
St. Andrew's Greek Orthodox Theological College

Redfern, N.S.W.

Chris Harvey, Librarian

The library is part of St. Andrew's Greek Orthodox Theological College whose parent institution is the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia. I have been employed by the archdiocese as the librarian since May 1997.

The library's main user groups are the students (11 full-time, 5 part-time and 7 master's students) and the faculty of the College. After the primary users, others include the Orthodox clergy, previous graduates, other theological students and faculty from other Sydney College of Divinity (SCD) institutions and members of the general public.

The library has just processed its 12,000th item and subscribes to a limited number of journals (about 20, mainly on Orthodoxy). In addition, a further 50 journals are received on exchange and as gifts.

New plant has been purchased recently, such as a new computer and photocopier. In 2003 it is planned to purchase another computer and to network both computers for student access as well as a new printer, internet access for the librarian and a new microfiche reader/printer. The purchase of the last item is considered a priority as Migne, which the library has on microfiche, is a major source for patristic studies.

In November 2001 the College engaged the services of a part-time library assistant (an ex-graduate undertaking further studies) for 12 hours per week. His knowledge of Greek and of the library has enabled the library to begin purchasing large quantities of Greek books from Greece, as well as allowing the library to remain open until 8 p.m. three nights per week.

The College does not have a mission statement but I believe that the objective of the library and its staff is to assist to

their greatest ability the students and faculty to learn and achieve excellence. The most enjoyable aspect of my job is the varied work, the work environment, the people I assist (students and faculty especially), the proximity of my work to my home and my on-going learning about Orthodoxy, people and Greek culture.

The negative aspects of the position and the library are the budget limits, the fact that the College is not well known—not only within the Greek community but also within the overall community, and my not reading or speaking Greek well. Other challenging aspects are the attitude of the borrowers to the rules of the Library (which many do not consider important), the Greek culture and mind, and also the fact that the College is located in Redfern, which has some problems with crime.

Within the College and the Archdiocese the level of support varies from 100% to not interested, which can make my life and the library difficult. However, within the SCD I have a great deal of support—in particular from the library staff at the Catholic Institute, and also from Camden Theological College and Moore Theological College.

I think the best way to promote the Library is to give outstanding and friendly service. This will keep the users coming back and also help in spreading the word about the excellent service!

I think that it is necessary for the churches at a local level, particularly in the Sydney metropolitan area, to promote the College library as a source of good information about the Orthodox Church.

However, the best strategy for overcoming the isolation is to allow graduates borrowing rights, especially those from interstate. I am always willing to listen to ideas on promoting the library, its facilities and collection.