ writing work.

“They also need to have some understanding of how to use that information. Sometimes you may read a certain book or a certain piece of literature and you quote it as it is. In the course of their work someone may come up with a statement such as, “This is plagiarism,” and they may wonder how to cite properly and what would be an improper citation.

So we hope that, at the end of the day, staff will take students through all that and they will be able to write very good projects and theses”, Dr. Nalumaga said.

The Director Makerere University Center of Excellence in Research, Teaching and Learning (CERTL) Prof. Andrew State said the training targeted graduate students from CHUSS who have reached the thesis writing stage.

“One of the things we do for students is to facilitate them have information and, having this information all together is very important for their writing stage especially on how to access and cite information, how to find out which information is available and how to use it.

One of the requirements of students in this college is that they have to publish before they defend their doctoral degrees, so this is why we thought this workshop is very important”, Prof. Stated said.

Prof. State implored students to read widely and never to rush with little information. He noted that the problem that most people have is that they access one piece of information and then they write as if they have covered without making sure they search for other information.

“The writing process is very lonely. It demands a lot and as students you should not get satisfied with the little that you have. You should be always looking for more until you reach saturation. When you reach saturation, it means you have rounded up all the literature and you can confidently write because you have the facts to get to publish”. Prof. State advised.

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The Reference Librarian Mr. Patrick Sikikome said the university conducts trainings for affiliate institutions especially those affiliated to CHUSS with the main purpose of imparting skills related to information access and retrieval to students so that they can access information remotely.

Mr. Sekikome handled a session on Searching strategies where students were given skills on how best they can retrieve information among the million results they get.

“This is done by use of Boolean operators. Boolean operators are the search strategies which students put in use to refine their searches. They include: and, or, not, double quotes, phrase searching, Wild card and truncation.

We realized that most of the students when trying to search, they search for the entire string or use the title as given to get results which is not right. In most cases they get irrelevant information or most times databases return no valid information. That is why we introduced them to the searching strategies so that they can search by key words to limit the searches and retrieve only relevant information”, Mr. Sekikome explained

Mr. Sekikome noted that most students only use Google to search for information. He advised students at the graduate level to always use peer reviewed databases which the library subscribes to because they undergo a thorough process before they are included.

**About Makerere University Library**

Makerere University Main Library was constructed in 1959 with a total area of 4,000 square metres and was extended in 1962, 1972 and 2006. The extensions increased the area to 12,000 square metres with a seating capacity of over 2,800.

The Main Library currently has eight sections namely: Technical Services, Periodicals/Serials, Reference and Circulation (including the Law collection and IDA/Basic textbook Reserve collection), Africana Section, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Microfilming and Digitisation, Book Bank and Bindery.

The library collection consists of over 600,000 monographs with an annual addition of about 2,500 print books and 100 electronic books excluding donations and exchange, over 12,000 titles of bound Serials/ Periodicals and an annual subscription of about 200 titles of print Serials/ Periodicals and over 27,000 titles of electronic journals.

There is a Book Bank System that came into existence in 1990. It comprises basic prescribed text books which are kept and accessed from the academic departments. Currently, the Book Bank collection has over 250,000 copies of books.

The Library has ICT facilities. A relatively well equipped Training unit was set up in the Main Library where information literacy sessions are conducted for university staff, students and library staff. A computer laboratory for library users with disabilities was also set up.

 The Library also offers a specialized space, Research Commons offering a differentiated service. The Research Commons is a new type of learning space that exemplifies technology and space design working to encourage and enhance research and collaboration. It’s a place for knowledge creation and research.

The Library also provides the following services: binding, microfilming and photography, photocopying, secretarial, computer training and various reference services.

Although Makerere University Library is an academic unit with programmes, services and functions primarily designed to meet the study, teaching and research information needs of Makerere University community, it also serves as a National Reference Library. In that capacity, it is a Legal Depository for all works published in Uganda including government publications. It is also the depository of the United Nations’ publications and related bodies. These, together with archival materials and dissertations, are housed in the Africana section of the Main Library, while the medical and health related materials are housed at the Medical Library.

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