

EX LIBRIS

WVU's Pillars in the Libraries

Augmenting the University's student success, research and land-grant missions with the power of libraries.





A LETTER FROM THE DEAN

It's been a busy time for West Virginia University Libraries! Campus changes have led to library changes. We undertook a major restructuring and resulting from that work is a new Research Support & Engagement (RSE) Department. RSE has supported WVU researchers with emerging research and open data and science

requirements. Additionally, we've added the new Student Success & Instruction (SSI) Department, which has assisted faculty and students with embracing new hybrid learning models. I am also pleased to welcome our new Humanities Center Director, Sharon Ryan, PhD.

Something that has not changed is that our Art in the Libraries program continues to develop exciting new exhibits and programming that engage the campus. The program celebrated 10 years with a retrospective exhibit highlighting all it has accomplished over the years.

The West Virginia & Regional History Center (WVRHC) was honored to host the Archivist of the United States at the invitation of U.S. Sen. Shelley Moore Capito (R-W.Va). Dr. Colleen Shogan met with students, the community and our own campus archivists, highlighting WVU's special collections and encouraging future collaboration with the National Archives.

As I write this, I am starting my ninth year at WVU and my seventh year as dean. While I have seen much change during this time, I am proud of how WVU Libraries continues to move forward. I have enjoyed getting to know so many great colleagues who bring passion and purpose to their work. As our services and structure evolve with new technologies, new demands and new challenges, we are driven by our core purpose of connecting people with information and cultural heritage to empower their exploration, discovery, learning and innovation.

Thank you for sharing that passion and vision and for your continued support of the work that ultimately brings about student success.

Karen Diaz

Dean of WVU Libraries

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ON THE COVER

Photo of U.S. Sen. Shelley Moore Capito (R-W.Va.) (center left) and Archivist of the United States Colleen Shogan, PhD, (center right) in front of stacks at WVU Libraries Depository with WVU Libraries faculty and staff. Photo by WVU Strategic Communications and Marketing.

The WVU Board of Governors is the governing body of WVU. The Higher Education Policy Commission in West Virginia is responsible for developing, establishing and overseeing the implementation of a public policy agenda for the state's four-year colleges and universities. WVU is an EEO/Affirmative Action Employer – Minority/Female/Disability/Veteran.

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SNAPSHOT

The Depository is WVU Libraries' high-density off-site facility designed to safely store materials. It can hold up to one million items and control for temperature and humidity, preserving fragile archival materials while freeing up space at on-campus libraries for students and faculty.

Photo by WVU Strategic Communications and Marketing



▲ WVU students with Dean of WVU Libraries Karen Diaz (center) attending a roundtable with U.S. Sen. Shelley Moore Capito (left of center) (R-W.Va.) and Archivist of the United States Colleen Shogan, PhD (right of center).

ARCHIVIST *of the United States* SPENDS DAY WITH WVRHC

It's not every day someone has an opportunity to see, let alone meet and talk with, the highest-ranking member of their field or academic interest. Last fall, West Virginia University's archivists and librarians, other faculty, staff and students were able to do just that.

It was October 2 and the beginning of American Archives Month when the Archivist of the United States (AOTUS) visited WVU Morgantown. At the invitation of U.S. Sen. Shelley Moore Capito (R-W. Va.), [Colleen Shogan, PhD](#), the 11th AOTUS, joined the senator for a series of visits and tours of campus.

WVU Libraries hosted Dr. Shogan for a full day, showcasing the [West Virginia & Regional History Center's](#) (WVRHC) special collections and rare books, as well as illustrating our methods and dedication to acquiring, preserving and providing access to materials in all formats that illuminate both local and national history and culture.

"The documents of history are essential to our future. They hold us accountable to the truth, they show us our mistakes and they document our progress," Dean of WVU Libraries Karen Diaz said. "As the nation's record keeper, Dr. Shogan is responsible for preserving, protecting and sharing the history of our nation, and I am grateful she took time out of her busy schedule to allow us to show her around our archives and special collections. We at WVU Libraries are honored to not only have hosted leadership at the highest levels of our profession and country, but to share a commitment and mission for collecting and preserving our history's records."

For the day's main event, Dr. Shogan discussed the role of archives and records in strengthening the nation's democracy, the vital importance of preserving and understanding history, the work of the [National Archives and Records Administration \(NARA\)](#) and female

leadership in the field in a moderated conversation with [Lisa DeFrank-Cole, EdD](#), professor and director of leadership studies at WVU.

"Having Dr. Shogan here was both personally enriching and absolutely fulfilling," Dr. DeFrank-Cole said. "As a scholar of women's leadership, having the national archivist, who is the first woman to hold this position, means so much to me. That she spoke not only about the National Archives, but also about what it is like to be a first, bringing her identity together with her position, was absolutely thrilling."

Prior to the public program with Dr. DeFrank-Cole, Dr. Shogan toured the WVRHC, the Libraries Depository and the [Modern Congressional and Political Papers Collection](#). She also had lunch with WVU President E. Gordon Gee and hosted a roundtable alongside Sen. Capito with students to discuss Dr. Shogan's unique career path, her success as the first woman appointed to lead NARA and the National Archives' work.

“It’s very special that the Archivist of the United States was here to talk about her role as a national leader,” said Chloe Hernandez, a WVU graduate student studying political science. “She’s such an inspiration with being the first woman in her role. A lot of times in today’s world you see male-dominated fields and it’s amazing to see another woman out there doing amazing work, especially with revolutionizing how we see the archives and our future.”

Dr. Shogan is the 11th Archivist of the United States. She was sworn in on May 17, 2023. A noted author and political scientist, Dr. Shogan is committed to civic education and public engagement, and she has made it a priority to expand the reach of National Archives to a wider audience.

WVU Libraries will continue to work with NARA to identify experiential and other learning opportunities for WVU and West Virginia students. Future collaboration with NARA will drive advancement in our University’s mission as a land-grant institution to improve the lives and livelihoods of our students, alumni, community and West Virginians and our priority of purpose to foster a culture of curiosity, belonging and self-discovery.

“This was huge. I’m always sending students to presidential libraries and the National Archives in Maryland,” Associate Professor and Department of History Chair Jessica Wilkerson said. “As a 20th century U.S. historian, my colleagues and I rely on those records, which means we rely on the work of Dr. Shogan and her staff to record history. It’s fundamental, and so I have deep respect for what she does. It makes all our work, all our books, all our articles and all our teaching possible.”

Q&A

WITH THE ARCHIVIST OF THE UNITED STATES



▲ Archivist of the United States Colleen Shogan, PhD (left), and U.S. Sen. Shelley Moore Capito (R-W.Va.) view displayed archives at the WVU Libraries Depository.

Colleen Shogan, PhD, the 11th Archivist of the United States, sat down with WVU Libraries to dive deeper into NARA’s history, her connection to WVU, the intersection of national to local archiving, her idea of a “civics renaissance” and why everyone should advocate for preserving and protecting records.

Q You are the 11th Archivist of the United States, a role that in the grand scheme of our nation’s history, is relatively new. What was the inciting incident or national climate of the times when NARA was formed in 1934? Why was NARA needed then and how has its mission and purpose evolved to what it is today?

Construction began on the original archives building in Washington, D.C., at the very end of Herbert Hoover’s presidency before Franklin D. Roosevelt became president. When construction began, there was no legislation to authorize or create a national archives administration yet. That came, as you said, in 1934 after FDR was president.

At the time, one of the concerns was that the nation was growing and so was the complexity of our federal government. As a result, records that were documenting our history and the decisions made by the federal government were all stored in

different places across the country. Additionally, it came to light that a lot of [these records](#) were being stored in the basements or attics of various government departments and cabinets. There are interesting photos of the conditions that some of these records were in — subjected to water, light and all kinds of things that would certainly not ensure the longevity of those records.

Around that time, other countries and other modern democracies were starting to build and create archives. FDR knew this and he knew this building was under construction. So, he thought this would be an opportune moment to create a national archives administration that would preserve and protect our nation’s records.

It’s also worth pointing out that this agency was built in the middle of the Great Depression, which is kind of amazing. There was a national crisis with its own challenges, but FDR and Congress believed it to still be a priority to preserve our history.

Q On October 2, you visited WVU Morgantown and our libraries. Why did our University spark your interest? And throughout your tours of WVU Libraries' archives and the day's public events in which you keynoted, what did you speak to students, faculty, staff and the community about?

I love engaging with universities and visiting when I can. It is important for me to take the opportunity when I can, especially when there's an entire day to visit university archives, to explore historical collections that might be unique to the university and to engage with the larger library system.

Most importantly, I love engaging with students and the public. When I have an opportunity to do that, it is a terrific day and time well spent for me because it enables me to talk about the mission of NARA and the importance of preserving records to a wider audience and potentially, future archivists.

For me in particular, West Virginia University is special. A lot of members of my family attended WVU — my brother, my sister-in-law and even my cousin's daughter is a current WVU student. WVU was

also the first college campus that I explored. When my older brother went to college, I would go with my parents to visit him. I look back on those visits with my family fondly.

My recent visit to Morgantown as Archivist of the United States was no different. I talked with faculty, staff, students and the Morgantown community about the role of archives and records in strengthening the nation's democracy, the vital importance of preserving and understanding history and how as a society, we need to prioritize civics education. I had a great discussion with WVU students about my career and alternate career paths as well. Those students were amazing and came to the table with thoughtful comments and questions.

I also had the opportunity to talk about the scope of NARA. We have 13.5 billion analog or paper records at the National Archives. I think that really shocks a lot of people. Many people visit the National Archives' original building in Washington, D.C., to see our nation's founding documents. But many don't realize

the breadth and depth of the records from American history that NARA protects and preserves. That building is just the tip of the iceberg.

Q The WVRHC preserves congressional archives and leads the American Congress Digital Archives Portal project. How do collections and initiatives like these intersect with the work done at NARA and what is their significance at all levels of government and society?

What WVU is able to collect and preserve in its own archives is very important, particularly the digital portal. The WVRHC is collecting the records and papers of significant individual members of Congress. Here at the National Archives, we hold records of the legislative branch of government — like committee records, floor records, etc. — but we do not hold papers of individual members of Congress or senators.

We rely upon institutions like WVU and others across the United States to be those repositories. Between the work the WVRHC



▲ Photo of nitrate film stored in a brick vault located between the 5th and 6th wings of the Department of the Navy.

◀ Photo of Coast Guard and Division of Bookkeeping and Warrants, room 13, basement.



▲ WVU Professor and Director of Leadership Studies Lisa DeFrank-Cole, EdD (left), and Archivist of the United States Colleen Shogan, PhD (right), speaking at a public event.

is doing with the larger digital consortium and the documentation the National Archives holds in trust for the United States Congress, the American people have access to a complete record of the activities of Congress and the legislative branch of government.

Q While you visited WVU and during your evening keynote, you mentioned driving a “civics renaissance.” Will you summarize what you shared about what this means, how you might implement this movement and how universities like WVU might play a role?

Education is another priority for NARA, especially civics education. It is vital we as a people have an understanding of the principles of American government that are enshrined in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.

We are doubling down on civics and history education as we prepare for the 250th anniversary of the United States in 2026. As a piece of that, we are increasing our resources to teachers. For example, we are developing new content around the Declaration of Independence because there isn’t as much educational content for teachers

about the principles contained in the Declaration of Independence and, of course, the 250th anniversary of the United States celebrates the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

Overall, we’re concerned because in recent years, civics and American history scores have gone down in the United States according to the Department of Education’s [2022 National Assessment of Educational Progress](#). I think everybody who is involved in preserving the history and sharing the history of the United States — not just the National Archives, but academic institutions, museums and archives across the United States — need to make infusing more resources to civics and history education a collective priority. If we all work on that, then we will certainly launch and engage in a civics renaissance.

Our civics renaissance can and should take example from our national efforts for a STEM renaissance. There was real impact from our nation’s efforts to encourage more education in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Scores went up! More kids became interested in those fields!

We shouldn’t stop that. I think we need to continue to encourage STEM, but not at the detriment of studying social sciences, history and civics. We need to add an “AND” to that movement. We need a STEM and civics renaissance.

Q Why should students, parents, faculty, American citizens and our leaders – from community to state to national – care about archives and prioritizing resources for archival efforts?

Archives are so important. It’s not simply a nice-to-have or a luxury. It’s essential to our democracy. Making records available, making them accessible to people across the country and not just in Washington, D.C., is foundational to empowering Americans in understanding the decisions the government has made.

We may or may not agree with specific decisions — and NARA isn’t here to tell you whether to agree or disagree with government decisions — but citizens are owed the ability to understand their government’s decisions for transparency and accountability.

If we don’t have archives and archival efforts as essential building blocks in our democracy, then we don’t have a strong democracy. So, I look at the National Archives and other archives like those within the WVRHC as essential to the vitality of continuing our democracy in the United States.

Q Is there anything you want to add?

I think fondly upon my time at WVU and all the great questions that I received from students and the public, as well as the opportunity to see firsthand some of the congressional archiving that’s going on at the WVRHC and WVU Libraries. It was a special day, thank you so much. 🙏

WVU Libraries rises to

MEET EMERGING RESEARCH AND OPEN SCIENCE NEEDS

A new compliance and research data management initiative led by West Virginia University Libraries and the WVU Research Office empowers university researchers, paving the way to advances in research and science.

The first significant step toward open science on a federal level was more than a decade ago. Today, WVU Libraries, in partnership with the WVU Research Office, empowers University researchers to navigate and excel under evolving federal mandates that require publicly funded research and data to be freely accessible to all.

OPEN SCIENCE'S ASCENT

In research, terms like “open science,” “open access” and “public access” are often used interchangeably, but each has a distinct meaning. Open access is a publishing model that allows authors to retain rights while enabling publishers to share their research freely. Open science, on the other hand, focuses on making scientific

research accessible to all and aligns with federal efforts to ensure public access to federally funded research without barriers.

Despite these differences, their shared goal is to remove barriers and make knowledge freely available, fostering discovery, innovation and equitable access to information for all.

Federal initiatives like the White House Office of Science, Technology and Policy’s (OSTP) 2013 [Holdren memorandum](#) and 2022 [Nelson memorandum](#), and the National Institutes of Health’s (NIH) data management and sharing policy, set the scene for and supported increased public access to results of research funded by the U.S. federal government.

These initiatives also better enable research results validation,

promoting sharing of scientific data, accelerating research discovery, providing accessibility to high-value datasets and promoting data reuse.

WHY OPEN SCIENCE?

“Research data management and sharing data makes for good science and it makes for good research,” said Jonah McAllister-Erickson, assistant university librarian in WVU Libraries’ Research Support & Engagement (RSE) Department. “There is a well-known reproducibility crisis in research. Difficulties in replicating results of published research threatens the credibility of science and when research cannot be reliably accessed and reproduced, it undermines the public’s trust in scientific findings.”

A 2024 pre-print [analysis](#) published on Open Science Framework found one in seven published scientific papers has some degree of data manipulation or underlying fraudulence.

By expanding open science to include sharing data, it becomes easier to scrutinize and validate findings, identify errors or misconduct and ensure higher standards of integrity in research. Coupled with preservation in a public repository, publicly sharing data enhances future research, becoming accessible and usable for subsequent research and expediting discovery.

“Academic libraries in general have been advocates and champions of open science as our role is to get as much information as we can into the hands of those who need it. WVU Libraries is helping to build a culture of shared science and research on campus in several ways.” Dean of WVU Libraries Karen Diaz said. “Soon, we will host a data repository to make data from research available to the public. Beyond that, we offer consultations

and workshops to campus researchers. We also actively keep abreast of and participate in national and international groups developing standards, best practices and resources for open science to ensure we are offering the best advice and the best tools to our researchers.”

WVU LIBRARIES AND THE WVU RESEARCH OFFICE JOIN FORCES

In 2022, with the first rollout of federal data sharing mandates quickly approaching, a committee of WVU research stakeholders was formed to translate NIH guidance into operational University policy and infrastructure.

The Data Management Sharing Committee’s goal: to support WVU researchers in meeting new grant proposal requirements, increasing the likelihood of acceptances in receiving funding for research.

After a needs analysis led by Rosemary Casteel, chair and WVU Research Office’s director of research systems and operational research data service, the committee discovered ensuring data sharing compliance would require new processes, guidance, training, services and roles. Needs included establishing a consulting service, training for data management tooling and ensuring services and guidance for data management throughout the research life cycle were available.

“There was a real void within the campus around who was going to be responsible for explaining these policies,” McAllister-Erickson said. “Who was going manage the necessary tools?”

“A committee supporting research data management and sharing like the Data Management and Sharing Committee has never existed at WVU,” Casteel said. “The DMS Committee is comprised of WVU’s

Libraries, Information Technology Services, West Virginia Clinical and Translational Science Institute, Research Office departments and department and college pre-award staff. Representations from these areas will ensure WVU is prepared and can be proactive. The funding agencies’ data sharing, management, protection, privacy and cybersecurity requirements change continually. The committee allows us to make decisions, obtain input and effectively communicate with the research community.”

The DMS Committee developed processes, services and roles in support of the new data management and sharing policy that went into effect on Jan. 25, 2023. The new processes and services included reviewing data management and sharing plans, as well as training and consultations. A key component was to ensure allowable costs for data storage, management, curation, publication and repositories were included in the budget and that the data management and sharing plans were compliant. WVU Libraries, ITS, WV CTSI and the Research

Office worked directly with researchers to ensure compliance with the new policy.

Of the total number of proposals sent to NIH by WVU researchers, 60% requested a consultation and/or review of their data management sharing plan, speaking to the large number of WVU researchers seeking help with navigating compliance.

“We appreciate Jonah McAllister-Erickson and his colleagues. Jonah walks us through the steps of developing a data management and sharing plan,” said Ubolrat Piamjariyakul, PhD, RN, associate dean of research and scholarship of the WVU School of Nursing. “With his expertise and guidance, we develop data management plans using research systems and workflows that comply with institutional research and information security policies and protocols. When we followed his instruction on developing a comprehensive plan, NIH complimented our recent R1 research proposal, which received funding by the National Institute of Nursing.”

“ The role of WVU Libraries is essential to compliance for public access. They are vital for direct support for the research community related to data management and sharing plans, tooling and general publication support,” Casteel said. “Maintaining sufficient resources in our Libraries and increasing research data management services will be critical for WVU. ”

“We were already advocates of and involved with open science through the WVU Libraries Research Repository,” McAllister-Erickson said. “So, there’s a natural connection for the Libraries to help University researchers in this way.”

OPEN SCIENCE EXPANDS VISIBILITY AND RESEARCH IMPACT

The ripples of recent and emerging public access mandates, and the efforts of the Data Management Sharing Committee to meet resulting campus needs, do not stop at proposal review and submission compliance. Now more than two years after the NIH data management and sharing policy went into effect, some of the first federally funded research to be impacted by public access mandates have been awarded and are closing out projects.

Research outputs and

supporting data now need to be made available to the public immediately and equitably. This does not only benefit the public, but researchers and WVU’s standing as an R1 institution.

“These efforts support improved discovery, visibility and impact for researchers’ work, enhancing University reputation and ultimately student and regional scientific and academic opportunities,” said Emily Fidelman, head of metadata services in WVU Libraries’ Knowledge Access and Resource Management (KARM) Department. “By enriching open science materials on Libraries’ platforms with metadata, we not only acquire it, in a sense, we make it discoverable and more likely to be used by our constituents.”

WVU Libraries’ KARM Department augments the University’s open science efforts by working with and bolstering

metadata about published research outputs and supporting data. Metadata, often described as “data about data,” serves as essential information that describes and organizes research materials, making them easier to locate and understand. By prioritizing focus on increasing engagement with open science materials via metadata best practices, KARM’s expertise and efforts make it easier for researchers, students and the public to find relevant open-science materials when searching online.

“When materials are easier to locate, more West Virginians and the research community can use them, which amplifies the impact of WVU-authored research. We’re making WVU research more than just publicly available, we’re making it findable, useful and impactful,” Fidelman said. “We aid open science research and supporting data, lending WVU’s open science



607

WVU Proposals
Submitted to NIH



88.2M+

In NIH Funding
Awarded to WVU



263

WVU Libraries
Consultations

and scholarship visibility, credibility and impact by creating, harvesting, enriching, transforming and analyzing metadata. All while also teaching researchers, faculty and students how to assign metadata and find openly published work and datasets that researchers can reuse.”

THE FUTURE OF OPEN SCIENCE AT WVU LIBRARIES

While all federal agencies comply with data sharing mandates over the next year, more and more private research funders are also requiring research outputs and supporting data to be shared. WVU Libraries will continue to commit resources toward research data management and sharing and is in the process of recruiting additional expertise to provide more support for researchers in data analysis and other steps of the research life cycle.

“We will be able to assist researchers with more aspects of their data life cycle,” McAllister-Erickson said. “We can help think about the arrangement, description and analysis of researcher’s data, making sure they have good data going into their research. We can help them, not just with the selection of a repository, but with their preparation for depositing their data in that open science repository.”

Both reproducibility of research and reusability of existing data leverages resources more efficiently, making open science a worthwhile endeavor. But the next challenge is outreach and capacity. Public access policies continuously change and effectively communicating those changes, along with supplying relevant Libraries resources and services, across WVU’s researchers is an ongoing, consistent and demanding process. ♡

WVU Libraries is one of many campus partners who contribute to the open science ecosystem. We are grateful for, and are deepening our collaboration with, the Office of Research to stay ahead of our researchers’ needs and challenges while continuing to build and evolve our services where they are needed.

KAREN DIAZ, DEAN, WVU LIBRARIES

► Photo of WVU students in a hybrid ULIB 101 class participating in experiential learning activities.



WVU Libraries

CENTERS LEARNING AROUND STUDENT SUCCESS

Picture this: *students acting as judges in a copyright case or measuring fair use to determine if the unlicensed use of a copyright-protected work on a beloved consumer item is permissible. They're debating the trickle-down effects of licensing rights on costs of textbooks. They're communicating findings about a topic and why the sources used are appropriate and authoritative.*

These are examples of real-world applications of library research course material that make information literacy real and relatable to students.

Like critical thinking, written communication and quantitative literacy, information literacy is essential for all.

It's an average fall Thursday on West Virginia University's Morgantown campus, four years after the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. The leaves are turning, and the air feels crisp. But it's not an average day of class for students in the modernized, hybrid Introduction to Library Research course, ULIB 101.

Students filter into a Libraries classroom and settle into their seats, likely the same comfortable spot they selected on the first day of class. However, they were not able to settle in for long.

Terra Rogerson, associate university librarian in WVU Libraries' Research Support & Engagement (RSE) Department, kicked off class with a request.

"If you're wearing jeans, please stand." A handful of students stood from their seats.

"If you're wearing jeans and sneakers, please stand. In other words, if you are currently standing but do not have sneakers on, sit," Rogerson continued. Two students wearing sandals sat as their

classmates observed the changing dynamics amongst their peers.

"If you're wearing jeans or sneakers, please stand." The same unlucky two wearing sandals stood once more, along with another handful of students who were wearing sneakers, but not jeans.

The fundamentals of Boolean search language conceptualized, Rogerson rearranged students and split the class into teams to host a game of Database Battle in which the teams raced to find a particular article or journal using their new tools.

ADAPTING TO EVOLVING SOCIETAL AND STUDENT NEEDS

"Like most things during the pandemic, ULIB courses went fully virtual," said WVU Libraries' Head of Student Success & Instruction (SSI) Department Kelly Diamond. "There was a lot of anxiety from both students and faculty about being in the classroom, so we kept the course online because that was what was needed at the time. But slowly, things started to shift."

Now, WVU Libraries is evolving post-pandemic and experimenting with novel instructional modalities to see what best centers student learning needs, wants and success.

“Our job as librarians and educators is to educate,” Diamond said. “We are preparing students to be successful in life by providing meaningful experiential learning opportunities that build essential skills and align with societal needs.”

At their core, ULIB courses are about students achieving information literacy outcomes. Every ULIB course is aligned to one or more frames from the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) [Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education](#).

“Information literacy is important in today’s world,” Diamond said. “One of the things we try to teach our students is everybody has bias, and all information has bias. That doesn’t mean it’s bad, wrong, good or correct, or that we can’t use it. We must think about the agenda.”

Challenges to student success rising out of the unique situation the pandemic created — such as difficulty fostering awareness of and engagement with essential services and resources, reaching students with information about accessing support and cultivating inclusivity and empathetic spaces — are the result of burgeoning human-centered student needs.

WHY HYBRID?

According to a peer-reviewed 2022 literature review of at least 25 studies over nearly two decades published in the *Journal of Computing in Higher Education*, online dropout rates are consistently and significantly higher than dropout rates for face-to-face courses, with online attrition being 7–20 percentage points higher than face-to-face courses.

“There are students who appreciate having face-to-face contact with their instructor,” Diamond said. “But a lot of students also want virtual components because they have the flexibility to do certain assignments from wherever that don’t necessarily need to take place in the classroom. Those are the students that sign up for hybrid ULIB, and that’s why we saw an impressive 63% and 75% initial fill rate for fall I and fall II in 2024.”

Seeing an opportunity to address student success challenges head on in new ways, librarian faculty met student needs with new options for various learning preferences, easier access to faculty and feedback, experiential learning and real-world application of course material.

Hybrid ULIB caters to the students who thrive in a traditional classroom setting as well as those who need autonomy to learn and find environments outside the classroom that work for them. In-person components offer more variety of engagement and methods for instruction than online-only environments. Meanwhile, online components offer additional avenues of expression for students who find speaking up uncomfortable, as well as easy access to referenceable coursework, class notes, discussion boards, etc.

Librarians have a unique lens on information literacy. While professors are able to articulate disciplinary expectations around information, librarians are experts on the economics, the politics and the technologies that drive and move information. Librarians are vital in helping faculty find ways to deepen student understanding and critical thinking around information in their classes.

KAREN DIAZ,
DEAN, WVU LIBRARIES

For both learning preferences, hybrid offers a comfortable outlet to absorb knowledge as well as an opportunity to embrace discomfort and learn in new ways.

“In online asynchronous ULIB courses, I’ve noticed a lot of the questions students ask are concerns that could be more easily answered, or even preempted, by in-person demonstrations,” said Miranda Smith, assistant university librarian in WVU Libraries’ SSI Department. “Many of the problem areas students experience are concepts that synchronous learning resolve.”

Other in-person, synchronous modalities like experiential learning activities — for example, the Boolean search ice breaker and Database Battle — offer faculty critical opportunities to provide instant assessment.

“The amount that body language or student attention can tell an educator is invaluable and something that’s really missing from online-only learning,” said Catherine Fonseca, assistant university librarian in WVU Libraries’ SSI Department. “Experiential learning activities are great for seeing if students are getting it. They are helpful for me as an educator, but also for students to get real-time feedback not only from me, but their peers as well.”

“Even if a student provides a great online discussion response to their fellow students, it’s not as personable. There’s no opportunity to go back and forth in the moment,” Smith said. “Having moments where students are required to partner up or form small groups, talking to each other, working through challenges and bouncing ideas pushes students to evolve their way of approaching a problem or topic. That dynamic goes beyond what I’ve seen achieved in any of the asynchronous sections I’ve taught.”

IMPACTING COMMUNITY AND STUDENT SUCCESS

In its first semester after the pandemic, 90% of students enrolled in hybrid ULIB 101 passed the course, with 79% of students earning a B or better and 64% earning an A.

“I learned about Boolean operator terms and specific databases. They’ve really come in handy in my plant science class,” said Ryan Dowell, a first-time student majoring in horticulture. “The overall environment of the class made it easy to speak and ask questions as well. The final project was also nice; a little bit of personalization goes a long way.”

Hybrid ULIB 101 was also open to high school students last fall, who took the class for college credit, getting a head start. But some had no experience with libraries or information literacy at the start.

“It challenged me to think about my assumptions and expectations around what prior knowledge students are coming into class with and how they can apply what they’re learning,” Smith said. “I usually try to apply modules to a topic or assignment students are looking into for their major or another class. And so, I had to think more in terms of how to relate class content to real-world, everyday searching scenarios.”

“The hybrid class gave me time to finish all my schoolwork and

juggle classes,” said Lucia Vargas-LaCasella, a dual enrollment high school student. “It allowed me more time to relax and thoroughly examine my work a few times before submitting. The teachers were extremely helpful, and I’ve used a lot of what we learned in my other school assignments.”

HYBRID ULIB’S NEXT EVOLUTION

Customization of coursework to student majors, career paths and topic interest areas can only go so far in a multidisciplinary elective. WVU Libraries is committed to information literacy, research learning and preparing students to be successful.

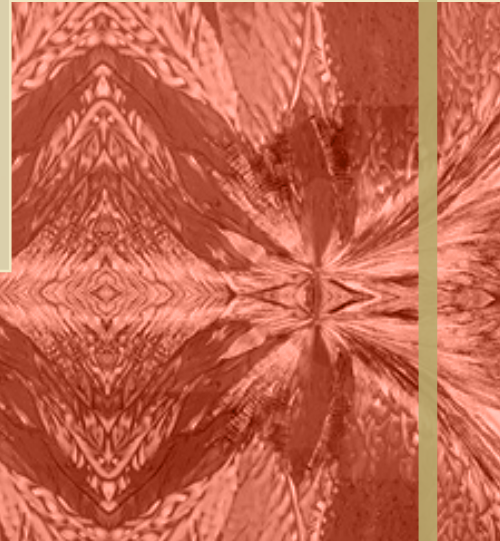
“We can go further if given the resources — STEM, social sciences, humanities. Information literacy in an AI world!” Diamond said. “Because a WVU Health Sciences faculty member anecdotally noted her students who enrolled in and passed ULIB 101 were better writers in the class, we collaborated with Health Sciences to develop a ULIB course specifically for health sciences majors. This is an example of what’s possible.

“In order to be successful, students need to be able to parse information, understand what is reliable and identify what is accurate. That’s a skill everyone needs.” ♡

““ I really believe in ULIB and its student success impact,” Fonseca said. “This is why all the effort to evolve and constantly improve ULIB instruction is worth it. The information literacy and research skills students learn in this class are transmutable across disciplines.” ”

ART IN THE LIBRARIES CELEBRATES

10 YEARS OF IMPACT



Art in the Libraries began from a vision for WVU Libraries' future as a vibrant hub of local and University art.

Libraries offer distinct spaces for gathering and learning, and Art in the Libraries (AiL) capitalizes on the natural link that ties art and libraries together – being incubators for ideas that stimulate conversation, inquiry, discovery and reflection.

“I feel fortunate to have been a member of the Art in the Libraries Committee since its inception. The breadth of exhibits means there’s always something interesting to see, from beautiful art works to collaborative exhibits on contemporary themes,” said Beth Royall, WVU Libraries university librarian and original AiL Committee member. “Curator Sally Brown continues to bring together the creative and scholarly work of faculty and students from across the University and beyond, generating fascinating exhibits and engaging discussions.”

Throughout the 10 years since its inception, AiL has enriched connections across disciplines that build bridges between WVU Libraries’ collections, library services and new ways of seeing, learning and understanding. Developing exhibits and related programming, AiL highlights the creative endeavors and scholarship of WVU faculty, staff and students, reaching across campus, the Appalachian region and the broader academic community.

Now under the guidance of Dean of WVU Libraries Karen Diaz and AiL Curator Sally Brown, with advisement from the AiL Committee, this commitment remains strong, ensuring the Libraries continue to thrive as vibrant hubs of artistic expression, cultural enrichment and visual displays of scholarship and social issues.

2014

A Vision is Born

Former Dean of WVU Libraries Jon E. Cawthorne, PhD (2014-17), envisioned transforming the Morgantown campus libraries into vibrant hubs of local and University art.

2015-2016

ENGAGING THE DISCIPLINES COMMUNITY

Availing Libraries and Its Multifaceted Spaces

AiL began by using WVU Libraries spaces for enriching connections across disciplines with engaging exhibits, serving as an incubator for ideas that stimulate conversation, inquiry, discovery and reflection.

2015



"Anglerfish Ovary Cross-Section," by James E. Hayden, The Wistar Institute, Philadelphia. From the National Institute of General Medical Science's visiting "Life: Magnified" collection.



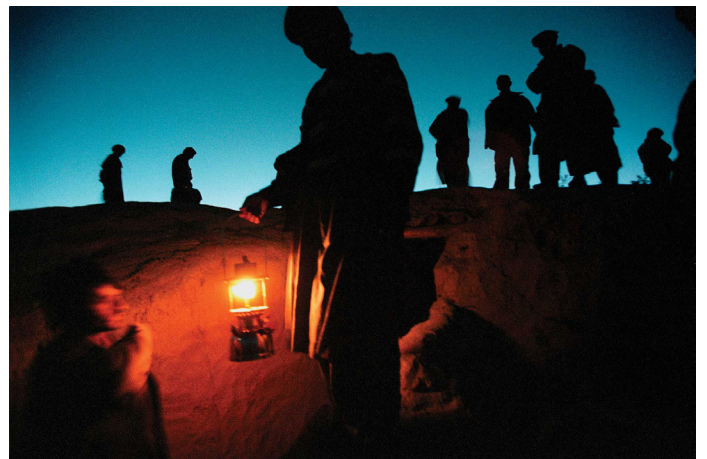
Painting by Max Hayslette, romantic landscape painter and abstract expressionist, from the West Virginia & Regional History Center (WVRHC) collection.

2016

ENGAGING STUDENTS

Dean of the Libraries Award

Since 2015, AiL has annually awarded two WVU art students the Dean of the Libraries' Award, which includes a monetary prize and an exhibition opportunity.



Photograph from exhibit "Fractured Spaces: Stories of Resistance and Resilience" by journalist and WVU Reed School of Media and Communications faculty member Lois Raimondo.

2017

ENGAGING STUDENTS

Amplifying Student Success via AiL

AiL became a pillar for strengthening student engagement and success by fostering academic partnerships with colleges and units like the College of Creative Arts and Media and the WVRHC.



Art students used photos from the WVRHC archives as inspiration to paint pieces for an exhibit about the Russian Revolution and its 100th anniversary.

Photo (top) of Russians shopping in 1962 courtesy of WVRHC and a resulting student painting (bottom).

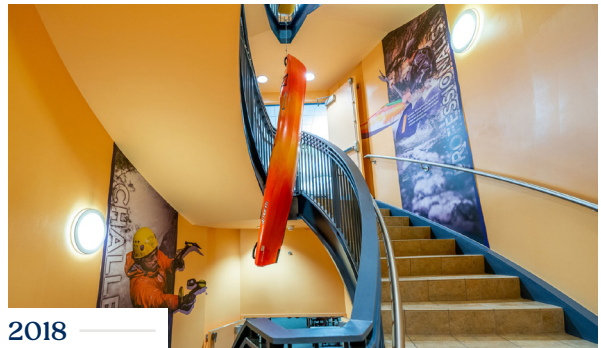


Sculpture, chemistry and engineering students from across the country came together to brainstorm, design and build artistic representations of a scientific concept, which were then displayed at Evansdale Library.

Images of Community Engagement in Science through Art (CESTA) sculpture "D4H," a 2017 study of molecule shape and symmetry.

The first multidisciplinary feature exhibit was "Water: A Cross-disciplinary Exhibit Exploring the Significance, Power and Play of Life's Critical Resource," an educational project to help spread awareness about stormwater management.

Image (below) of displays and boat installation for "Water" exhibit by Adventure WV.



2018

ENGAGING THE DISCIPLINES

Launch of the Multidisciplinary Feature

AiL embarked on a journey to feature multidisciplinary scholarship each year with guidance from a subject matter expert committee of WVU and regional scholars, artists and community members.

2018-2019

It was fantastic to work with students in a cross-disciplinary environment. In truth, Art in the Libraries saved the CESTA Program! The Libraries provided a space and exposure for the student artists.

JASON LEE, BERNARD SCHULTZ ENDOWED PROFESSOR IN ART, SCULPTURE AND FOUNDATIONS, SCHOOL OF ART AND DESIGN, WVU COLLEGE OF CREATIVE ARTS AND MEDIA

HIGHLIGHTING FACULTY

Faculty/ Staff Award

Since 2018, AiL has annually awarded one WVU faculty or staff member for their art and/or scholarship. Exhibit winners span disciplines and topics, including biology, dime novels, culture, gaming, origami, education and art.

2019



ENGAGING THE DISCIPLINES

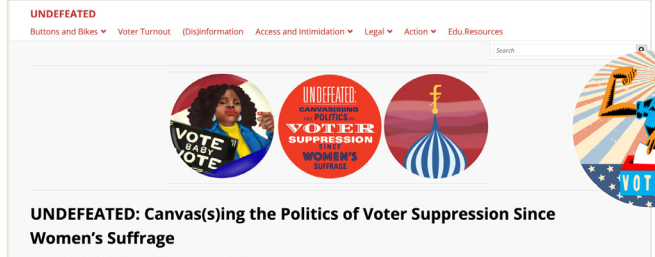
Multidisciplinary Feature:

"Appalachian Futures" was the second multidisciplinary feature exhibit, advancing important conversations about what it means to be Appalachian.

Design by David Smith, teaching associate professor, WVU Reed School of Media and Communications.



2020



ENGAGING THE DISCIPLINES

Multidisciplinary Feature:

"Undefeated: Canvas(s)ing the Politics of Voter Suppression Since Women's Suffrage" highlighted the 100th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th amendment to the U.S. Constitution and the 55th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

COMMUNITY

AiL Goes Virtual

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, AiL went virtual, expanding the reach of its exhibits by producing online versions for people to enjoy from wherever they are.

ENGAGING STUDENTS

Students:

Associate Professor of Fashion Design and Merchandising Colleen Moretz's students filled the Evansdale Library's second floor with mannequins sporting original 2019 fashion designs.

Images of students and their original fashion designs.

If there was an upside to the pandemic, it's that it showed the resourcefulness, the flexibility and the adaptability of our students, accessibility service providers, staff, faculty and cultural programs like Art in the Libraries.

NICOLE FULLER, CAPTIONER, OFFICE OF STUDENT ACCOMMODATIONS, WVU

2021-2022

Renewed Focus Rooted in Social Activism

AiL sought to demonstrate how art, libraries and scholars encourage the community to explore, reflect, discuss and act.

2021



ENGAGING THE DISCIPLINES

COMMUNITY

1. Multidisciplinary Feature: "Food Justice in Appalachia," was curated in partnership with the WVU Center for Resilient Communities' Food Justice Lab and Appalachian Farm Collective and explored a multilayered, complex social movement in Appalachia.

Painting by GA Valera.

COMMUNITY

2. New Exhibit: The "West Virginia People of Color in Healthcare," exhibit was created to look at the past, present and future of West Virginia healthcare with historical imagery and text, current perspectives and WVU initiatives and more.

Photo (left) of Dr. Mildred Mitchell-Bateman, courtesy of the WVRHC. Photo (right) of Shelia Price, DDS, EdD, Professor and Associate Dean for Admissions, Recruitment and Access, WVU School of Dentistry (retired).

ENGAGING STUDENTS

3. Students: Funded by Women of WVU and in partnership with the WVRHC, the Inclusive Portrait Project was launched to create three portraits to be painted by WVU fine arts students or recent graduates.

Photo of Dean of WVU Libraries Karen Diaz (left) with Anna Allen (BFA, 2021) and Allen's portrait of **Victorine Louistall Monroe**, the first known Black female to earn a graduate degree from WVU and the University's first Black faculty member. She taught library science.



ENGAGING THE DISCIPLINES

Multidisciplinary Feature:

"Hacking the Library" was curated to explore the ability to deconstruct and reconstruct information systems.

Art by Jackie Andrews.

2023

Reflecting on 10 Years of Impact

"We have shown that libraries are more than just books – they're vibrant incubators for ideas that spark conversation, curiosity and reflection. The AiL program transforms these spaces into dynamic areas, connecting students, faculty, staff and the larger WVU community to the Libraries' collections in new, exciting ways," WVU AiL Curator Sally Brown said.

2023-2024

ENGAGING STUDENTS

Graduate Student Award

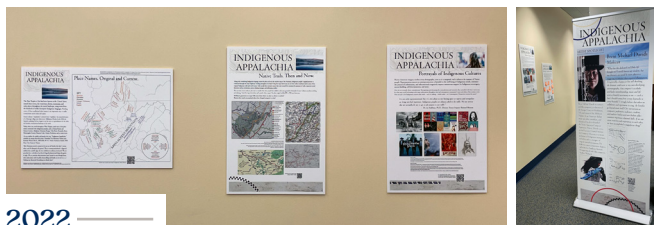
Since 2022, AiL has annually awarded one graduate student each year for their art and/or scholarship. Exhibit winners span disciplines and topics, including literature, digital media, microbiology, ecology, engineering and agriculture.

ENGAGING THE DISCIPLINES

Multidisciplinary Feature:

"Indigenous Appalachia," curated in partnership with the WVU Native American Studies Program, encourages observing, listening, feeling, reflecting and questioning.

Images of "Indigenous Appalachia" exhibit displays.



2022



ENGAGING STUDENTS

Students:

Caroline Blumish (MA, Professional Writing, 2023) researched and created the “Banned Books” exhibit on the history of banned books in North America.

Design made from “Banned Books” exhibit.

2024



ENGAGING THE DISCIPLINES

COMMUNITY

Multidisciplinary Feature:

“WVU Art in the Libraries Retrospective: 2015-2024” was curated in collaboration with the WVU Humanities Center to illustrate and celebrate 10 years of exhibits and programs across the three Morgantown campus libraries, showcasing their scope and impact on the campus and community.

2025

Moving Toward New, Exciting Engagements

AiL continues to create more engaging exhibits and initiatives that challenge perspectives, deepen understandings and encourage everyone to experience the intersection of art, learning and discovery. Plans for the coming year include new collaborative initiatives such as the West Virginia Feminist Activist Collection Artist in Residency (FAIR) program, a feature exhibition with a focus on artificial intelligence, continued student engagement projects, annual award programs and traveling exhibits. Follow WVU Libraries and WVU AiL so you don't miss another great year.

In the fall of 2024, AiL celebrated 10 years of impact with the “WVU Art in the Libraries Retrospective: 2015-2024” exhibit and a multidisciplinary panel launch event. Like the exhibit, the panelists and their discussion at the public launch event explored a broad spectrum of pertinent subjects, from addressing environmental concerns to exploring food justice, ethics, voting, healthcare, contemporary art, literature and more.

Their contributions and the exhibit represent the best of the AiL initiative and celebrate its impact on the campus, community and beyond. Embodying the University’s focus on prosperity, AiL has opened opportunities that empower and inspire individuals and communities to reach their full potential and will continue to do so into 2025 and beyond.

“WVU Art in the Libraries Retrospective: 2015-2024” was on display at the Downtown Library in Morgantown for the 2024-25 academic year and will travel to the WVU Institute of Technology Library in Beckley for the 2025-26 academic year. See for yourself the retrospective exhibit that spans disciplines, fosters interactivity and speaks to the pivotal role of the humanities.

The full exhibition can also be found on the WVU Research Repository at researchrepository.wvu.edu/retrospective2015-2024. 📖





▲ Sharon Ryan, PhD, Director, Humanities Center, WVU Libraries

Ryan named **WVU HUMANITIES CENTER DIRECTOR**

Sharon Ryan, PhD, was named director of the West Virginia University Humanities Center to guide the center into the future. She stepped into this role in January 2025.

We are excited to have Dr. Ryan, whose clear passion for and expertise in the humanities will build on the incredible foundation of the WVU Humanities Center as a cultural and intellectual hub,” Dean of Libraries Karen Diaz said. “Dr. Ryan will capitalize on the great synergies that already exist on and off campus, and work to evolve the roles the center plays in strengthening the University’s R1 status and commitment to the land-grant mission.”

Originally founded with the primary purpose of facilitating and encouraging collaboration of faculty who are engaged in scholarship in the humanities and to make WVU and the Morgantown region a cultural and intellectual area of national significance, this original charter called for supporting humanities funding, working with the campus and statewide community and developing graduate and undergraduate research in the humanities.

A recent survey of WVU faculty underscored the ongoing need and desire for these features to continue to advance and evolve:



A grants program that supports the research of campus faculty.

Humanities grants support collaborative projects, innovative teaching practices and research support that allows scholars to travel or access archival materials.



Programming that brings prominent humanities scholars to campus and highlights the work of our own scholars.

This programming should appeal to a wide range of disciplines and interests, and address concerns about the current political and academic environment’s impact on humanities. There is a great opportunity to foster collaboration across University departments and external learning communities.



Advocacy to encourage the inclusion of humanities in broader University initiatives, stressing their value to both students and faculty. This advocacy must also address the public’s diminishing confidence in the humanities by dispelling misconceptions about career prospects and emphasizing the broader academic and community value. This includes connecting with the K-12 community and regional cultural endeavors, strengthening humanities faculty collaboration and ensuring our scholars are valued and supported.



Bringing in a new Humanities Center director is an opportune time to explore new avenues. We have the opportunity to build communities of practice, such as a group seeking to develop book proposals, or share regional interdisciplinary work. We can engage the Office of Undergraduate Research to encourage more humanities research. As a member of the Consortium of Humanities Centers and Institutes, we can engage others for greater collaboration across institutions.

WVU Libraries looks forward to the unique approach that new Humanities Center Director Ryan will bring to this work. She brings 13 years of administrative experience and a deep passion for the humanities.

“Every R1 institution should have arts and humanities programs that are thriving. Our scholars and artists deserve to feel valued, energized and appreciated.” Dr. Ryan said. “Humanities scholars and artists grapple with the most fundamental, contentious and significant concerns and challenges that we face as humans. And all across the University, our humanities faculty are engaged in meaningful research projects, creative work and teaching. I look forward to supporting and showcasing this valuable work as the Humanities Center’s director.”

Prior to joining the Humanities Center, Dr. Ryan served as a member of the first advisory board for the center in 2017 and played a critical role in creating the Humanities Center’s mission statement, strategic vision and initial programming and grant opportunities.

Additionally, during her nearly 35-year tenure at WVU thus far, Dr. Ryan has been a professor of philosophy and held leadership positions as chair for both the Philosophy Department and the Humanities Department and the Religious Studies Program. As chair, she organized lectures, reading groups, social events, workshops and conferences.

Dr. Ryan has published widely on a variety of topics in philosophy, given countless presentations and served on dozens of committees and reviews both on and off campus. Among her many honors and awards, she won the Eberly College of Arts and Sciences Outstanding Teacher Award, was a finalist for WVU Eberly College of Arts and



Sciences’ Outstanding Teaching Professorship in 2016 and won Outstanding Public Service Award in 2010.

The Humanities Center director champions the role of the humanities at WVU, builds community and supports the humanities research mission throughout the campus community. The director also highlights the role of humanities in society by promoting career opportunities for humanities students and identifying opportunities for cross- and multidisciplinary research.

The Humanities Center cultivates environments for developing insight into human thought, culture and history while creating space to bridge the past with the present and foster a richer understanding of our shared narrative. 🦋

NEWS AND UPDATES

WVU Libraries welcomes **NEW LIBRARIANS**

DIGITAL COLLECTIONS ARCHIVIST PATRICK BURDEN

Patrick Burden's extensive background in a mixture of information technology (IT) and libraries, archives and museums uniquely positions them for this cross-functional role within West Virginia University Libraries. Burden will lead programs for managing, preserving and providing access to digitized and born-digital archives to meet the needs of researchers and students. Previously, Burden worked at various institutes and historical societies, digitizing and updating records and collections to modern standards and ensuring their digital accessibility. Burden earned their Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) from Drexel University.

INSTRUCTION & PUBLIC SERVICES ARCHIVIST BRIDGET JAMISON

Bridget Jamison provides critical West Virginia & Regional History Center (WVRHC) instruction in various disciplines with a focus on primary source literacy and integration into course curricula. Jamison earned her MLIS and Master of Arts in History degrees from the University of Maryland (UMD), College Park. During her studies, she served as a research and teaching fellow teaching information literacy at UMD Libraries and as an instruction and outreach intern teaching with primary sources at UMD Special Collections and University Archives. She also worked as a student assistant for the Historic Maryland Newspapers Project.

STUDENT SUCCESS & ENGAGEMENT LIBRARIAN AMY MELNYK

Bringing not only extensive academic librarian experience, but communications and outreach experience as well, Amy Melnyk's distinctive perspective aligns well with her role in the WVU Libraries' Student Success & Instruction (SSI) Department. Melnyk will focus on co-curricular partnerships and departmental instruction, supporting WVU's various co-curricular units such as academic support and services units, student organizations, cultural centers and other campus support centers and units. Previously, Melnyk worked in both nonprofit and private sector communications, connecting with diverse audiences, developing impactful programs and driving meaningful engagement. As an academic librarian, Melnyk focused on teaching, delivering instructional content and developing innovative programming. Melnyk earned her MLIS from the University of Pittsburgh and Master of Arts in International Affairs from Ohio University.

STUDENT SUCCESS & INSTRUCTION LIBRARIAN MIRANDA SMITH

Miranda Smith's educational background in the humanities, alongside serving as an instructional designer and course instructor for WVU Libraries, has set her up as an ideal addition to the SSI team. Smith will focus on academic instruction, supporting instructors and students in the humanities by leading and designing courses to improve research skills and information literacy. Previously at WVU Libraries, Smith assisted and led the design of instructional materials and evaluated efficacy and course objectives. As a graduate teaching assistant for WVU's Department of English, Smith taught introductory English courses. Smith earned her MLIS from the University of Kentucky and Master of Arts in English from WVU.

WVU Libraries faculty

ACHIEVE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIAN STATUS

West Virginia University Libraries recently promoted three librarians from associate university librarian to university librarian, the highest rank of librarianship at the University.

WVU Libraries congratulates West Virginia & Regional History Center (WVRHC) Director Lori Hostuttler, Law Library's Head of Outreach, Attorney Services and Digital Initiatives Stephanie Miller and Associate Dean for Services, Resource Management and Technology Dennis Smith.

"Lori, Stephanie and Dennis' knowledge, experience and leadership are instrumental to the Libraries," Dean of WVU Libraries Karen Diaz said. "Their well-deserved promotions to university librarian are an incredible accomplishment and testament to their dedication and hard work, but also, a modest recognition in comparison to the impact they each have had on WVU Libraries, students, colleagues and the community."



Lori Hostuttler,
Director, WVRHC,
WVU Libraries



Stephanie Miller, Head of
Outreach, Attorney Services and
Digital Initiatives, Law Library,
WVU Libraries



Dennis Smith, Associate Dean for
Services, Resource Management
and Technology, WVU Libraries

WVU Libraries thanks

RETIRING LIBRARIANS AND CELEBRATES THEIR COMBINED 97 YEARS OF SERVICE



STUDENT SUCCESS & INSTRUCTION LIBRARIAN VIRGINIA DESOUKY

Virginia Desouky, student success & instruction librarian at West Virginia University Libraries' Student Success & Instruction (SSI) Department, retired December 31, 2024, after 30 years of service as a librarian to WVU Libraries.

From the start of her career, Desouky was a librarian. From Ohio to Oklahoma to Montana, Desouky held numerous positions at various libraries, providing reference and information services, supervising and training staff and more. In 1994, she settled in Morgantown and began her time at WVU Libraries in a temporary position at the Health Sciences Library.

Expanding her role to countless aspects of collection development and teaching, Desouky worked her way up to reference librarian, education coordinator, information services librarian, scholarly engagement librarian and now student success & instruction librarian.

"Virginia was a wonderful colleague to everyone in the Health Sciences Library and beyond for many years. As the longtime liaison to first the School of Nursing and then the School of Public Health, she taught hundreds of information literacy sessions and answered countless reference questions, leaving a lasting impact on numerous health sciences students," said WVU Libraries' Health Sciences Library Director Anna Crawford. "Her willingness to share her knowledge and lend a helping hand on any project has made her an invaluable colleague. We certainly miss her, but we are excited for her as she enters retirement."

Over her career, she dedicated herself to dozens of committees, leadership roles, associations and local chapters of national library organizations.

"I am grateful for Virginia's nearly 30 years serving the Health Sciences Center community through workshops, classroom instruction and reference services." Dean of WVU Libraries Karen Diaz said. "While I am sorry we lost her deep institutional knowledge, I wish her all the best in her retirement!"



ACCESS SERVICES DIRECTOR HILARY FREDETTE

Hilary Fredette, director of WVU Libraries' Access Services Department, retired January 2, 2025, after 26 years of service as a librarian to WVU Libraries.

Fredette started with WVU Libraries as the government documents librarian in 1999 and has held several roles since, including interlibrary loan coordinator, distance education coordinator, operations and resource sharing director and finally director of Access Services.

Throughout her service, Fredette has been central and integral to many parts the Libraries we now take for granted, such as circulation and resource sharing services, new student orientation, services for distance education students and faculty, online room reservations and more. From adopting various service platforms essential to the day-to-day work and impact of our librarians, to transitioning that work to more modern library management systems, Fredette's leadership and vision continues to ripple through library research support and access services across the WVU system.

"Hilary has been an excellent leader at the WVU Libraries, not only in leadership of Access Services, but also within our Library Faculty Assembly," Dean of WVU Libraries Karen Diaz said. "We miss her capable and steady leadership of the people, the technology and the relationships that guide our ability to provide excellent and efficient delivery of materials to our campus. She made daily operations of our Downtown Library facility seamless. She is missed not only by us, but by countless colleagues nationally with whom she interacted on a regular basis through our major consortia."

Her leadership shined even as much of the world and WVU campus shut down due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Fredette led infrastructure adjustments to ensure WVU Libraries circulation and resource sharing services continued despite challenges from the pandemic. She was also an expert in copyright and was the go-to librarian for reserves and resources in this area for both students and faculty.

Recognized by her peers for her leadership and dedication, Fredette was awarded the WVU Libraries Outstanding Librarian Award in 2013 and the Mountaineer Value Coin for Service in 2021.

Fredette retired from WVU as university librarian, emerita.



RARE BOOKS CURATOR STEWART PLEIN

Stewart Plein, curator of rare books and printed resources at WVU Libraries' West Virginia & Regional History Center (WVRHC), retired August 30, 2024, after 13 years of service as a librarian to WVU Libraries.

Plein began her passionate work with books and printed materials in the local books trade in 1995. In 2004, she joined WVU Libraries as a volunteer in the Rare Book Room. This experience changed her life's direction, inspiring her to earn her Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) degree. She began her professional career as a special collections librarian in 2011 at the WVU Law Library and was a member of the faculty at the WVRHC since 2014.

As curator, colleague and instructor, Plein's infectious passion for books and historic West Virginia newspapers was unmistakable. Throughout her career, she inspired students, library patrons, colleagues and collection donors.

Plein greatly advanced the stewardship and development of the West Virginia Books and Serials Collection, the Appalachian Collection and the Rare Book Collection at the WVRHC. Plein also built and maintained donor relationships, some of whom provided resources to support the Rare Book Collection. In this role she added collections such as the Presgraves Appalachian collection, the Ebersole gardening and cookbook collections and the Lowell and Susan Thing Margaret Armstrong Collection.

Plein served as principal investigator and managing director for five of six West Virginia National Digital Newspaper Project (NDNP) grants. Supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities in partnership with the Library of Congress, this work resulted in the digitization of approximately 150 historic West Virginia newspapers from WVU's collection and their addition to the Library of Congress' Chronicling America website, allowing for free online access worldwide. In addition, her research on Black newspapers in West Virginia uncovered more than 50 newspapers and their publication history.

Plein's scholarship includes articles, book chapters, blog posts and essays and annual updates to the West Virginia History Journal's West Virginia History Bibliography, as well as research and production of multiple exhibitions. Over her career, she received multiple awards, honors and scholarships.

Plein retired from WVU as university librarian, emerita.

I am thankful for the strong heart and hospitality with which Martha has led the Evansdale Library. She has passionately advocated for employees of the Evansdale Library and cares deeply about serving the community on that campus. She has mentored numerous professionals in our midst, including residents of our Diversity Residency Program and international visiting librarians.

KAREN DIAZ,
DEAN, WVU LIBRARIES

ACCESS SERVICES ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR MARTHA YANCEY

Martha Yancey, associate director of WVU Libraries' Access Services Department, retired January 2, 2025, after 28 years of service as a librarian to WVU Libraries.

During her career at WVU Libraries, Yancey held various roles, from reference librarian and interlibrary loan coordinator to access services coordinator and user services and resources sharing librarian. In her leadership roles, she was interim and then full director of the Evansdale Library and finally associate director over all WVU Libraries' Access Services.

To students, Yancey was a devoted teacher, taking on countless sessions of Introduction to Library Research courses and other instructional sessions, including several courses for the WVU Information Literacy Course Enhancement Program. To colleagues, she was a steadfast mentor, active in her service to not only WVU, but national and regional professional organizations as well.

Yancey regularly attended the National Access Services Conference, where she served as a member of the sponsorship and program committee. The American Library Association (ALA) conferences and the West Virginia Library Association conferences are just a few examples of the professional development opportunities, in addition to webinars, seminars and workshops she led presentations for and attended. She always returned with cutting-edge library services, technology and more.

She was also instrumental as a member (2007-2011) and chair (2011-2012) of the awards committee for ALA's Sharing and Transforming Access to Resources (STARs), granting Yancey the opportunity to work with other resource sharing librarians, contribute nationally and identify outstanding librarians to recognize.

Diligent in moving the Evansdale Library toward the future, Yancey led the transformation of several manual operations to electronic formats to better accommodate students and faculty, bring in new services and increase efficiencies.

Over her career, Yancey wrote several published works, including a co-written book chapter on fostering librarians from underrepresented groups, specifically regarding her experience in the WVU Libraries Residency Program. She also received the WVU Mountaineer Value Coin Award in 2020 and the WVU Faculty Justice Network's Distinguished Service Award in 2022.

Yancey retired from WVU as university librarian, emerita.

Science meets art for two

ART IN THE LIBRARIES AWARDS

West Virginia University Libraries' Art in the Libraries Committee selected Kushal Naharki, a WVU graduate research assistant studying plant and soil science, as the 2024 Graduate Student Exhibit Award winner, and WVU Department of Biology Teaching Professor Jennifer Ripley Stueckle, PhD, as the 2024 Faculty/Staff Exhibit Award winner.

Naharki received the **award for his work**, "Aerial Detection and Release of Natural Enemy Insects using Drones to Manage Invasive Species." Invasive species are a major threat to agriculture and forest ecosystems, causing over \$26 billion annually since 2010 in economic losses in North America according to a 2021 study published in *NeoBiota*. Because these species often invade hard-to-reach areas, it is difficult to manage their negative impacts.

Featuring photos of the equipment and images captured by various optical sensors, Naharki's exhibit showcased the innovative methods developed to use drones to detect invasive species, identify invasive plants and deploy natural enemy insects for management.

"The Art in the Libraries graduate student award was an incredible opportunity to showcase my research

to a wider audience. My exhibit highlighted the innovative methods we are developing at WVU using drones to manage invasive plants," said Naharki. "It was important to share my research with more students, faculty and staff as we are addressing and managing the important issue of invasive species in West Virginia in sustainable ways. This platform helped me have meaningful discussions and reach more people to foster a deeper understanding of aerial surveillance and biological control methods."

Dr. Stueckle received the **award for her work**, "Trout in the Classroom: A Journey Through Art and Science." The beauty and vitality of the United States' ecosystems come to life, Dr. Stueckle's winning exhibit showcased her work and the collaborative efforts of local schools, community volunteers and university students in exploring the life cycle of rainbow trout through quilts, paintings, prints and photographic documentation of the project process. The exhibit celebrates the wonder of native species and the educational impact of experiential learning.

"Trout in the classroom engages students in multidisciplinary activities. This exhibit showcases many facets



WVU Department of Biology Teaching Professor Jennifer Ripley Stueckle, PhD, in front of paintings by fourth grade students at North Elementary School in "Trout in the Classroom: A Journey Through Art and Science" exhibit.

of the project from the trout life cycle to impacts on the environment and food webs," said Dr. Stueckle. "Many community groups and members have contributed to the work and I'm proud to show all our collaborations."

The graduate award recipient received \$500 in professional development funds, and Naharki's project was exhibited in the Research Commons at the Downtown Library throughout the 2024 academic year. The faculty/staff award recipient received \$1,000 in professional development funds, and Stueckle's project was exhibited in Room 1020 at the Downtown Library throughout the 2024 academic year.

With the Annual Graduate Student Award, Faculty/Staff Exhibits Award and others, the Art in the Libraries Committee offers opportunities for WVU to honor our community's creative talent on campus and share it with the broader community.

A list of current and former award winners can be found at exhibits.lib.wvu.edu/awards.



Kushal Naharki, a WVU graduate research assistant studying plant and soil science, in front of "Aerial Detection and Release of Natural Enemy Insects using Drones to Manage Invasive Species" exhibit.

Opportunities to **TO SUPPORT THE FUTURE OF WVU LIBRARIES**

As West Virginia University moves forward with new opportunities and program alignments to increase student success and engagement with its research and land-grant missions, WVU Libraries continues to play a crucial role in meeting the growing information and cultural needs of our campus and community.

Private giving is essential to our ability to bolster student success, support the ever-changing needs of the research enterprise and serve the state through firsthand access to information services and cultural heritage collections.

To meet the shifting needs of WVU students, researchers and West Virginians, WVU Libraries has focused its development priorities for 2025 in the following areas.



ACCELERATING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Strategic partnerships with faculty across our campuses provide curricular and extracurricular opportunities that enhance students' understanding and engagement with our increasingly complex information landscape. Such instruction and programming allow them to achieve greater success in the classroom and provide them with critical thinking skills to succeed personally and professionally, now and after graduation.

Through paid student internships and assistantships within the Libraries, students are able to meet

their financial needs while also gaining a quality experience that provides them with workplace skills for any discipline or major. They are able to increase their understanding of how information is generated, gathered and accessed, and fit it all within their busy classroom and campus engagement schedules.

INVESTING IN SKILLED, FUTURE-READY LIBRARY WORKFORCE

Continuous learning and retooling of skills are essential for library employees as new technologies emerge and the needs of our users evolve. How do we deploy — and

teach — artificial intelligence in our information services and landscapes? How do we engage with a diverse community of information seekers and information providers? What new technical frameworks and programming languages do we need to keep our tools useful and up to date? What new services are needed as technology changes how users interact with us? What best practices can we include to ensure our campus is getting the best support we can offer? What content do we need to purchase to better meet the needs of our researchers and the curriculum as it changes? All of these challenges require ongoing and timely professional development opportunities for our staff.

Increasingly, we have identified areas where new endowed positions can extend the expertise and resources available to our campus and community and will increase engagement with our collections.

These positions are crucial for our ability to excel amongst Big 12 Conference Schools and other land-grant libraries. They also help us to effectively acquire and manage specific areas of national and state importance like our University Archives, women's archives and the William A. Neal Museum of the Health Sciences.

DEEPENING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The West Virginia & Regional History Center (WVRHC), WVU Humanities Center, the Art in the Libraries program and the William A. Neal Museum of the Health Sciences provide robust cultural and educational programming and events open to all. Writers, poets, historians and prominent West Virginians and national figures have visited our spaces and added context to our materials. Along with personal connections, our exhibits are designed to facilitate community and campus collaboration and provide a venue for student and faculty researchers and artists to interact and engage the public.

Because WVU Libraries does not receive state funding to achieve this land-grant mission of outreach to the wider community, donor contributions are essential.

ADVANCING DIGITAL INNOVATION AND PRESERVATION

Preservation of and access to the unique digital assets of our history and culture require an ongoing and evolving commitment to advanced technical infrastructure. Even digital items require storage space and demand ongoing upgrades and reformatting for access through the latest technology. An upgraded infrastructure will allow for digitization projects that increase access to our deep collections, making materials available online and open to all. By deploying innovative technologies, we enhance research, learning and accessibility.

EMPOWERING CAMPUS RESEARCHERS

Researchers' needs evolve as technologies evolve and federal funders develop new requirements around open data, science and scholarship to make research accessible to the public. By continually evolving our expert services and developing new tools, we help our researchers step up to meet new demands. We connect them with the scholarship of their field. We help make their data and discoveries findable and accessible. We help increase the

impact of their work, enhancing the University's reputation and student and regional scientific and academic opportunities.

TRANSFORMING AND ADAPTING PHYSICAL SPACES

Creating dynamic, flexible environments that foster collaboration, innovation and individual study to support diverse, evolving needs is an ongoing demand. In addition to refreshing and repurposing our spaces for our users, we also need to address the sustainability and environmental demands of our print collections for accessibility and preservation. We are gearing up for major upgrades to our historic Wise Library stacks that host our dearest and most unique materials essential to the preservation of our state and regional legacy.

WVU Libraries is evolving with the University in powerful, transformative ways. We welcome your support and would be pleased to talk with you further about how to engage with any of these large goals. **Email Director of Development Paula Martinelli at paula.martinelli@mail.wvu.edu or call 304-293-0303.**



◀ Photos of exploratory Student Success Summit hosted by WVU Libraries in newly enhanced classrooms. The summit facilitated collaborative discussion about defining student success, sharing unit missions and services and fostering interdepartmental partnerships among 14 frontline student success units from Student Life, Office of the Provost and the University Police Department.



Advancing the LIBRARIES' UNIQUE COLLECTIONS

WVU Libraries and the WVRHC have a vision to build upon and sustain three unique historic collections. With the addition of a permanent, full-time archivist for the West Virginia Feminist Activist and Women's History collections, the WVU University Archives and a sustaining operations fund for the William A. Neal Museum of the Health Sciences, we will ensure these significant and irreplaceable collections are:

- ▶ identified, preserved and made accessible to the research community;
- ▶ available for instruction in WVU and K-12 courses and
- ▶ highlighted in exhibits and programs that educate future generations.

THE RIGHT TIME, THE RIGHT PLACE

Women's history continues to be made every day in West Virginia. And yet, many more stories are being silenced with the passage of time and lack of resources to identify and acquire collections. One of those stories was that of the Artemis Sisters, a feminist collective whose local social and political activism are still imbedded in our community.

Today, materials like these, and from many others including creatives, tradeswomen, educators, coal miners, civic leaders and advocacy groups are growing in our collection. The work has been recognized with awards and funding from national archival groups. This initiative enhances WVU's longstanding commitment to women through the Women and Gender Studies Program, Women's

Leadership Institute, Women in Science and Health and the WVU Foundation's Women of WVU.

A MOUNTAINEER SPIRIT FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

WVU has been making history for 157 years. However, unlike most R1 universities, we have never had a dedicated University archivist to ensure the vast amount of official university archival records are preserved for posterity. The material extends from major research accomplishments to athletics, departmental histories, administrative and student organization records to public performances and events. Documenting the legacy of a university requires a continuous, holistic approach at a level the WVRHC has never had the staff to be able to accomplish on a regular basis. That can change with a University archivist position solely dedicated to this work.

NEAL MUSEUM HIGHLIGHTS WEST VIRGINIA MEDICAL ACHIEVEMENTS

Ten years ago, a WVU-centered medical museum on the Health Sciences campus was a dream nurtured by accomplished pediatric cardiologist Dr. Bill Neal. Neal devoted his time and treasure to telling the story of the WVU School of Medicine and the groundbreaking achievements of West Virginians.

Today the William A. Neal Museum of the Health Sciences makes a statement at the WVU Health Sciences Center and, with gratitude to Neal and his generous family, we have a curator in place to continue the work. It is our commitment to grow the funds for ongoing operations in perpetuity.

The Neal Museum and archivist positions open the door to the vital work and public exposure necessary to save and manage primary source and museum collections, and especially for bringing West Virginia and WVU accomplishments to the national stage. Your donation to our campaign can make a difference!

Visit our website at library.wvu.edu/give for future updates and information on ways to give.

DAY OF GIVING

DAY OF GIVING SET FOR MARCH 26

WVU Day of Giving, provides a great opportunity to support WVU Libraries. Many of the areas identified in this issue of Ex Libris can use your support in an immediate way — from library internships to individual student and faculty grants. Or consider a gift to one of our campaign priorities!

Visit dayofgiving.wvu.edu to make your donation on March 26 or contact **Director of Development Paula Martinelli** at paula.martinelli@mail.wvu.edu or call **304-293-0303** to learn how your giving can be multiplied to advance these goals. 🏹

BY THE NUMBERS

FY2024: July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024

OUR COLLECTIONS

West Virginia University Libraries' wide-ranging collections connect students, faculty and the community with current and historical resources, fostering exploration, discovery, learning and innovation.

COLLECTIONS USAGE

1.3M+

LIBRARIES VISITORS

400K+



BOOKS

Unique titles at WVU Libraries.

2,749,732



RESEARCH DATABASES

Online tools providing access to journal articles, scholarly publications, streaming media and more.

669



MEDIA

Audio, video, microforms, map and graphic materials and artifacts.

674,314



JOURNALS AND NEWSPAPERS

Publications issued periodically or in parts.

244,870



SCHOLARSHIP

WVU-authored scholarship via the Research Repository @ WVU.

134,889

CONNECTING OUR COLLECTIONS WITH CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY

INFORMATION CONSULTATIONS PROVIDED

6K+

CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL EVENTS HOSTED

30+

ULIB SECTIONS OFFERED

24

STUDENTS ENROLLED

495



ITEMS BORROWED, VIEWED, ACCESSED

1.3M+

RESEARCH REPOSITORY ITEMS DOWNLOADED

1.2M+

RESEARCH INSTRUCTION SESSIONS AND WORKSHOPS TAUGHT

360+

STUDENTS, FACULTY AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS REACHED

7.7K+



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