

The Future of the Libraries Report Implementation Update Jean and Alexander Heard Libraries

Introduction

In October 2014, [Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Susan R. Wentz](#), charged a broadly representative committee consisting of faculty and library leadership with developing a future vision for Vanderbilt University's [Jean and Alexander Heard Libraries](#). In April 2015, [the Future of the Libraries Report](#) was published sharing the committee's recommendations for the ongoing development of the Libraries in support of Vanderbilt's [Academic Strategic Plan](#) and teaching and learning mission. This report outlines progress made to date on implementing that report and what lies ahead.

Digital Presence and Resources

In a diverse universe of platforms and sources of information, search engines must improve to facilitate access to resources. The *Future of the Libraries* Report identified the crucial need for improved search and discovery tools to enhance visibility and access to the Libraries' resources.

Progress to Date:

- The implementation of a new Integrated Library System fulfilled recommendation *F1: Better Search* from the *Future of the Libraries* report. Primo-Alma, which together constitute the new ILS system, was launched in July 2018, providing sophisticated searching capacity, updated user interfaces, and easily interpretable search results. Immediate benefits of the new system include:
 - Users can seamlessly login to the catalog and access materials from off-campus;
 - Users can locate materials as they are entered into the system without delay;
 - Users now have the ability to place recall requests directly within the system;
 - Since this is the system used by the world's leading research libraries, proficiency in using it is a transferable skill for the Vanderbilt community.
- The Libraries have increased licensing of digital resources and also initiated a scanning operation to digitize Vanderbilt resources, including *The Commodore*, *The Owen Manager*, and the *Pillar*, to satisfy *F2 Dramatic Additional Digital Collecting in Addition to Monograph and Serials Acquisitions* of the *Future of Libraries* report.
- To support *F3 E-Textbook Acquisition* of the *Future of Libraries* report, the Libraries adopted Ex Libris' *Leganto* to assist faculty with course reserves, making it easy for them to place online materials licensed by the library; the Libraries also hired a specialist in Open Educational Resources (OER) to direct its scholarly communications program in May 2018. Resulting savings in copyright costs (FY2015, \$63,382; FY2019, \$11,057).
- The complete renovation of the Eskin Biomedical Library and Walker Management Library along with major improvements to spaces in Central Library, Sarah Shannon Stevenson Science and Engineering Library and TV News Archive have incorporated useful technologies and fostered the innovative uses envisioned by *F4 New and Readapted Spaces for New Functions* of the *Future of Libraries* report.
- The Libraries have increased support for and investment in the digital humanities in response to recommendation *F5 Supporting Digital Humanities* of the *Future of Libraries*

report. The Office of Digital Scholarship and Communications (DiSC) consults on data analysis and visualization, digital storytelling, educational gaming, geographic information systems, network analysis, textual encoding, and text mining, among much else. The Libraries also annually co-sponsor an international conference with the Digital Humanities Center called *Cultural Heritage at Scale* as well as other special events throughout the year such as Open Access Week and GIS Day. Librarians also regularly serve as instructors for digital humanities bootcamps and other digital humanities working groups.

- Librarians have increased their engagement with teaching, learning, and research in response to recommendation *F6 Librarian Professional Partners in Education*. Librarians offer instruction of every kind, ranging from consulting with individuals and groups and guest lecturing in classrooms to teaching credit-bearing courses. In FY2017, librarians reported 498 instructional engagements; in 2018, 494; and 672 in 2019. Librarians also support research across campus, taking active roles in trans-institutional programs such as the *Computational Thinking and Learning Initiative*, *Digital Cultural Heritage Research Cluster*, and the *International Initiative for the Study of Slave Societies*.
- The Libraries launched a new web presence in July 2018 with a streamlined, mobile friendly layout in response to recommendation *F7: Constant Access* from the *Future of the Libraries* report. A growing number of special collections findings aids are available via ArchiveSpace, a web-based, open source archive information management system, providing twenty-four-hour access to materials from special collections.

Next steps:

- To improve *F1: Better Search* from the *Future of the Libraries*, the new ILS will be integrated with the interlibrary loan request process.
- To improve *F2 Dramatic Additional Digital Collecting in Addition to Monograph and Serials Acquisitions*, the library will license and make more data sets available for computational research. Digital preservation must be a focus of the coming years.
- To improve *F3 E-Textbook Acquisition*, the library will broaden participation in national Open Educational Resources initiatives and collaborate with faculty to promote adoption of OER textbooks.
- The library will be involved in the creation of a space for digital innovation in the 1101 19th building. Existing resources from the Digital Imaging Lab and Visual Resource Center will be consolidated in the new space.
- To improve *F5 Supporting Digital Humanities*, librarians will promote connections between the Computational Thinking and Learning Initiative, Data Science Institute, and Research IT to promote programs like the *Software Carpentries*.
- To improve *F6 Librarian Professional Partners in Education*, the libraries have initiated a system-wide “digital capacity building” task force to ensure that every librarian has the opportunity to develop cutting-edge digital skills.
- To improve *F7: Constant Access*, we will investigate the use of chatbots with artificial intelligence to provide basic reference services online outside of standard hours. Space development for DiSC team collaboration will be part of the new Digital Commons, 2020.

Collections and Services

As indicated in the Future of the Libraries Report, the scope and quality of a Library's collections is reflective of that Library's level of excellence. The Future of the Libraries report and the [2017 Manifesto and Recommendations for the Humanities at Vanderbilt](#) released by the Chancellor's Humanities Committee recommended the ongoing development of Library collections to match the research needs of the faculty, particularly in the humanities and special collections. The called-for investment in Library collections has increased access to premier resources beyond the maintenance of current collections in order to support emerging areas of study, cross-disciplinary scholarship, an information experience beyond coursework.

Progress to Date:

- The move to a centralized collections budget along with coordinated collection development and management throughout the library system aids analysis, collaboration, and evidence-based decision-making and has led to a more flexible collections budget allowing for effective negotiations and large-scale purchases and new endeavors. The Libraries continue to advocate for an increase in the collections budget to better meet the needs of *all* in the Vanderbilt community.
- Despite no significant increase in the collections budget—annual collections increases have averaged only 5%--the Libraries have decreased recurring expenses from nearly 92% to under 80%, allowing for discretionary one-time purchases and a broadening of the VUL holdings.
 - Acquisition funds have been established for new areas such as Medicine, Health and Society, Latina Studies, and Digital Humanities.
 - Desiderata lists from faculty and library liaisons are fulfilled, particularly in e-resources. For instance, Vanderbilt has perpetual access to nearly all digital collections from vendors such as Gale and AdamMatthew, and a large portion of ProQuest's catalog.
 - Beginning in 2018, broad streaming video collections became part of the Libraries' collections, e.g. Kanopy and Academic Video Online.
 - Beginning with 2018 imprints, monographs from University Presses that fit our subject and price criteria are shipped automatically to Vanderbilt.
- In April 2017, the Provost's [Library Collections Initiative](#) awarded funding for faculty to secure and acquire new collections of primary resources and research materials to enhance the institution's position as an inclusively excellent and intellectually innovative research university. Ten projects were [awarded in 2018](#) across a breadth of disciplines totaling nearly \$750,000.00. Examples of acquisitions include 900 musical scores, climate fiction titles, and video interviews of holocaust survivors.
- Acquisitions in Special Collections have enhanced Vanderbilt's reputation as a destination for scholarly research.
 - In December 2015, Vanderbilt [announced the acquisition of the John Hartford music collection](#), containing collections of fiddle tunes, as well as musician biographies and histories of Southern music donated by the family of singer-songwriter, John Hartford.
 - In April 2016, Vanderbilt [announced the acquisition of the Hervé Vilez-Paul Verlaine Collection](#) currently housed in the W.T. Bandy Center for Baudelaire and Modern French Studies located in the Central Library. With the Verlaine Collection, Vanderbilt houses one of the most extensive collections of modernist work outside of Europe.

- In August 2017, Vanderbilt [acquired the George Clulow and United States Playing Card Co. Gaming Collection](#)—one of the world’s premiere collections of books about card games, games of chance, playing cards and chess.
- Increased donor development and grant pursuits have provided additional funding in support of the special collections and responsive collection efforts. The [Friends of the Libraries](#) program was reestablished as part of that initiative. A \$1 million endowment, for example, was set up in 2018 to support student-librarian connections.

Related Progress Not Specified in the FOTL Report:

- Print collections continue to grow and we are running out of storage space. The Libraries have sought to better manage the size of print holdings through a variety of means:
 - In 2014 we embarked on a strategic print journal deaccession plan to free space for new services.
 - In 2017, a system-wide collection analysis began using Sustainable Collection Services (SCS) to better understand, manage, and develop our print collections.
 - In 2019, the Libraries joined the Scholars Trust in a coordinated journal preservation program.
- To create greater coherence in collection development and access, the oversight of the acquisitions and e-resource unit, the metadata services and cataloging team, and access services now lies with the Associate University Librarian for Collections and Core Services.
- The Assessment, Communications, and Engagement (ACE) department was established in 2017 to improve communication. Among many other improvements, ACE produces Quarterly Reports that not only communicate library activities, but also clearly indicate and monitor the ways in which the Libraries are supporting the University’s Strategic Plan. A social media coordinator was hired and a plan implemented to push information via Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and LinkedIn.

Next Steps:

- The Libraries will continue to advocate for resources and ensure they are used effectively.
- With the help of the ULC, the Libraries hope to begin a campus-wide dialog regarding rising journal costs, ownership of research, and the possibilities of open access.
- The newly renovated 19th Ave. S. building will house a portion of library collections. A proposal for the collections will be presented in late Fall 2019.
- Ongoing efforts to collect and preserve a significant special collections and archives, building upon strengths and in response to curricular and research needs.

Developing an Agile, Well-Qualified and Diverse Staff

The Future of the Libraries Report called for the ongoing development of an agile, well-qualified and diverse Library staff.

Progress to Date:

- An investment in leadership was a key priority. Effective August 1, 2016, Valerie Hotchkiss was named Vanderbilt's new University Librarian after a national search led by Dean of the Law School, Chris Guthrie. In May 2018, Vanderbilt announced the hiring of a new Central Library Director, Kasia Gonnerman. Vacant positions for the Director of the Science & Engineering Library (Honora Eskridge) and the Eskind Biomedical Library (Philip Walker) were also filled in 2017-18.
- The Future of the Libraries Report called for the creation of a rank and promotion system to set clear expectations of what is required for Librarian success, and to reward staff members who surpass expectations through service and scholarship. Effective September 1, 2018, Vanderbilt adopted a new rank and promotion system for professional librarians based on professional performance and achievement. The system will also give Vanderbilt a competitive advantage in recruiting and retaining exceptional talent. 57 of 62 professional librarians have opted into the rank and promotion system and were placed in their ranking during 2018-19.
- All divisional Libraries now implement a collaborative hiring process for professional Librarians. For each hire, the library notifies the dean of that school, sending the proposed job description and inviting participation by both the dean and a faculty member in the interview process. Many, but not all search committees include a faculty member from the school. Director level positions generally meet with the appropriate dean during the hiring process.
- 34.7% of all hires in 2016-18 were from self-identified underrepresented groups.
- Since 2017, the Libraries have partnered with the University of Tennessee Library Science School and Nashville's Opportunity Now program to identify and recruit students from minority groups to the field of librarianship.
- December 2018, the Libraries adopted as a policy/professional development direction by the Policy and Planning Group of the Libraries, an initiative to increase capacities for digital scholarship. The Libraries have built up expertise in the areas of scholarly communication, digital scholarship, digitization, and digital curation with four recent hires in the past year (GIS, Data Science, Scholarly Communications, and Born-Digital Curation). Every professional position we have filled in the past year brought technical expertise in new technologies. Library-based digital projects are on-going and growing in number.

Related Progress Not Specified in the FOTL Report:

- Vanderbilt continues to prioritize inclusive access to collections, including access to over 14 million titles regardless of copyright for the visually impaired, captioning for public lectures, expanded access to JAWS software, and attention to accessibility in Library facilities and web design.
- Vanderbilt's Librarian for Inclusion Initiatives, Melinda Brown continues to provide scholarly support in the areas of women's and gender studies, LGBTQI studies, and diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- The Libraries will develop a statement on Diversity and Inclusion to attract and retain diverse talent and an inclusive staff group, 2019-20 task force.

Next Steps:

- Partner with a consortium of peers, including the University of Virginia, George Mason

University, Texas A&M, the University of Illinois, Northern Arizona University, and the University of Wisconsin on a grant-funded initiative: Federated Repositories of Accessible Learning Materials for Higher Education.

- Implement a library-wide mentoring program for all staff.
- Re-evaluate digital strategies/staffing to maintain strong presence on campus digital scholarship scene and improve library response and services.
- Complete and implement work on rank & promotion system for non-librarian staff.
- Help librarians develop professionally through rank & promotion programming.
- Continue the work of task force currently working on library-wide mentoring program for all staff.
- Continue to push for resident librarianship programs to complement our efforts with practica, and high school interns to create a pipeline for the next, diverse generation of librarians.

Facilities, Collaboration and Study Spaces

Students report that the experience of studying in a library reading room evokes a sense of participation in the enterprise of higher education. Spaces for collaboration, research, and group study are essential to advancing the undergraduate residential experience. The Future of the Libraries Report recommended enhancements to Library facilities, and spaces for collaboration, research, and group study to enhance the academic experiences of undergraduate, graduate, and professional students.

Progress to Date:

- The Eskind Biomedical Library reopened in 2018 after a year-long, \$13.3 million-dollar renovation to improve the infrastructure in support of medical education.
- In 2018, the Central Library restored a beautiful space on the 6th floor to create the “Poetry Room” and likewise created the “Vanderbilt Authors” room on the 4th floor. We also added an ADA-compliant restroom; updated the Food for Thought Café; installed five hydration stations; created a new study area in the Government Documents section; improved spaces by renovating main service desk and media/reserves desk, wrapping metal posts in the walkway between service desk and computer lab, and introducing new signage.
- In 2019, the Central Library added 96 brand-new graduate carrels, 45 dual occupancy offices, and 6 single-occupancy offices for A&S graduate students, bringing the total number of available “seats” for graduate students to 192. In addition, all students now have access to five brand-new large-group study rooms equipped with technology for collaborative work, as well as six additional small meeting rooms. These additional group study spaces – all of which can be reserved on EMS-- bring the total number of group study rooms in the Central Library to 15. The Library now also provides a graduate lounge, kitchenette, and numerous clusters of comfortable furniture (study pods or booths) interspersed throughout the building as cozy nooks for lounging and studying.
- Since 2016, the Divinity Library has installed two interactive displays in the Exhibit Alcoves; created an additional study room (Room 210) in 2017; added new furniture, tables, chairs, table lamps, in the periodicals room, computer area, and the Cheek Reference Room (doubling the number of seats); installed additional electric outlets; added built-in shelving in the Cheek Reference Room; and updated technologies.
- In 2017, the Law Library remodeled the Tarkington classroom with new technology and furniture.
- In 2017, the Walker Management Library at the Owen Graduate School of Management [unveiled new renovations totaling \\$4.4 million](#), including an updated main reading room, configurable study spaces and reading nooks, comfortable team rooms with consistent and modern technology, and 24/7-accessible study spaces, team rooms, and a copy/print

center.

- In 2018, the Music Library renovated the Seminar Room, including sound proofing, new sound system, podium, and AirMedia. Also, new front doors to the library were installed and 54 linear feet of additional shelving for music scores were added, along with additional lighting.
- Since 2017, the Peabody Library has updated study rooms with new furniture, digital screens; created a low-tech "curriculum design lab;" removed shelving in and painted part of the Grand Reading Room; moved Librarian offices to the 3rd floor and moved the administrative assistant and the library director's offices to the 1st floor to increase visibility and accessibility of library staff. A wheelchair lift was added to the front of the building.
- Since 2018, the Science & Engineering Library has added 40 study carrels bringing the total number to 72; renovated the restrooms, including an ADA-compliant restroom; and added new spaces and an information instruction room.

Next Steps:

Throughout this fiscal year the Libraries will:

- Prioritize planning and fundraising for the restoration of Peabody Library;
- Explore and make recommendations for future renovations to the Science and Engineering Library, including interior reconfigurations and exterior courtyard updates;
- Begin renovation of the computer area building five new study rooms in the Divinity Library;
- Continue with Music Library upgrades, as funds are available;
- Re-purpose spaces at the Central Library to incorporate facilities, such as an active-learning classroom and a cinema/media room.