

Blitstein Institute Branch of the Saul Silber Memorial Library Gets a New Look

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This past summer and fall, the library staff at Blitstein Institute embarked on a reorganization project to make the library more effective and in-tune with the needs of the student body and faculty. In the past, students have commented about how the library was inviting, but in reality, they rarely used it. With the goal of making the library a more intuitive, accessible, and interactive resource for students and faculty, the reorganization project was born.

The reorganization began with an analysis of the collection and vision of the library. “There is so much potential for greatness here,” commented Eti Berland, Acting Head Librarian, “and we can really make the library into the resource center that our students need.” With her vision and carefully planned step by step process, the staff worked tirelessly to remove the outdated and damaged materials from the collection. They were then able to make room for new books that were donated from friends and former students, as well as the Chair of the English Department, Mrs. Malkie Eisenberg. After the books were redistributed and reorganized, signs and a map of the collection were created with the help of the Walder Education Pavilion so that the students know exactly where to find all of the materials.

But the resources in the online catalog are not all that the library has to offer. One of the most important updates to the collection has been the creation of a Library website, which can be accessed at <http://htclibrary.weebly.com>. The purpose of the library website is to provide students and faculty access to online resources, career services, events, and library information. There is even an online forum for student to sell their used textbooks, so that new students can benefit.

The library expanded its online database collection as well. Having recently become a member of the Consortium of Academic Research Libraries (CARLI), students now have access to Academic Search Premier, which will provide them with full-text articles they need for their research. Students also have access to the collections at Loyola University and Spertus through long-standing reciprocal borrowing agreements. During the library orientation at the beginning of the fall semester, they had Jane Currie, a librarian at Loyola, show students how to access their numerous collections, and she encouraged the students to visit and use their materials.

Loyola is not the only library that our students visited. This past fall the Blitstein students visited the Northtown Branch of the Chicago Public Library. This field trip to our local library ensured that students have access to their vast array of web resources and library cards to check out materials.

Recreational activities and programs like the field trip are an essential part of making the library the center of student activity. As part of the American Library Association’s National Gaming Day, the library hosted a hugely successful game night at the Blitstein Library on November 12. More than 30 students (as well as alumni and faculty) joined the game night, (The Saul Silber Memorial Library is officially on the map of participating libraries. You can click on this [link](#) and zoom in to find our library.) The library also hosted events for our students’ safety

and well-being. Officer Manois from the Chicago Police met with students to discuss safety tips and strategies. As we headed towards midterms and finals, Rachel Zimmerman, LSW, conducted a stress-relief workshop to help students manage their time and anxiety.

As part of the library's holistic approach to services and programs, they are in the process of providing career resources so that the students are fully equipped to join the workforce and find a job in this economic climate. Through a partnership with Jewish Vocational Services (JVS), the library has provided a three part Success Series Workshop led by Melissa Fickling, a career counselor for JVS. They are currently working on creating a Career Resources Center in the library to provide students with career resources and support. Professionals interested in sharing their expertise, advice, or resources can contact Eti Berland at berland@htc.edu.