

University Libraries at Virginia Tech

2020-2021
Annual Report



UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES
VIRGINIA TECH.



Message from the Dean

Libraries are transforming into an enabling partner in the creation, curation, and communication of data, scholarship, and other information resources used to create new knowledge. Contemporary research in many disciplines is computational and incorporates the bringing together of digital media and analytical tools to improve processes and outcomes. Researcher training and skills development are of cardinal concern in this emerging paradigm and are embedded increasingly in scholarly activities. It is in this new context that the University Libraries at Virginia Tech provides the resources, technologies, and expertise to enable today's faculty and student success. The University Libraries' strategic plan, 2020-25, is focused on this perspective in support of the university achieving its strategic goals.

The University Libraries' strategic plan charts our continued course to be more than an information resource provider. According to the Association for Research Libraries (ARL), the roles of libraries are becoming more robust and embedded in the university's mission. ARL predicts that by 2033 the research library will have completely shifted from its role as a knowledge service provider within the university to a collaborative partner in the university's rich and diverse learning and research ecosystem.

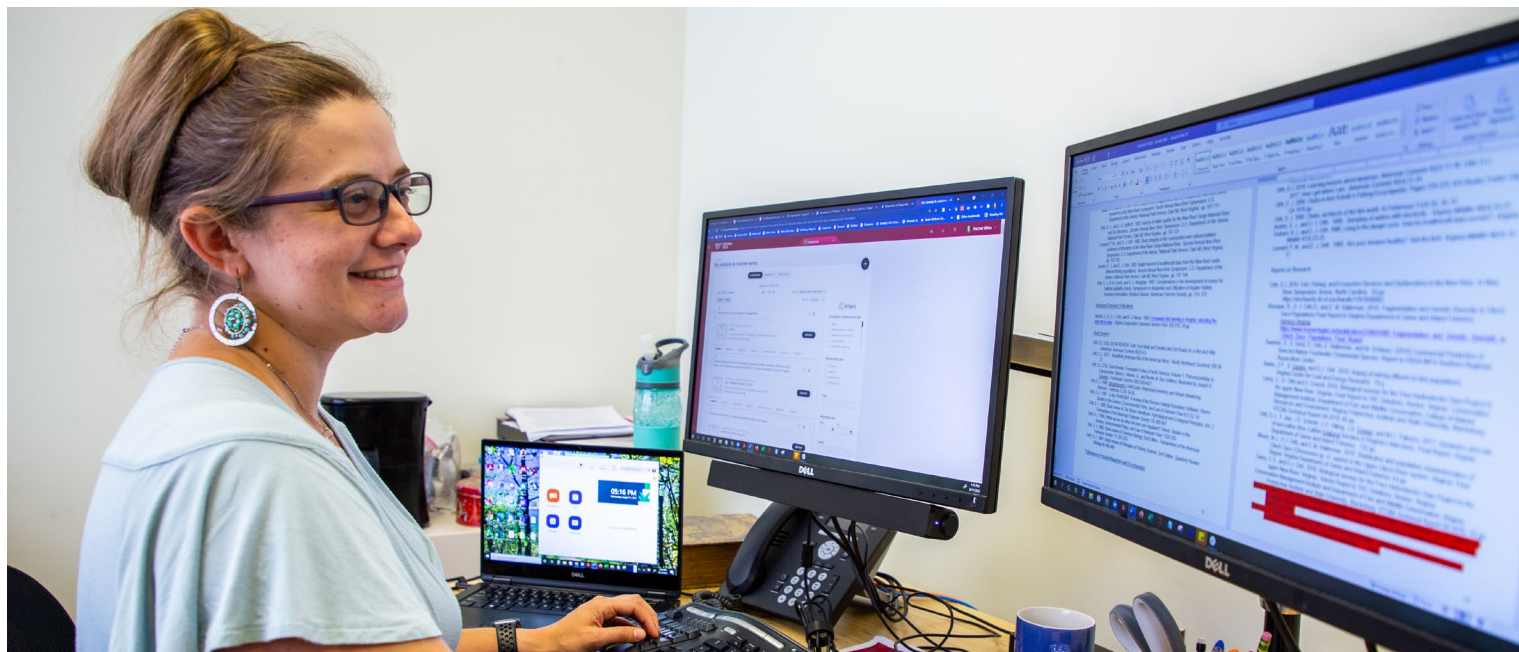
As you will see, the University Libraries is an integral partner with the colleges in our shared university mission of pushing "the boundaries of knowledge by taking a hands-on, transdisciplinary approach to preparing scholars to be leaders and problem-solvers."



GOAL

Advance Regional, National, and Global Impact

University Libraries, through its activities involving creativity and innovation, data, and scholarship will actively contribute to the university's learning, discovery, and engagement missions and advance its regional, national, and global impact.



Rachel Miles, research impact librarian.

Analyzing Virginia Tech's research output and impact

The University Libraries' research impact team is conducting two pilot projects to assist the College of Veterinary Medicine and the College of Natural Resources and Environment (CNRE) in analyzing the productivity and impact of their faculty's research. The goal of the projects is to obtain a holistic view of research in the college by collecting information about faculty research and scholarship, and uploading it to the Elements activities database to make the system's information more complete and gain a more comprehensive view of faculty output and impact. College administration will then be able to extract research output data through Elements' analytics; in addition, data users and librarians will be able to export the data and analyze it in specialized research analytic tools, such as VOSviewer.

For faculty, having this comprehensive record of their research and scholarship in Elements, will mean that their Elements list of scholarly and creative works is more up to date if they choose to opt in to displaying a Virginia Tech Experts public profile sourced from their Elements pages. It will also mean that they can use a quick deposit method via Elements to more easily deposit works to the university repository, VTechWorks, providing global open access to their work.

Finally, college and university reporting will better represent the scope of faculty work. Alternatively, when universities or colleges rely on commercially available databases, there will always be research and scholarship that is not included - depending on types of work and disciplinary areas. With a combination of automatic importing from multiple databases and manual entry in Elements, the team is building college-specific databases that attempt to cover all of the research outputs produced by faculty.

Librarian Rachel Miles is manually entering and automatically importing research output data from 86 CNRE faculty members to ensure it is documented in Elements. She has been collecting curriculum vitae, researcher profiles, and researcher IDs, and then cross-referencing them with research databases and profiles such as Scopus, Web of Science, PubMed, Crossref, ORCID profiles, and Google Scholar Profiles.

"CNRE and the College of Veterinary Medicine are ideal for these pilot projects because they have the ideal faculty size. We are doing this for the first time and working through challenges as we go. Both of these colleges see the value in this work and will benefit from the holistic view of their research impact," said Miles.

CNRE Associate Dean Keith Goyne said capturing this information is vital to communicating his college's impact.

"Faculty within the College of Natural Resources and Environment are studying and developing solutions to 21st century challenges - sustainability, climate change, changes in biodiversity, disease transmission, products made from renewable resources, natural resources-human interactions, and water quality and quantity," said Goyne. "Fully capturing scholarly activity in the college is critical for accurately communicating the breadth, depth, and importance of faculty activities to stakeholders, the public, funding agencies, and campus leadership."

By using a web form, Veterinary Medicine Librarian Kiri DeBose is working with faculty in the College of Veterinary Medicine to ensure that their information is up to date and complete in Elements.

"The first page gives an overview of the project and the second includes information that can be added to their profile. The third page is where they can include links to their curriculum vitae or other lists of scholarship, as well as any research profiles or IDs, such as ORCID, Scopus ID, or ResearcherID that we can connect to their Elements profile to auto-claim publications in the future," said DeBose.

Once the form is submitted, DeBose's team creates citation lists to be checked. Then, they check what citations have been claimed or what citations need to be claimed. They also check what citations may be listed in the faculty's curriculum vitae with discrepancies to the final published citation. DeBose's team can verify if the items are the same or if one needs to be added to Elements or the faculty's curriculum vitae. They also reject citations that are not the faculty's, as well as have faculty verify citations that look like they might be a publication that wasn't included in the curriculum vitae. DeBose is also working with others in the college to include professional contributions, university service, and grants.

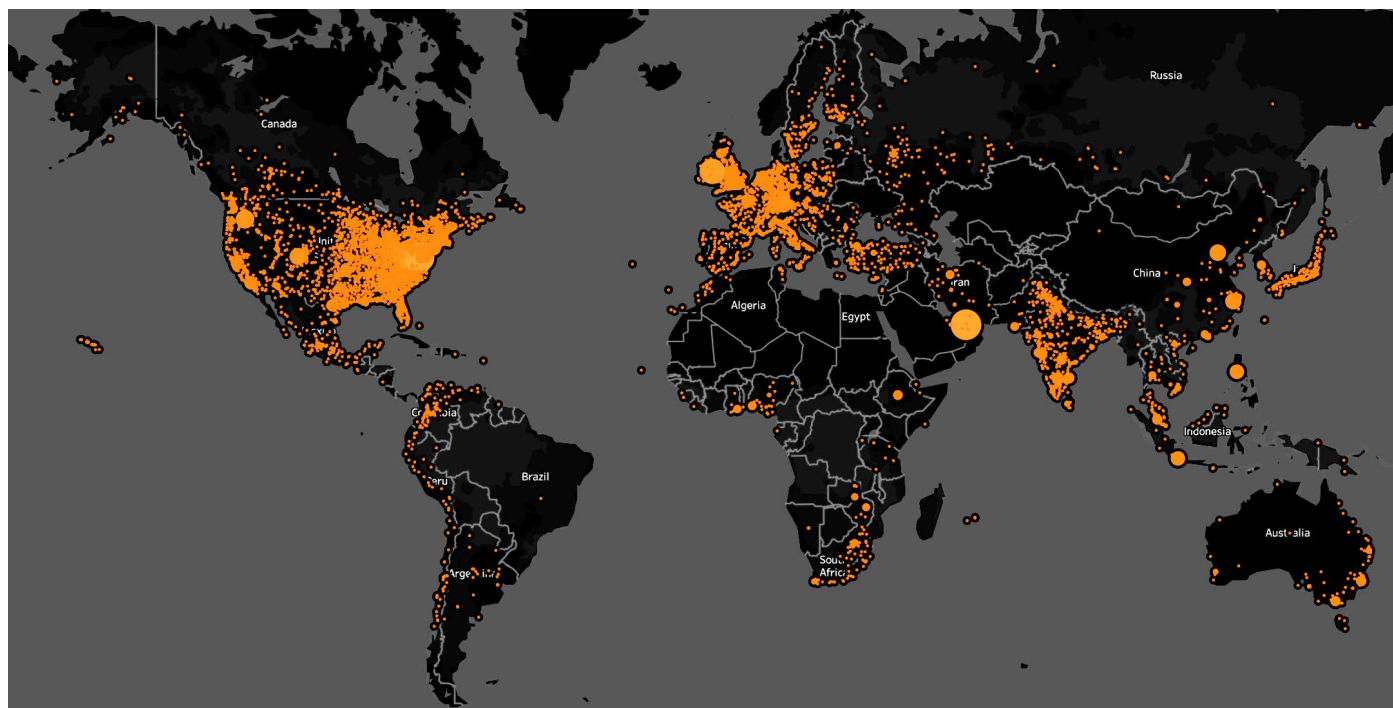
According to College of Veterinary Medicine Dean Dan Givens, this project is key to communicating the reach and impact of the college's work.

"Faculty of the college create a broad and significant impact through their scholarship in applied veterinary medicine, biomedical science, and public health," said Givens. "To rapidly and effectively summarize the cumulative scope and impact of this work at the level of the college, the appropriate collation of scholarly output is necessary in a single summarizable format. Once effectively summarized, we can better communicate the exciting narrative of how our college is improving the lives of animals, people, and communities."



These library services are available to all college faculty. Some may choose to enter and manage their information themselves, others may ask for assistance while they enter their information or have DeBose work on certain aspects of data.

"Because of Kiri's work, faculty are able to focus primarily on their area of scholarship while investing limited quantities of their time to ensure that the summary of their scholastic efforts in the Elements system is accurate and comprehensive," said Givens. "Thus, more scholarship is completed and the narrative of our success is communicated most appropriately and effectively."



Making research openly available globally

More than 85,000 items are housed in the university's scholarship repository VTechWorks, including about 35,000 theses and dissertations by Virginia Tech master's and Ph.D. students and 8,600 peer-reviewed articles. Faculty, students, researchers, and interested citizens from all over the world download more than 4,000 items a day, up from last year's average of 3,000 a day. All of these items are freely available to anyone with an internet connection. VTechWorks embodies Virginia Tech's core values of diverse and inclusive communities, knowledge and innovation, opportunity and affordability, and excellence and integrity.

"This past year, VTechWorks team members have been actively searching for open versions of articles authored by faculty to deposit into the repository to increase reach and findability of Virginia Tech research," said Philip Young, institutional repository manager. "If a potential collaborator or news reporter is looking for a research article, they can use the search function on the university's homepage, vt.edu, and find a link to it in VTechWorks. Also, a potential graduate student may want to look at what professors publish. Through the Virginia Tech homepage, they can find full text articles written by the professors they're interested in. We've indexed the

repository with the university's homepage and other widely used search engines to make as much Virginia Tech research available in one place as possible."

The key to reaching the goal of findable and accessible Virginia Tech research is encouraging faculty to upload research articles to the repository. That's where the newly approved scholarly articles open access policy comes in. Virginia Tech authors grant the university nonexclusive license to their scholarly articles in order to make them openly available through the university's repository.

This policy is a culmination of almost three years of planning, outreach, and implementation by a five-member working group. Two of those members, Ginny Pannabecker and Philip Young, are from the University Libraries, and the other three hail from College of Natural Resources and Environment, College of Architecture and Urban Studies, and the College of Science.

Sharing data to fuel discovery

The University Libraries provides expertise in data planning, management, and publishing to fuel discovery and future research. Recently, the library launched a new version of its research data repository platform powered by the software Figshare.

Accessible from anywhere, Figshare is a cloud-based platform for storing, sharing, and citing research data. Virginia Tech researchers can upload their research data and receive a digital object identifier (DOI) for citing the data in publications and meet sponsor requirements for openly available data. Data uploaded to the Virginia Tech research data repository is discoverable in search engines, including Google Scholar and Google Dataset Search. Engagement and impact of the research can be tracked through views, downloads, citations, and Altmetric usage tracking. In 2020-21, 4,245 datasets were downloaded from the Virginia Tech Data Repository and its predecessor.

“The University Libraries has a long history of and expertise in preserving and providing access to information,” said Jon Petters, University Libraries assistant director of data management and curation services. “Helping Virginia Tech researchers publicly share data and other outputs fits neatly within this scope of work.”

The reason the University Libraries chose the Figshare platform for the university’s data repository is because it makes it easy to upload and publish data. Figshare provides well-written guidance on how to work within the system, which is available in the Virginia Tech data repository guide on the library’s website. Faculty and students can use this guide to work within the system or contact the data services team to ask for help.



Nina Stark, associate professor of civil and environmental engineering and her students conduct field research. Photo courtesy of Nina Stark.

Nina Stark, associate professor of civil and environmental engineering and Anthony and Catherine Moraco Fellow in the College of Engineering, and her graduate students have published their raw and processed data in the repository. They also published how they processed the data.

“Publishing and curation of data is difficult and we — my research group — are not experts in it,” said Stark. “Therefore, I appreciate the support from the University Libraries, that they work with us to get this done. It makes it easier for us, and it makes my life easier in a way that I can send students to them. I know the students will be supported, and we will end up with a well-curated data product.”

Stark believes that sharing knowledge and data within research communities propels advancement of knowledge forward. “I also believe that sharing data openly fosters trust, communication, and collaboration between researchers as well as with stakeholders and the public,” said Stark. “I also increase my visibility as a researcher through data publications.”

Ashley Dayer, assistant professor in the Department of Fish and Wildlife Conservation in the College of Natural Resources and Environment and an affiliate of the Global Change Center and the Center for Coastal Studies, both housed in Fralin Life Sciences Institute, said published



Ashley Dayer, assistant professor in the Department of Fish and Wildlife Conservation conducts field research. Photo courtesy of the College of Natural Resources and Environment, Virginia Tech.

data allows other researchers to build on her research. The University Libraries data services team helps faculty share data appropriately when it involves human subjects, especially at an individual level.

“Transparency is a key aspect of open data – so others can replicate our research or do additional analyses. Also there’s the potential for the responses to our research survey to become a part of other new studies, maximizing the benefits of the time survey respondents spent responding to the survey without taking their time again,” said Dayer. “While social science has been slower to move to open data, more and more journals and funders are recognizing the benefits and that it can be done.”

A benefit of publishing data in the data repository with its own digital object identifier (DOI) is the ability to track usage metrics.

“I’ve yet to be made aware of any use of my dataset but I can track usage metrics and see that the data has been downloaded,” said Dayer. “I hope in the future to see it cited elsewhere, which is a benefit of it having its own DOI.”

The University Libraries not only helps Virginia Tech researchers publish data openly, but collaborates with partners across the globe to help others do the same. One


recent project is the Guide to Accelerate Public Access to Research Data. This Association of American Universities and Association of Public and Land Grant Universities project was the result of work funded by the National Science Foundation. University Libraries Dean Tyler Walters served on the project’s steering committee and helped advance the initiative.

The guide discusses framing a campus initiative to accelerate public access to research data, making priorities visible, establishing a plan, and considering key implementation areas. During the AAU/APLU Advancing Public Access to Research Data meeting on May 5, 2021, Walters presented how Virginia Tech is completing the process outlined in the guide.

“As a whole, when more researchers publicly share their data,” explained Petters, “non-researchers, such as policymakers and journalists, can have more confidence in the integrity of research results.”



GOAL



Elevate the Ut Prosim (That I May Serve) Difference

The University Libraries commits to build and maintain enduring climates of mutual care, respect, and responsibility. We affirm the intrinsic humanity of every person and claim an active role in removing all barriers to inclusive and equitable participation in our work.





Members of the team assessing DEI in collections.

Assessing and expanding diversity, equity, and inclusion in collections

In Fall 2020, Nitra Eastby established a five-person team to explore assessing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in the University Libraries' collections. Team members, Ana Corral, Kirsten Dean, Roberto Silva, and Anthony Wright de Hernandez, represented a variety of departments and roles within the University Libraries. The team attended an online course, "Equity in Action: Building Diverse Collections," that outlined essential concepts in cultivating and promoting inclusive and equitable collections, and learned the basics of conducting a diversity audit. They conducted a literature review and interviewed library liaisons about the meaning of DEI for specific disciplines. A concrete outcome of the team's work is a collection consultation model, which Eastby is piloting with Inga Haugen, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences liaison, in Fall 2021.

At the 2020 and 2021 vendor visit events, vendors were asked to include a presentation or statement about diversity, equity, and inclusion in their collections and company. The University Libraries will continue to request this at each vendor event to emphasize the importance of this issue.

The University Libraries added many new collections with a diversity, equity, and inclusion focus, including Gale Archives of Sexuality and Gender part 4, Global Hip Hop Studies, and additional Black historical newspapers. New acquisitions from VIVA extended the library's DEI collections.



Developing strategy for meaningful change

“The library, as an organization, is changing and evolving to best serve the Virginia Tech community. Diversity, equity, and inclusion is a major part of the change that we’re looking to create,” said University Libraries Dean Tyler Walters. “Carrying out the library strategic plan around diversity, equity and inclusion is directly tied to the library’s work climate. Inclusiveness and climate are very related. Is the library a positive, supportive, and engaging place to work? Is it respectful and understanding to a wide variety of people with varying backgrounds? Throughout the year, we have been working hard to ensure that it is.”

During FY20, the University Libraries created its strategic plan with many voices and perspectives. The inclusion and diversity strategic planning subgroup made sure that the library’s strategic plan was infused with considerations surrounding inclusion and diversity at its core. In FY21, the diversity, equity, and inclusion strategic planning subgroup published the article *Developing a Plan for a More Diverse, Inclusive, and Equitable Library at a Research I Land-grant University: An Exploration of Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Planning Process in the University Libraries at Virginia Tech* in the July edition of the open journal *Library Diversity Residency Studies* to share its strategic planning process and lessons learned along the way. Thanks to the work of this group and other library diversity and inclusion advocates, the University Libraries made progress in this area.

Assessing needs and perceptions of work climate

The University Libraries is dedicated to fostering a positive work environment to fuel creativity, innovation, and professionalism in services and expertise to benefit the Hokie Nation. Beginning in the spring 2020, University Libraries administration partnered with Henry Yampolsky from the Office for Equity and Accessibility and representatives from Virginia Tech’s human resources office to launch a library climate survey. Completed in April 2020, this survey assessed employees’ perceptions of the University Libraries’ work environment.

Upon receiving survey results and recommendations from Yampolsky, Dean Tyler Walters created the Climate Survey Task Force to help with implementation of recommendations born from the first climate survey. This group included representatives from the Library Faculty Association, Library Staff Association, University Libraries Diversity Council, Library Council, Inclusion and Diversity Coordinator, Director of Strategic Communications, and up to three additional at-large members nominated by their peers and chosen by the dean. On Dec. 14, 2020, the group submitted a preliminary report to the dean regarding progress made in implementing the recommendations.

The work group and library administration discussed the best time to schedule a second survey, when responses may reflect a more normal working environment. The work group assisted Yampolsky with conducting a second climate survey in March 2021. Results of the second survey were communicated to the library in July, in which close to 77% of library employees are satisfied with their job and nearly 86% indicate their department leaders listen well to their opinions.



Nearly 30 members make up the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategic Planning Subgroup; the Climate Survey Task Force; and the Diversity Advocate teams.

Diversity advocates and applicant pool certification

In FY21, the University Libraries implemented a diversity advocate program to assist in the recruitment of a more diverse employee population. During the employee search process, at least one diversity advocate must be a member of each search committee. Library faculty and staff who have completed the diversity advocate training, Being a Change Agent in the Search Process, and are willing to serve on search committees in the role of designated diversity advocate are listed on the intranet as a diversity advocate for searches. They are trained to encourage committee members to be aware of unconscious bias and the need for a diverse applicant pool.

In addition to diversity advocates, the library implemented a pool certification process created by Virginia Tech's Division of Human Resources. After posting the job position and before the search committee identifies applicants for interviews, the human resources manager, diversity advocate, and University Libraries Dean examines the applicant pool for diversity benchmark goals. If the applicant pool is certified by Virginia Tech Human Resources as sufficiently diverse, the search may continue. If the pool is not certified as diverse, the posting is extended or the search is closed.

A new diversity leader

The University Libraries is hiring its inaugural Director of Inclusion, Diversity, and Organizational Development. This is a key component of the University Libraries' strategic plan and diversity, equity, and inclusion strategic plan.

In alignment with the university-wide InclusiveVT initiative, the director reports to the Dean of University Libraries and is responsible for implementing the strategic direction for the library's diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) activities and promoting an organizational climate of civility, sensitivity, and mutual respect. The position's activities focus on overseeing the Library's DEI programming and advising library departments, committees, councils, task forces, working groups, and individual employees how to optimize organizational culture and foster continuous learning in support of inclusiveness. The director also collaborates with colleagues from other university units, serves as the University Libraries' InclusiveVT representative, and liaises with the Office of Inclusion and Diversity.

This director position is a collaboration between the University Libraries Dean Tyler Walters and the university's Vice President for Strategic Affairs and Vice Provost for Inclusion and Diversity Menah Pratt-Clarke.



GOAL

Destination for Talent

University Libraries is a place to collaborate, innovate, create, and share. We aspire to transform the way people experience knowledge and through our efforts, help to attract bold and dynamic faculty, staff, and students to a diverse and inclusive community to be a force for positive change.



The University Libraries is a hub for creativity and innovation. It has the traditional information resources for scholarship expected in an academic research library, plus emerging technology and expert perspective to assist faculty and students in pushing boundaries and fueling accomplishments.

A unique collection of traditional and non-traditional resources

With the closure of the library studios during the pandemic, delivery of many core services embedded within them, from 3D printing to technology lending, were fundamentally rethought. Nevertheless, the pandemic also provided an opportunity to develop new services and new forms of outreach for the studios network.

The Data Viz Studio transformed into a lecture capture space and, in collaboration with the library's teaching and learning department, offered faculty assistance with making the transition into online or hybrid class delivery of course content. To counterbalance the reduction in consultations and in-person space usage, the studios increased their number of online events and engagement at a distance. They moved their Game Night events into an online offering, for example, bringing together students isolated by the pandemic and making progress toward the University Libraries' strategic diversity, equity, and inclusion goals in the process. Maker Challenge Week, offered by the studios and geared toward k-12 students in the region, transitioned to all virtual to

accommodate the pandemic, and some of the changes will carry over into supplemental programming for future Maker Challenge events.

The studios' biggest unexpected success of the last year, however, has been the implementation of the studios' Twitch Stream, which immerses people in stories and history with an emphasis on learning through play. Over the course of approximately nine months, the stream gathered more than 2,200 views, over 110 followers, and partnerships with the local school system (Montgomery County High School), other academic libraries (NC State University Libraries), departments at other universities (Games Innovation Lab at USC), and student and faculty guests from all over the Virginia Tech community. The University Libraries at Virginia Tech is one of a small number of academic libraries engaging with patrons this way, and we already have plans to grow the channel and pursue research publications and presentations with some of our collaborators.

The University Libraries also implemented changes to existing services, such as the Media Design Studios and Virtual Environments Studio, in order to grow those services and renovate spaces.

The studios' managers and some collaborators proposed an REU/RET grant this past year. Although it was not accepted by the National Science Foundation, it garnered positive responses from reviewers, and they foresee submitting again in the future. The studios received two grants this past year, both funded by Institute for Creativity, Arts and Technology (ICAT). First, the Virtual Sculpture Garden, a virtual reality experience that featured a dynamically expanding environment that grew as digital art was added, was created and launched. This project resulted in multiple presentations, both to colleagues and student groups. The project also hosted this year's ICAT Innovation Day event within the virtual world. The second grant is a partnership with Geosciences and Center for Educational Networks and Impacts (CENI) to produce an augmented reality application and collection of dinosaur bone scans that will facilitate a new dimension of K-12 paleontology education.

Beyond these major milestones, the studios continued to offer their services, consultations, and instructional workshops, and although overall turnout from patrons was down from past years, we still saw use, particularly in the 3D Design Studio and Media Design Studio A (See data below). We've also used this period of reduced onsite activity to establish some programming and goals for the upcoming years. Looking to the 2021-2022 academic year, the Studios Internship Program should see its first group come through in fall 2021. We've also laid the foundation for the studios' Knowledgebase, a repository of training and policies for the studios, which will reach completion in spring or summer of 2022. Finally, we have completed the last stages for renaming and restructuring some of our existing services over the next year, which will include adding new offerings, such as a self-serve digitization service and a live-event streaming cart.

Bringing ideas to life

This fall, the Prototyping Studio on the fourth floor of Newman Library will open for students and faculty to take projects from idea to reality through the ideation, design, and construction process. The opening is a culmination of more than two years of planning.

Even while Newman Library reopened under modified, limited operations, the studios' personnel were deep in the process of creating the Prototyping Studio. Construction is nearly complete, equipment has been purchased, and team members have begun generating partnerships with departments. Through a Memorandum of Understanding with the College of Engineering, a group of seniors from an Interdisciplinary Design Course will be calling the Prototyping Studio home for part of the 2021 fall semester.

The new studio will include 3D printers (FDM, metal, resin, and bio-resin), a CNC router, laser cutter, vacuum former, PCB Mill, PCB printer, a large collection of electronics equipment, and a variety of hand tools that can enable work in foam cutting, clay molding, carving, resin casting, sewing, and about anything else students might want to do.

The studio will absorb the 3D Design Studio. The service and 3D printers will be the same, with a few new additions, but the Prototyping Studio is intended to do a lot more and expand the limited scope of the original 3D Design Studio. It will also be the only place on campus where patrons can 3D print metal.



Video tutorials created for Maker Challenge Week.



Prototyping Studio construction.

The Prototyping Studio is special because of its access model. Other makerspaces exist on campus, but the Library's goal is to make these resources available to anyone. It will expand the reach of our experiential learning opportunities and help University Libraries reach the goals of the modern research library, which includes providing access to more than just books and articles.

The studio team will make display pieces to showcase the studio's capabilities and the machines inside. They will provide a new series of workshops about the studio's technologies and machines and add a program to the studio's Twitch Stream, an interactive online video stream, so viewers can interact with team members as they create things live in the studio. The studio team has partnered with the engineering department so seniors in interdisciplinary engineering groups can book studio time to complete their projects.



Maureen Sauverot, 3D texture artist.

Advanced technology leads to modern collections

Through the work of Maureen Sauverot and other University Libraries digital imaging and 3D scanning experts, the library is creating two dimensional and three dimensional digital collections in partnership with colleges across the university to provide more access to previously hidden specimens, like ancient dinosaur bones from an archaeological dig in Africa or 180-year-old pollinators from the Virginia Tech Bug Collection. This year, Sauverot's position became full-time to increase the capacity for these partnerships to digitally preserve and provide access to unique artifacts not normally available to the general public, policy makers, or even researchers outside of Virginia Tech.



GOAL

Ensure Institutional Excellence

University Libraries embraces the Association of Research Libraries' 2033 vision that research libraries will shift from a knowledge service provider to become a collaborative partner. Well underway toward this vision, we will continue to optimize the efficiency and effectiveness of existing library programs and promote collaborations beyond internal and external boundaries to develop and enhance our new and emerging roles.



International partnership with teaching, learning, and equity at its core

In February 2021, The University Libraries' Virginia Tech Publishing and the American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers (ASABE) published "Introduction to Biosystems Engineering," an open textbook for university-level introductory courses in biosystems engineering.

Written by an international team of authors, this is the first open textbook published as part of the University Libraries' membership in the Open Education Network Publishing Cooperative. It also marks the first time that Virginia Tech Publishing has partnered with an international professional association to publish an open textbook.

For many college students, the cost of textbooks can be an insurmountable challenge. Thanks to the open textbook movement, students are increasingly able to obtain high-quality educational resources at no cost. The University Libraries is committed to the open education movement and is engaged in creating and promoting open textbooks and other open educational resources with Virginia Tech faculty authors. Since 2016, the library and Virginia Tech Publishing have published 10 open textbooks.

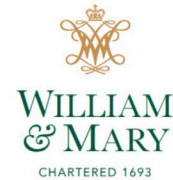
"Introduction to Biosystems Engineering" is released under a Creative Commons Attribution license (CC BY)

and is available both in print and online. The online version is freely downloadable either as a complete work or as stand-alone chapters. In addition, a parallel resource in development, The Biosystems Engineering Digital Library (BEDL), will provide more teaching and learning resources instructors can use in the classroom.

ASABE Director of Publications Joseph C. Walker said "Introduction to Biosystems Engineering" "will help define the profession and support the organization's goal of raising the global prominence of the agricultural and biological engineering profession."

He said it was important for his organization to make this book freely available through open publishing.

"Making the text freely available will provide savings to the students and ensure wider usage, including in non-U.S. countries. With a broad user-base, open access, and ongoing development, the text will stay relevant to the profession and be widely used," said Walker. "We look forward to the textbook possibly spurring other related projects and advancing the field of study."



Expertise and experience used to benefit Virginia Tech and statewide library group

On behalf of Virginia Tech, the University Libraries has taken an active role in state-wide negotiations with international publisher Elsevier. In fall 2020, members of the Virginia Research Libraries (VRL) group completed contract negotiations with Elsevier, the largest publisher of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) scholarly journals. Through a new one-year 2021 agreement, Virginia Tech, University of Virginia, Virginia Commonwealth University, George Mason University, Old Dominion University, William & Mary, and James Madison University libraries addressed their priorities for affordability, accessibility, and equity.

Leslie O'Brien, director of collections and technical services for the University Libraries at Virginia Tech, was instrumental in the negotiation process. As a member of the VRL negotiations committee, she brought her decades worth of experience and expertise to the negotiation table and reduced Virginia Tech's Elsevier spend by 50% from previous years.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Virginia's research libraries were moving toward a new contract with Elsevier beginning in 2022. Due to the pandemic's negative effect on operating budgets, the group asked to renegotiate its

last year of the current five-year contract. The library group will be back at the negotiating table in 2021 to pen a longer-term agreement.

In the new agreement, the group included titles based on download data, article citations by institutional authors, open access availability of articles, articles published by institutional authors, and library liaison input. The group also analyzed the projected costs of alternative access to those titles. This is part of a longer-term effort to realign investments in favor of tools and resources that are more affordable, equitable, and sustainable. And it allows the libraries to build a more tailored collection from more diverse vendors that better service evolving needs of their universities.



In conclusion

This last year has been extremely challenging, but the University Libraries rose to that challenge. Navigating change as the country and world were grappling with an international pandemic forced an assessment and enhancement of virtual services while the library maintained excellence in creativity, innovation, and service to our communities. We are stronger and more nimble as a result.

lib.vt.edu

Photo by Christina Franusich



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