General Statement

The James P. Adams Library endeavors to protect the privacy of all of its patrons, whether students, faculty, staff, or members of the general public regarding their use of the Library. Following Rhode Island state law (R.I. General Laws sections 11-18-32 & 38-2-2) and procedures outlined in the American Library Association’s “Confidentiality and Coping with Law Enforcement Inquiries: Guidelines for the Library and Its Staff,” Adams Library staff members, including student staff, shall treat information concerning a borrower’s registration, identity, status, requests for information and materials, and loan transactions as confidential and not to be released or made available in any format to a federal agent, law enforcement officer, or any person, other than a library supervisor or fellow staff member attempting to facilitate a patron request, unless proper authorization, such as a search warrant, subpoena, or other lawful directive has been presented. Moreover, patrons of the Library should be alert to the fact that due to certain provisions in the US Patriot Act of 2001 (Public law 107-56), the Library may be prohibited from notifying them of requests for confidential information.[1]

Information Collected

A library registration record is created for each patron. The record contains the borrower's name, address, and other identifying information. This information is used only for library circulation purposes. The library's circulation function temporarily links a patron with the library materials he or she has checked out. Unless fines or other exceptions occur, this link is severed, when materials are returned. For each item checked out to a patron, the library maintains the following information:

- Item specific details, such as the author, title, call number, and barcode number
- The date charged, loan period, and the date due
- The number of renewals and the date of the last renewal

Instructions for Library Staff

Staff, including student staff, working at the James P. Adams Library shall NOT disclose the following:

- The name of a patron who has a particular item checked out
- The titles that are checked out to a particular patron

[12/13/07]
• Personal information of any patron (address, phone number, email, etc.)
• Identify a patron who has checked out a particular item or describe them in any other way
• Past circulation records, including inter-library loan or course reserves
• E-mail or electronic resources transactions
• Content of reference transactions

Staff, including student staff, working at the James P. Adams Library MAY do the following:

• Give the due date of a particular item
• Recall any checked out item
• Suggest that students mention their need for specific checked out items in class, with the hope that borrowers of those materials will hear the request and return materials sooner, rather than later.

In the event that a federal agent or other law enforcement authority with a court order approaches a library staff member, including a student worker, with a request for any information about a patron, the staff member shall refer the request to the Director of the Library, or in the Director's absence, to the Vice-President for Academic Affairs.

[1] The FBI may obtain any information about a patron that the Library has. This includes, but is not limited to:

• Records of books and other materials checked out
• Records of searches done on the Library computers, including places visited on the Internet
• Records of books and other materials borrowed through interlibrary loan
• Notes taken by librarians when assisting a patron with a question

The Patriot Act also specifically prohibits the Library from either alerting the patron whose records have been disclosed or challenging the validity of the request.