

Pfau Library Critical Information Literacy Program: Design & Vision

Introduction

The Pfau Library's Critical Information Literacy (CIL) Program is designed to help students develop a critical consciousness about the information environment. Our program is based on the belief that becoming informed requires active participation; continual analysis of one's own and others' assumptions; consideration about how information is created, produced and distributed; and the ethical use of intellectual property.

This commitment serves the Pfau Library's [mission](#), which includes "supporting lifelong information literacy, critical thinking, and societal engagement," and is an essential piece of the library's [core value](#) of teaching and learning.

Critical Information Literacy in Support of the Curriculum

The CIL Program continues to work with and support the curriculum, particularly those courses in the General Education program that have a [critical literacies](#) learning outcome. A [CIL rubric](#) with accompanying documentation and resources, such as:

- our online [CIL Laboratory for Faculty: An Online Toolkit for Teaching and Learning](#),
- [video tutorials](#) and online quizzes,
- consultations, and
- research guides,

is available to provide pedagogical support and assessment guidance for courses that satisfy this outcome. Librarians are also available to assist with activity and assignment design and to lead professional development opportunities for individual faculty or departments that incorporate CIL into their courses or curricula.

Additionally, the CIL Program offers learning opportunities for students, both by faculty request and through our workshop program. By-request instruction sessions target upper-division, capstone, and graduate courses in which students produce literature reviews and perform critical analyses of information sources. These sessions are customized to the assignment at hand, and we collaborate with faculty to create complementary library assignments. By-request

sessions are taught either in the library or in the classroom, and faculty are surveyed after the completion of each session as a way to measure instructor satisfaction and student learning.

Librarians also teach workshops that students attend on their own time. These workshops are open to everyone, and many faculty choose to offer extra credit to students for attending. Workshops are taught in the library, and in an effort to reach as many students as possible, some are also offered (and some recorded) online through Zoom.

The library has two teaching spaces – a traditional computer lab and a more student-centered, flexible learning space equipped with laptop carts and wireless casting technology.

In both by-request sessions and workshops, librarians focus on one or more of the CIL Program **Student Learning Outcomes**:

1. Students explore the economic and social implications of free and fee-based information access in order to critically analyze the information environment.
2. Students create and use effective search strategies in order to engage in exploratory, inquiry-based research processes.
3. Students distinguish between popular and scholarly information sources in order to select the sources whose purpose, authority, and audience are consistent with their information needs.
4. Students examine how information changes over time in order to determine the values, perspectives, and processes that shaped it.
5. Students recognize the essential value of attribution in order to engage ethically and legally in scholarly conversations.

Student learning is assessed via a survey distributed to students at the end of most classes and workshops. Surveys are also used to measure CIL **Program-level Outcomes**:

1. In an effort to combat library anxiety and to highlight ways library faculty and staff can assist students in their inquiry, *students identify the library as a place to get research help and support.*
2. Recognizing that access to information is a matter of social justice and a requisite for engagement in community and university life, *students strategically access and utilize library resources (subscription databases, textbooks on reserve, etc.) instead of paying for these resources out of pocket.*
3. Valuing the ability to ask questions and solve problems through inquiry, *students apply information literacy research skills and concepts to their coursework and beyond.*
4. Noting that a variety of socioeconomic dynamics shape information, *students demonstrate a critical understanding of the information environment, specifically of the ways in which information is created, disseminated, accessed, and used.*

Quarterly data can be found [here](#).

Looking to the Future: High Impact Practices

The CIL Program aims to broaden its commitment to social justice by growing existing and establishing new collaborative partnerships with various units and experiences that support high impact practices (HIPS) across campus, both curricular and extra-curricular. According to the [Association of American Colleges and Universities](#), “research suggests [HIPS] increase rates of student retention and student engagement.” At both a Hispanic and Minority Serving Institution where approximately [81 percent](#) of students are first-generation college students, the [invitation](#) to ensure all undergraduate students experience at least three HIPs by the time they graduate (CSUSB 2015-2020 strategic plan) is a compelling one and aligns with the Pfau Library’s [core value](#) of social justice and democracy.

To date, our partners include:

- Undergraduate Studies - First-Year Seminar Course (USTD 100)
 - This course serves as an introduction to the university's history and its mission to enhance the intellectual, cultural, and personal development of each student. Librarians assist with professional development for instructors, focusing on and assessing the course's CIL outcome. Librarians have also taught this course in the past.
- Student Mentoring Program - peer-to-peer Library Ambassador Partnership
 - The Student Mentoring Program at CSUSB fosters the success of undergraduate students through peer support programs that encourage academic excellence, campus connectedness and engagement, and the personal growth and development of participating students. The CIL Program partners with the Student Mentoring Program to offer a Library Ambassador program in which student ambassadors visit first-year courses that have a CIL outcome. Ambassadors share library resources and cover basic search skills while at the same time promoting the mentoring program.
- Educational Opportunity Program
 - The mission of the EOP program is to provide access to higher education for historically low-income, first generation disadvantaged students who have the potential to succeed at the university level. The CIL Program offers an orientation session with EOP students that covers library resources and services as well as the importance and role of attribution in college-level research.
- Early Start Program & Coyote First Step
 - The Early Start Program serves CSU admitted first-time freshman requiring skills development in written communication and/or mathematics/quantitative

reasoning. The goals of Early Start are to better prepare students in written communication and math/quantitative reasoning before their first term, thereby improving their chances of successful completion of a baccalaureate degree. The CIL Program offers training and a resource overview for Student Orientation Leaders who mentor and support Early Start participants.

- Office of Student Research
 - The mission of the Office of Student Research is to facilitate the engagement of students in scholarly and creative activities related to their disciplines by providing resources that support both student scholars and faculty mentors. The CIL Program collaborates with the Office of Student Research to offer a variety of workshops in support of participating students.
- Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship Program
 - The Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship (Melon) is a 2-year program at CSUSB that provides financial support, research mentorship, and assistance with graduate school applications. The fundamental objective of MMUF is to address, over time, the problem of underrepresentation in the academy at the level of college and university faculties. The CIL Program offers tailored workshops and consultations for participating students.