

Academic Year 2022-2023

Elihu Burritt Library Annual Report

Introduction

As the virtual routines of the pandemic made very clear, a library is a collection of informational resources in a variety of formats – both virtual and physical – and not a building full of books. Librarians are information specialists who are trained to assist and guide students and faculty members through the processes of determining and/or developing the scope of a research problem, finding information sources to resolve the problem, evaluate the sources and then properly use the information ethically and legally. While information resources and services now transcend physical places and are accessible from anywhere one has a computer and an internet connection or cellular service, we have also retained the in-person, high-touch library service model. As the library team addresses post-covid challenges, we have embarked on the process to create a new strategic framework that aligns with the university's SP30 plan. This work will progress over the summer in order to provide some expanded services for fall 2023 and beyond.

Recruitment

The library's Special Collections and Archives department plays an important role in supporting student and faculty/staff recruitment efforts. This support comes in several forms.

The department works with campus departments and outside organizations to create engaging content and materials that can be used for promotional and recruitment purposes. A few examples of past activities are listed below:

- Italian American Poetry event (partners included EB Library, CCSU Italian Resource Center and representatives from other universities and organizations). The event encouraged students to study their ethnic heritage. It engages students, artists, faculty, and alumni.
- Maria Sklodowska Curie exhibit (partners included EB Library, CCSU Polish Studies, Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies and the Polish Embassy in Washington, DC). The exhibit attracted students and faculty and was later shown at the State Capitol and at New Britain High School. The event evoked interest in CCSU, particularly among women of Polish descent.
- Lecture on Witch Hunting in Africa (partners included EB Library, Connecticut Explored magazine, and the End Witch Hunts organization). The event raised awareness about human rights violations and provided access to documents, photographs, and other materials that might be of interest to prospective students.

The library's archives and special collections related to Polish and Polish American history are used by various students, faculty and community organizations and serve as a popular attraction for CCSU.

The Kosciuszko Squadron Exhibit at the New England Air Museum (partners included EB Library, Polish Studies, and the NE Air Museum) raised interest in CCSU among prospective students and supporters of the Polish Studies program and students interested in engineering and aviation.

The department digitizes archival materials and make them available online to enhance accessibility and potential interest among prospective students who may not have physical access to the university's campus or library. Digitization allows them to explore the university's history, academic achievements, and cultural resources remotely. Examples include:

- Digitization of artwork by muralist Mike Alewitz, professor emeritus, and his students.
- Digitization of campus student publications: The Recorder, Contemporary, and Inferno.
- Collaboration with the National Academy of Sciences in Warsaw Poland on digitization of Polish American periodicals.

Future department activities that may represent opportunities for student recruitment include:

- Closer collaboration with Polish American organizations that distribute scholarships to high school students that will help attract them to CCSU.
- Collaborative programming by the Polish Studies Program, Music Department and the Polish American Foundation of CT resulted in a classical music concert series this Summer. It will attract prospective students to study music on campus.
- Further collaboration with New Britain High School bringing students for tours to CCSU and sharing library resources of interest to Polish, Italian, Latino and GLBTQ communities.
- Establish connections with Polish Saturday Schools, Polish genealogical societies, and other Polish organizations to facilitate support by library resources.

The Research and Instruction department collaborated with Saybrook High School in the spring 2023 semester to introduce rising high school seniors to collegiate-level research projects. This collaboration is part of the reintroduction of community outreach program to high school students with the instructional librarians that was very robust prior to Covid. During the library's strategic planning retreat, our community outreach initiatives were discussed as a critical element to the library's strategic framework.

Student Retention

The research and instructional librarians have closely monitored, both in person and online, the multi-faceted impact of the pandemic on all levels of our students' academic success and understand that they are struggling more than ever before with research processes. Under normal circumstances, those students of underserved populations would have little, if any, experience with and/or access to library resources when conducting secondary research. These students therefore need more individualized assistance with the complex and abstract concepts involved in research, such as understanding the differences between a Google search versus a database search for scholarly resources or how to read or evaluate either type of resource simply because their secondary education lacked direction and/or the resources to provide them with these skills.

Although the measures listed below were initiated *before* the pandemic began, they are likely to affect student success across all student populations to a greater degree now due to the gaps in classroom instruction during the pandemic, but especially among our underserved populations who likely did not have the Internet access that students from privileged classes have had.

1. **First Year Experience/CCSU-102:** The reference and instructional librarians have participated fully in the most recent evolution of this program throughout its conception and development and have addressed our first-year students' introduction to library services in two ways:
 - A. We continue to collaborate with all FYE professors requesting instruction on library services and information resources.
 - B. We have developed an FYE section, led by two of our instructional librarians to begin in the fall 2023 semester. This section is designed to assist incoming students in their transition to CCSU through guidance on effective study, critical thinking, communication, and information-seeking skills; campus engagement; and overall well-being practices. This course will help to lay the foundation for future information literacy skill-building. The course design is informed by research on the unique characteristics of Gen Z students, many who are first generation college students, and how they learn best such as through active learning activities and community building opportunities.

2. **Book a Librarian/Research Consultation Services:** This service provides individualized research assistance to students at all collegiate levels throughout the research process. In 2019, we observed that very few students were scheduling appointments with our reference librarians to seek help with the research process. This consultation service was conceptualized and activated in March of 2020 just days before the campus closed for the pandemic. When we made the transition to online services, we carried over this service and were happily surprised to receive many requests for appointments by students who were struggling with the online learning environment. This service adds to our established embedded librarian program with the WRT105-110 sections.

As a result of undergraduate students requiring more assistance with basic research processes, such as conducting literature reviews, we are expanding our consultation services for students in two ways.

- A. We have piloted a popup research/reference desk in the Writing Center, currently dubbed Roaming Research Librarians, and plan to seek other locations across campus for such services to meet students where they are instead of requiring them to meet us in the library. This strategy might also lessen students' library anxiety wherein they would not need to approach the traditional reference desk with its incumbent connotations of confusing research processes and judgments about students' failures to understand them (i.e., library anxiety).
 - B. We are also providing more individualized research consultations to both undergraduate and graduate students, especially those in the DNAP program, as faculty members encourage their students struggling with research and information literacy skills to book time with us. This service point, both in the online and in-person delivery modes, has gained popularity over the past year as more faculty members return to requiring in-depth research projects and fewer students fully grasp the concepts necessary for conducting college-level research.
3. **Embedded Research Librarians/WRT105-110 Program:** Initiated in 2015, this program pairs the WRT105/110 composition sections with dedicated instructional librarians to guide the students in the process of learning the research process. The librarians have embedded in the course curriculum in a variety of modes, including providing a Blackboard Learn shell presence, designing library

scavenger hunts, scheduling consultations with students on a regular basis throughout the course semester, and creating library guides and online video tutorials for a flipped classroom approach. The instructors of record are now required to align a research assignment with the AAC&U VALUE rubric for information literacy for their course sections. These assignments are then completed by the students and submitted to Assessment Coordinator in the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment for anonymization and scoring within the Central Education Outcomes initiative/project. During the spring 2023 semester, two instructional librarians embedded within three WRT105/110 sections, and the department will be reviewing the assessment of the students' artifacts during the summer 2023 sessions. We have already met with Dr. Brewer and identified five new faculty members, in addition to two current professors for a total of seven faculty members, with whom we will partner for this program during the fall 2023 semester. Additionally, we will be identifying other academic programs with whom to partner for the embedded IL program, including the Social Work 374 course and possibly History classes.

4. **Library Impact Dashboard:** Academic libraries have been slowly progressing towards demonstrating their resources', services', and spaces' impacts on student academic success and retention since around 2013. Literature reviews on this practice have demonstrated a strong correlation between library usage and academic success, despite the lack of methodology to demonstrate a direct cause and effect relation. We are currently resuming our pre-covid pilot of using the BlueTrack system to track student participation in library instruction and events. The library team has, therefore, drafted and published a dashboard ([linked here](#)) to demonstrate our comprehensive usage statistics on the library's home page. Since our assessment process of the information literacy program began in 2014, this annual report will be appended to the dashboard in a more visual manner for accessibility. We have conferred regularly with the Associate Vice President for Planning & Institutional Effectiveness to guide our data collection methods for effectiveness, efficiency, and accessibility by all stakeholders.

Resources

The primary uses of our OE/DPS allocation are to provide library research resources and service point staffing for some of our hours.

Our largest OE expenditures are for databases and e-journals. In 2022-2023, we were able to manage those costs by strategically reducing other OE items (see below). During COVID, most publishers did not increase prices, but we anticipate a return to about 5% inflation increases annually for subscriptions. In response to faculty and student needs, we have continued to provide streaming video via Kanopy, and this year have been able to shift the funding from special COVID funds to library OE funds.

In other OE areas, we have right sized the budget for office supplies for the past few fiscal years and we have also not been able to purchase furniture for the library from our budget. In the past, we have always used some monies from OE to replace or add furniture to the library spaces. We have always tried to update or replace furniture and/or equipment, such as scanners, printers, microfilm machines, each fiscal year.

We use DPS funds to staff service points and handle interlibrary -loan and other physical materials. Adjunct positions in the library are as important in the budget because they allow the full-time staff to

address higher level research needs of students and faculty and to focus on the current dynamic information literacy program. We have used a University Assistant to cover the Reference Desk on Monday – Thursday evenings from 8pm– 10:45 pm and Sunday evenings. Our statistics have shown that the library is being used at this time but there are few reference questions asked during these hours. This allows us to save money because our DPS budget has been cut and we need to hire part-time AAUP Reference Librarians, UAs and student workers from this budget. Student workers will be needed for more hours in the future as we continue tagging books for our RFID project.

We will need this budget to remain the same for the next FY in order to cover all the hours that the library is open. If more funding could be allocated to this budget, it would allow us to hire more part-time staff for night and weekend coverage. For the past few fiscal years, we have had a reduced workforce for the nighttime and weekend shifts, and this becomes problematic if the assigned staff members call out sick.

Enrollment trends and student needs move the library toward increasing online information resources. The trend toward part-time students is particularly important; for these students, competing demands of work and family make a visit to the library building harder and less likely. The same is true for our graduate students, for whom our degrees are often an important credential in a busy career. To support student success for these groups, we must provide information resources that are available from many locations, at all times of day and week. Most such online resources are subscription-based and must be budgeted for annually. Few online resources can be acquired as one-time expenditures. We would also like to become part of a virtual reference service that would provide live reference services in a virtual format when the library is closed. Additional funds would be necessary to become a part of this service.

As we seek to support enrollment in STEM areas, such as the DNAP program, it is important to note that research resources in STEM areas, especially e-journals, are more expensive than those in other curricular areas. We strive to provide a set of research resources that are consistent through time, with ongoing subscriptions to the same e-journals and databases every year, so that faculty and students can rely on having access to the information resources they need for research and instruction.

APPENDIX I

Library team accomplishments 2022-2023

Resources

Print & Electronic Resources

- The library continues to provide access to films from Kanopy to enhance teaching and learning. So far, this academic year, we have had over 3000 views of these films. Importantly, we have managed our budget carefully in order to be able to absorb the ongoing cost of these resources, which were previously paid for by special COVID funds.
- The library provides online publication of the theses, dissertations, and scholarly projects of students in several programs, including the Ed. D. and DNAP programs.
- The library Director and Acquisitions Librarian were able to balance the library budget and still ensure that faculty and student print and electronic resources needs were met.
- The library has continued to update our extensive Diversity Collection with materials on diversity, equity, and inclusion to support faculty and students engaged in teaching, learning and research in the School of Education and Professional Studies and programs in preservice education, counseling, and social work.

Digitization Initiative

- Librarians have continued to digitize archival materials from Special Collections and Archives and upload them to the Connecticut Digital Archives (CTDA) website, which is easily accessible by CCSU students, faculty, and staff.
- The Mike Alewitz (Professor Emeritus, Art Department) Collection was scanned and uploaded to the Connecticut Digital Archives (CTDA).
- Inferno, a student literary magazine, 1970-1984, was uploaded to Connecticut Digital Archives (CTDA).
- The Recorder, CCSU student newspaper, on microfilm was digitized (1931-2004) and will be available to the campus community.
- The library is in the process of digitizing Polish language newspapers on microfilm from late 1800's to 1920's. This project is a collaboration with the Polish Studies at CCSU and the Polish Academy of Science.
- The library continues to advocate and collect funds for the Digital Lab in the Library for collaborative projects with campus and outside community.

Special Collections & Archives

- The library and Polish Studies established a collaboration with the New England Air Museum to create a permanent exhibit related to the Kosciuszko Squadron exhibit.
- The library established a collaboration with the CCSU Public History Program to host interns in Special Collections and Archives.

Library-Wide Initiatives

- The library works with the MLIS program at Southern to accept interns and expose them to work in various departments in the library.
- Librarians and the Library Director created a “Library Impact Dashboard” that will serve to regularly publish key metrics of Library usage, in-person and online and to communicate how library-driven services and materials are impacting CCSU’s students, faculty and staff.
 - Planned, created and implemented an e-dashboard to post on library’s website to demonstrate stats of library use by students.
 - Fine-tuning dashboard appearance and statistics
 - Re-initiating use of BlueTrack program to demonstrate correlation between student usage of library services with academic success and degree completion.
- Librarians worked with faculty on OER initiatives and created an OER Newsletter.
 - Worked on a hub for CCSU publishing in GoOpenCT
 - Provided professional development presentations at local OER conferences
- Published two *Burritt Connection* newsletters.

Services

Research/Reference & Instruction

Reference/Research Services

- Librarians continued to offer and expand the “Book a Librarian” Service. This service offers students half an hour research help appointments with Librarians. These appointments are offered on ground our through a virtual session.
- Reference librarians have answered a total of 3,879 queries at the reference desk
- Reference librarians have answered a total of 1,390 reference/research queries at the reference desk
- Reference librarians have provided around 216 research consultations this year.

Instruction

- Librarians held “Research on the Run” workshops to teach students how to use various databases and electronic resources.

- Instructional librarians taught 141 information literacy stand-alone classes for academic subject courses.
 - Currently assessing students' information literacy success from both the regular academic subject courses and FYE courses.
- Librarians created an FYE Course that focuses on Information Literacy (CCSU102). This course passed the Curriculum Committee and will be offered in the Fall of 2023.
- Provided intra-curricular and extra-curricular workshops for first year students struggling with the research process.
- Department taught four sections (60 classes in total, 60 students in total) of LSC-150 for 2022-2023.
 - Currently assessing students' information literacy success within this course.