Academic Year 2023-2024
Elihu Burritt Library Annual Report

Introduction

A library is a collection of informational resources in a variety of formats – both virtual and physical – and not a building full of books, a fact made very clear during the pandemic. 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 of creating 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 makes 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 the 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 continued to monitor, both in person and online, the multi-faceted impact of the pandemic on all levels of our students' academic success; and because of our observations, we understand that most are struggling more than ever before with research processes. Under normal circumstances, 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. Students from all walks of life – both undergraduate and graduate levels alike – have been struggling, however, with lack of understanding about the different resources used in secondary research practice and especially with proper usage of and attribution to resources such as generative artificial intelligence like ChatGPT.

Information Literacy Instruction in Academic Course Offerings

Tables 1, 2, and 3 show results for librarian-led information literacy instruction, including credit-bearing courses taught entirely by librarians, during the past two academic years

Table 1 – Information Literacy (IL) Lectures

	2022-23	2023-24
One-shot (in-person & online) Lectures	95	96
Multi-shot (includes embedded) Lectures	37	42
Research on the Run (ROTR) Lectures	6	8
Total One-shot, Multi-shot, and ROTR Lectures	138	146
Number of professors Requesting Lectures	94	96
Number of students Instructed (includes One-, Multi-shot and ROTR)	2365	2522

Table 2 –Number of Librarian-Led Credit-Bearing Classes

	2022-23	2023-24
LSC-150	56	70
CCSU-102	0	33
DHS-100	32	32
Total	88	135

Table 3 –Total IL Instruction Visits and Credit-Bearing Classes

	2022-23	2023-24
One-, Multi-shot, and ROTR Lectures	138	146
Librarian-Led Credit-Bearing Classes	88	135
Total Librarian-Led IL Classes/Lectures	226	281

Embedded Research Librarians/WRT105-110 Program

In the tables above, multi-shot instruction refers predominantly to the library's embedded program, which pairs WRT105/110 instructors with instructional librarians to guide the students in learning the steps in the research process. Various touchpoints within and outside the classroom include a Blackboard Learn shell presence, library scavenger hunt, one-on-one consultations on individual research topics, watching online video tutorials to "flip the class", customized topical lessons, and more. Research assignments are aligned with the AAC&U VALUE Rubric for information literacy and submitted to the Office of Institutional Research and

Assessment for anonymization and scoring. During the 2023-24 academic year, four instructional librarians embedded within twelve WRT105/110 sections.

Also included in the table of figures are visits to first-year experience (FYE) courses. All incoming students are required to enroll in an academic-focused FYE course, a career exploration FYE course, or one of the many topical FYE courses such as the section of CCSU-102 taught by librarians described below. In 2023-24, librarians visited 30 FYE classes, compared to 22 classes taught in the previous academic year.

LSC-160 - Information Exploration in the AI Era

In January of 2024, Dr. Michael Gendron, MIS Department, requested that the academic librarians create an information literacy course that will explore the use of AI within the context of academic research processes to be included in the new artificial intelligence minor he was developing. A small team of librarians and the Library Director quickly developed a proposed course description and syllabus framework for LSC-160: Information Exploration in the AI Era, a 3-credit library component to the minor. The course was approved by the Faculty Senate during the Spring of 2024, and it is planned for two of the librarians who have taken the lead in designing the course to serve as lead instructors in the Fall 2024. Enrollment was at 85% as of September 13, 2024.

LSC-150 – Research in the Digital Age

Librarians taught five sections (70 classes and 75 students in total) of LSC-150 Research in the Digital Age during 2023-24. Separate sections for freshmen/sophomores and junior/seniors were created this year so that additional required support and tailoring of lessons for each group could be offered. The final exam and supporting documents were updated during the summer of 2023 to more closely align this assessment with its grading rubric and checklist as well as with the AAC&U VALUE rubric that is used by CCSU to score artifacts for general education requirements.

CCSU-102 - Separating Fact from Fiction: Critical Evaluation Skills We All Need

Two librarians co-taught a newly designed section of the first-year experience (FYE) course offerings, CCSU-102 Separating Fact from Fiction during the Fall 2023 semester (33 classes, 25 students). FYE courses are designed to assist students in their transition to CCSU by incorporating best practices for student success with guest speakers from campus resource areas alongside course content; which in this case, focuses on critical evaluation skills. The course received high marks in end-of-semester student evaluations (such as a rating of 4.5 out of 5 in agreement with the statement 'I would rate the overall quality of instruction in this class high').

DHS-100 – Digital World

Our digital humanities librarian, currently a member of the Archives and Special Collections Department, taught two sections of DHS-100 Digital World this year. This introductory course provides an interdisciplinary study of digital humanities and the ethical, social, and political

dimensions of everyday technology use. As this is taught by a librarian, information literacy skill-building is woven throughout the context of the course's content.

Research on the Run Workshops

Librarians delivered eight "Research on the Run" workshops, with an increase of two from the previous year. These workshops are offered during the Fall semester both virtually and in-person. Each session provides short 15–20-minute overviews of topics related to the research process such as database searching, citations, ethical use of artificial intelligence, evaluating sources, and more. There was a total of 25 attendees at these workshops, up from 18 in the Fall 2023.

Research Services

Below are two tables providing an overview of the types of questions and contact methods in comparison to the prior year.

Question Type	2023/2024 Total	2022/2023 Total
No Value Set	11	13
Reference	1300	1510
Directional/Basic Info	753	809
Equipment	155	95
Software/System	105	105
Circulation/Billing	63	89
ILL	66	93
Reserves	42	46
Office Supplies	354	357
Special Collections / Archives	38	34
Printing / Papercut	768	1091
Tech Support	71	133
Study Rooms	10	7

Contact Type	2023/2024 Total	2022/2023 Total
No Data	4	4
In Person	2442	2919
Telephone	256	262
Email	71	118
Chat	935	1050
Research Consultation (Book a Librarian	242	158
Text (SMS)	17	8

Ask a Librarian Virtual and In-Person Services

Ask a librarian, a staple service at all libraries through which library patrons are able to have quick library-related questions answered by degreed librarians, is provided at the Research Desk of the Elihu Burritt Library via a wide variety of formats, including virtual chat, email, telephone, in-person, and text messaging (among others). Prior to the 2023/2024 academic year, the research desk had been known as the reference desk. The name was changed because students did not understand the term “reference desk” as a service desk where they could have their research questions answered. The change has been gradual, with many signs still using the old “reference” terminology.

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, especially in the WRT-110 courses, in which many professors chose to assign a research consultation to all students prior to submitting research papers.

As a result of undergraduate students requiring more assistance with basic research processes, such as conducting literature reviews, we are promoting our consultation services across the curriculum and 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 two years as more faculty members return to requiring in-depth research projects and fewer students fully grasp the concepts necessary for conducting college-level research.

Resources

Our budget allocation for the year totals $1,511,654. Approximately 91% of the budget goes to OE, with the remaining 9% used for DPS expenditures. 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 2023-2024, we were able to manage those costs by strategically reducing other OE items (see below). Since COVID, most publishers have returned to about 5% inflation increases annually for subscriptions. In response to faculty and student needs, we have continued to provide streaming video via Kanopy, using library OE funds, but managing the streaming catalog carefully to stretch our dollars.

In other OE areas, the librarians 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, and 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 an adjunct librarian 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 since we need to hire part-time AAUP Reference Librarians 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 night-time and weekend shifts, and this becomes problematic if the assigned staff members call out sick.

Enrollment trends and student needs propel 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 2023-2024

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 staff continues to work with the MLIS program at Southern Connecticut State University in guiding its students through academic library internships to provide them with valuable work experiences in various departments of the academic library.

- The library's Maker Space reopened to the Central Community once again after being closed since the Covid-19 campus shutdown.

- For the first time since the pandemic, the library's popular e-Resources Fair and Trick or Treat Event took place again.

- Librarians and the Library Director worked with the campus community to provide support for digital projects.

- Representatives from the library staff attended all undergraduate open houses, accepted student days and new student orientation sessions.

- The library staff hosted National Library Week events and the "Pursue the Truth Day" at the library.

- Librarians worked with faculty on OER initiatives and sent out an OER Newsletter to the campus community.

- 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-hour research assistance appointments with instructional librarians. These appointments are offered in person or through a virtual/online 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.

- Instructional librarians created an FYE Course that focuses on Information Literacy (CCSU102). This course was approved by 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.

- The department librarians 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.