University Library
Washington & Lee University

Strategic Directions
2014 - 2015

Enhancing the university’s capacity to meet the challenges of learning & research
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Transformation

The 21st century liberal arts library is a teaching organization that collaborates with faculty to prepare students for life-long learning.

Changes in the library will strengthen educational opportunities that embrace the university’s mission:

Washington and Lee University provides a liberal arts education that develops students’ capacity to think freely, critically, and humanely and to conduct themselves with honor, integrity, and civility. Graduates will be prepared for life-long learning, personal achievement, responsible leadership, service to others, and engaged citizenship in a global and diverse society.
Strategic Goals

- Expand library integration and participation in the curriculum and in student learning outcomes.
- Partner with faculty and students in creating, designing, and maintaining research-oriented Digital Humanities initiatives.
- Develop digital and print collections to support the curriculum and independent learning.
- Strengthen special collections in instruction, outreach, access, and preservation.
- Enhance library technology for discovery and scholarly communication.
- Revitalize the lower levels of Leyburn to offer modern learning spaces as well as shelving for the collection.
Not a Vision
but reality

For today’s undergraduates, it always has been the 21st century.

Knowledge has never been confined solely within the pages of books. The library always has been a place for creativity, learning, and research. The 21st century library offers a unified digital and print collection, along with rare materials and archives that present distinctive learning and research opportunities for students and faculty. Our search engines have matured to the point where we can shift library instruction from the mechanics of navigating databases to thinking critically in the context of information, including creative methods for examining and conducting research in a digital environment.

The library remains a place for creativity, learning, and research by housing books and journals but also study spaces, classrooms, computer labs, multimedia editing facilities, and offices. The library remains a vibrant space for engaging the campus intellectually with the world of scholarship.
The Library, The Curriculum, & Student Learning Outcomes

The library places the highest priority on the goal of expanding our instruction program to prepare students for life in an information society.

The library faculty offers an instructional program structured around five learning outcomes for W&L undergraduates:

- master quality research skills.
- gain confidence in creating information products.
- form life-long learning habits.

• understand the variety of information platforms & services. Today’s students use information services in their daily lives more than any other generation. The variety of information platforms (e.g., Facebook, Spotify, Twitter, YouTube) share structural qualities with research databases and digital collections of primary source material. Through understanding how these tools organize and deliver content—whether text, audio, or video—students strengthen their capacity for effectively utilizing any database-driven resource.

• think critically within the context of information. We are all inundated with bits of data from a wide-range of resources with various levels of credibility. Students are enriched by the analytical ability to consider the authority, line of reasoning, and transparency of the source as a means of deciphering hidden agendas within issues and research.
Rethink library instruction by shifting the focus from finding resources to critical thinking.

- Create short courses exploring digital humanities methodologies, resources, and tools within specific disciplines.
- Craft a series of online videos outlining the basics of research.
- Evaluate knowledge gaps & progress of students through the HEDS Research Practices survey (in coordination with Institutional Effectiveness).
- Expand poster clinics to include the development of other information products such as e-books, infographics, multimedia, and Web sites.
- Conduct workshops on statistical and geospatial data.
- Propose and develop courses on topics such as the future of the book, visual literacy, & science in popular culture.
- Establish specialized digital research and methodology workshops for students contemplating graduate school in the humanities and social sciences.
- Offer sessions featuring in-depth strategies in library research to students writing honors theses.
- Enhance the library’s participation in first-year initiatives.

- Continue outreach to student groups with specific training and in-depth library activities.
- Increase contact with teaching faculty through library-sponsored events and one-on-one library liaison activities.
- Review and revise subject and course guides to create standards for content and navigation.
- Hold regular teaching strategies sessions among library faculty to refine instructional techniques and professional development.
Digital Humanities

“Digital Humanities is less a unified field than an array of convergent practices that explore a universe in which print is no longer the primary medium in which knowledge is produced and disseminated.”

Digital Humanities, Anne Burdick, et al.

For more than two decades the academic library community has been digitizing scholarly materials and developing databases. Based on these initiatives the Digital Humanities (DH) represents an evolutionary stage in library services: engaging with faculty and students in creating, designing, and maintaining research-based digital collections.

When digital scholarship in the humanities thrives at a university these days, the library is almost always a key player, and often the center and driving force.

A New Republic of Letters: Memory and Scholarship in the Age of Digital Reproduction, Jerome McGann

The University Library’s commitment to Digital Humanities

Collaboration & partnership: we believe in the motto “if you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together” (projecthydra.org). As librarians, we naturally take the long-term view: we want to go far and together with our colleagues on campus and at other institutions in support of DH resources that are part of the broad community of scholarship.

Metadata, open-source, preservation, & standards: these are the building blocks for a robust infrastructure on which to develop sustainable digital projects for use in teaching and research.
Our DH focus: learning is intertwined with student and faculty research

INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE: the choice of systems and tools is an essential factor in the longevity and interoperability of digital projects.

In the fall 2014 the library will expand support for WordPress and Omeka as platforms for DH initiatives and examine needs for other solutions.

DATA AND GEOSPATIAL: non-textual information plays a critical role in scholarship, whether it’s data analysis, curation, management, preservation, and visualization, or approaching data from a geographic perspective.

In 2014–2015 we will offer a series of workshops on data tools and collaborating with faculty on incorporating data tools and resources into courses.

NARRATIVE IN DIGITAL MEDIA: scholarship is traditionally conveyed through textual narratives of articles and monographs. The future of the book is based in digital compositions that present an elegant narrative combining words, images, sound, and video.

The library is launching a global learning initiative that aids students in exploring the craft of writing these multimedia interpretations of their study-abroad experiences.

XML STRUCTURED MARKUP: The Text Encoding Initiative (TEI) is the standard for creating critical, scholarly editions of digital texts in the humanities and social sciences.

The library will develop expertise in creating scholarly online texts, initially with faculty in Romance Languages preparing a TEI-encoded version of a late 14th/early 15th century Franco-Italian epic.
After all, books have never been ‘just books’. They were always coaxed to life by conversation and oration; the oral and written sharing of excerpts; practices of addition, deletion, and extension; swarms of mental and scribbled notes….

_The Library Beyond the Book, Jeffrey T. Schnapp & Matthew Battles_

With rapid access to practically any book in print, libraries are no longer defined by the size of their collections.

Librarians throughout the world are collaboratively constructing a diverse research environment that enhances learning across all levels of institutions.

**Unifying digital & print**

**READY BY FALL 2014**

Provide a discovery service that offers a single search engine across all library resources: databases, e-books, e-journals, and print collection.

Implement more efficient methods and tools for managing the metadata that sustain seamless access to the diversity of licensed digital content.

**READY BY WINTER 2015**

Shift buying books from a just-in-case model to a demand-driven program that increases the efficiency of the book budget.

Establish a data-driven collection evaluation program to identify underutilized resources.

Streamline acquisitions and processing procedures.

Expand access to streaming media as an alternative to DVD and VHS media.

**RECENTLY ACQUIRED DIGITAL RESOURCES**

Index Islamicus (the international classified bibliography of publications in European languages on all aspects of Islam and the Muslim world)

New York Review of Books archive (1963-present)

Merriam-Webster Unabridged

**THANKS TO THE FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY FOR THE FOLLOWING:**

The Times (London) Digital Archive (1785-2008) & The Sunday Times Digital Archive (1822-2006)

BBC Shakespeare Plays (streaming video)
Technology & Scholarship

Librarians focus on the information aspect of information technology.

Libraries leverage technology to serve learning and scholarship. The library’s Web presence provides access to licensed digital resources and the library catalog. Our technological expertise also is manifested through maintaining the WordPress system that is the infrastructure for not only library Web sites but also nearly 100 academic course sites.

Key Library Technology Initiatives for 2014-2015:

- Complete development of a new library Web site.
- Further develop the technological skills of staff.
- Implement a ‘search everything’ discovery search engine.
- Begin evaluation of next generation integrated library systems.
Special Collections & Archives

Learning and research opportunities facilitated through distinctive material

- Strengthen the collecting of rare and specialized material that supports a liberal arts curriculum.
- Expand outreach efforts encouraging faculty to include rare books and manuscripts as components of undergraduate teaching as well as class visits to Special Collections & Archives.
- Develop a detailed space plan to allow for collection growth within the confines of the special collections vault.
- Establish a preservation plan for unique items within the care of Special Collections & Archives.
- Improve intellectual control of materials in the collection through implementation of standardized software tools, e.g., ArchivesSpace, and digital finding aids.
- Establish research and curriculum development grants for faculty and students.
- Prepare a long-term strategy for the university’s digital archive.
- Provide Web access to a digital version of Ring-tum Phi (1897 - present).
- Establish a digital Mock Con archival collection.
The library as a learning space

Digital changes in scholarly communications have lessened the need for ownership of printed materials, yet the library remains a prominent place in the learning experiences of W&L students.

In W&L’s strategic plan, the University seeks to “create a campus for the 21st century”. This plan includes the initiative to transform Leyburn Library into a 21st century learning venue. The 2009 renovation of the main level was the first step, but the transformation of the four other levels is unfinished.

Modernize the lower levels of Leyburn Library by focusing the renovation on learning spaces for students rather than storage of the print collection.

While our library resources and services are rooted firmly in the 21st century, the physical space of Leyburn was designed in the late 1960s/early 1970s to offer the “best post-World War II college and library experience” (Leyburn Library building program, February 12, 1971).

In the first half of 2014, a group of librarians reviewed the space needs for Leyburn. Among the proposals:

- Increase the learning spaces available on levels 1 & 2 by reducing the physical footprint of the government documents and bound journal collections.
- Relocate the administrative suite to level 1 in order to create a teaching space on the main level dedicated to library instruction.
- Expand space for Special Collections & Archives.
- Provide contemporary student seating, and improve lighting, carpeting, as well as wall decor throughout the lower levels.
- Install adequate power connections throughout the lower levels so that students no longer have to study on the floor near an outlet to plug in a laptop.
- Modernize the classrooms, seminar rooms, group study rooms, and individual study rooms into engaging spaces conducive to learning.
• Provide space for a presentation practice room.
• Obtain a suitable amount of compact shelving on level 4 to accommodate collection growth and material storage.

As part of this process, the library also plans to seek out partnerships with other campus departments with shared goals and space needs. Recognizing that revitalizing the lower levels of Leyburn is a long-term, multi-year initiative with significant costs, we recommend a systematic approach resulting in a remodeling that will serve W&L students to the middle of the 21st century.