Library Faculty and Staff Presentations                    Ralph W. Steen Library

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# Demise of the Reference Desk: Tradition and Transformation

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# Demise of the Reference Desk:

Tradition and Transformation

Presented by Tina Oswald and Ann Ellis, Stephen F. Austin State University

# Our University

- Size – 11,000 students
- Description – state university in a small rural city
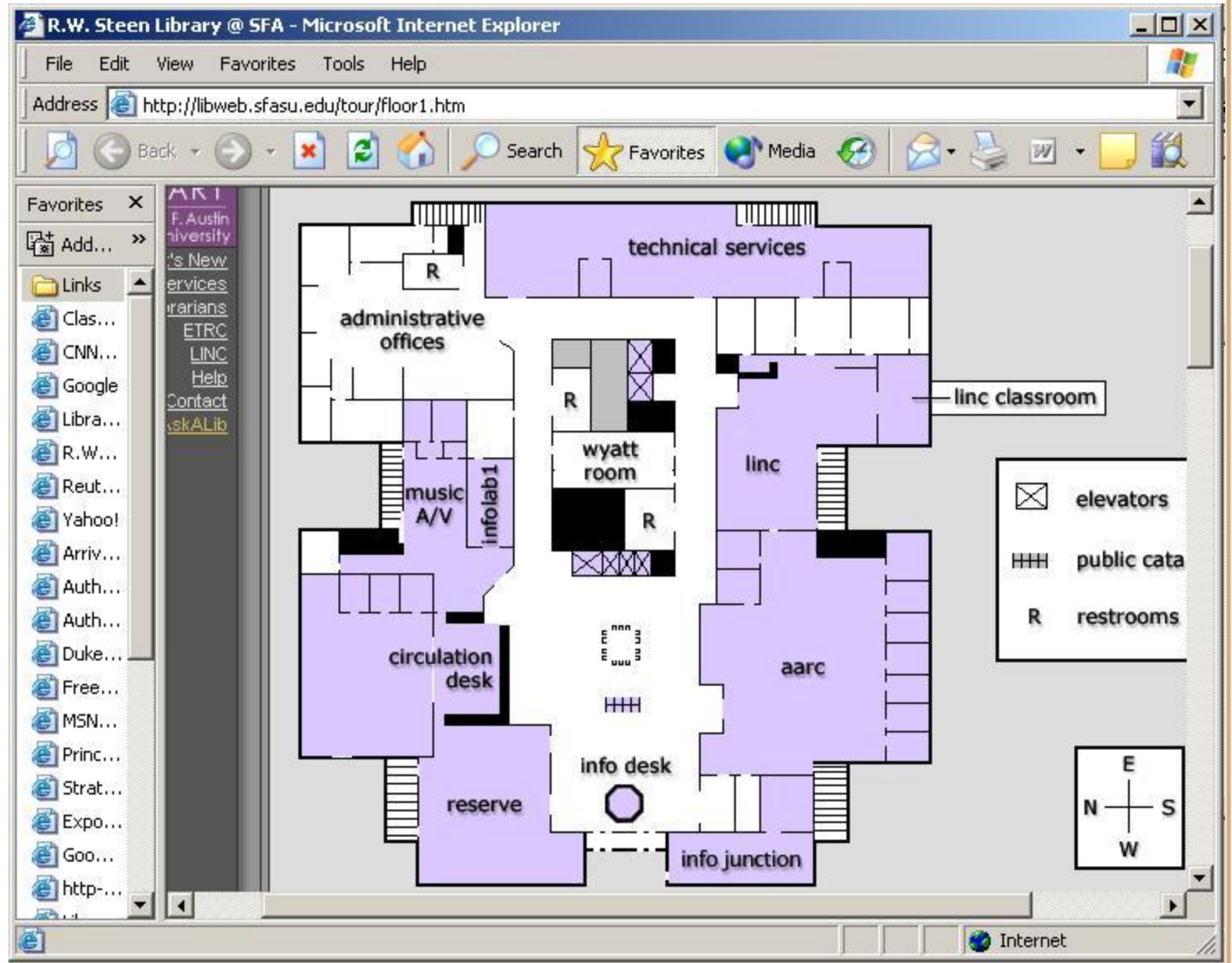- Programs - 93 bachelor's, 61 master's and two doctoral programs

# Our Library

- Size – 1.9 million volumes
- Layout – 4 floors
- Features – offices, computer labs on first floor; reference dept. on second floor
- Special areas – tutoring center, 3 computer labs, computer classroom, meeting rooms

# First Floor

# Second Floor

# Reasons for Change

- Building layout
- Desire for fewer service points
- Decline in number of reference questions
- Flexibility in scheduling work responsibilities

# Beginnings of Change

- Reorganization workshop
  - Entire staff involvement
- Suggestions for changes
- Discussions
  - Administrative Committee
  - Reference Department meetings

# Implementation of Changes

- Steps taken to begin change
- Staff issues
- Trial and error
- Discussions continued
- Name changed to Research and Instructional Services
  - Reduction in reference staff

# Information Desk

- History of desk – began as security checkpoint
- Ideas to change it
  - Limit scope of responsibility
- Staffing issues
- AARC involvement
  - supervision
  - training
- Transfer responsibility to RIS

- The Info Desk is not a reference desk:

# Lobby Area and Info Desk

**Info Desk**

# Research Services

- Office hours with on-call hours
- Faculty liaison program
- Information literacy focus
- Consultations
- Training/workshops
- Community outreach
- Other responsibilities

# Is it Working? - Outcomes

- Results of user survey
- Satisfaction of current staff
- Problems encountered
  - Workload issues
  - Visibility of librarians
  - Changes continue to be made
  - Consider relocation of department to 1st floor