# **University Library**

# University of Louisiana at Monroe

# **Annual Report, 2020-2021**



Prepared by the Director of the Library, Megan Lowe

# Library Annual Report, AY 2020-2021

### Director's Narrative

The academic year of 2020-2021 proved to be unprecedented and unique in the University Library's history (as well the institution's and the nation's history). The Library reopened over the summer of 2020 with the rest of campus and began the fall of 2020 with limited hours, fewer physically-present personnel, and a keen awareness of the digital disparities experienced by some students. Attempting to balance these considerations with promoting and preserving the health of Library personnel and the campus community was challenging, especially in light of issues with mask adherence and social distancing compliance. Despite these challenges, the Library endeavored to provide services and resources as close to "normal" as possible, including continuing engagement activities.

Spring 2021 saw the Library retain the same limited hours used in the fall. A few personnel who had been working from home returned to campus. Ongoing digital disparities and students trying to balance in-person and hybrid or online courses necessitated the Library allowing students to use study rooms as private Zoom spaces. Students also needed these spaces for exams and interviews. As with 2019-2020, in 2020-2021 the University Library remained and remains dedicated to and focused on supporting ULM's students and employees in learning, teaching, and research and the pursuit of excellence.

# Fall 2020

The Library started business for the fall semester with curtailed hours in deference to reductions to in-person faculty and staff. Several members of the Library's personnel self-identified as COVID-vulnerable and were granted permission to work from home (WFH). The general hours for the fall were as follows:

Monday – Thursday, 7:30am – 11:00pm

Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm

Saturday, CLOSED

Sunday, 12:00pm - 11:00pm

The Library established, per state mandate, a temperature check station in the lobby. This station was staffed all hours the Library is open and was staffed mainly by 04 student workers. The student workers were instructed on acceptable temperatures and what to do in case of excessive temperatures. They were also instructed to inform patrons that masks must be worn in the Library and kept on when not eating or drinking. Library and Information Technology (IT) staff encountered mask adherence issues and user rudeness regarding adherence, a circumstance that both the Library and IT Directors attempted to keep the administration apprised of fairly.

Reference services were not offered in-person. Users can obtain reference and research assistance via email (<a href="reference@ulm.edu">reference@ulm.edu</a>); via phone; via the Ask-a-Librarian link on the Library's website; and via Zoom. Some of the reference librarians physically staffed the desk to provide back-up for Circulation staff but in-person consultations were not offered.

The Library's very popular study rooms, both technology-equipped and not technology-equipped, were taken offline in keeping with state recommendations for COVID precautions in the state. There were concerns about the ability of the Library staff and/or ServiceMasters staff to keep the rooms adequately disinfected, not to mention the cost of the resources this prospect would involve. There was minimal pushback from students, especially when the situation was explained. The Library attempted to be transparent about these concerns, when contacted and on social media. Additionally, Library personnel removed furniture to ensure that social distancing

was observed, though there remain problems in certain areas with patrons moving furniture around in defiance of social distancing guidelines.

August saw the Library join a pilot for open access resources under the auspices of SirsiDynix, the vendor that provides LOUIS consortium members with its management system. Director Lowe and reference librarian/liaison Jessica Louque, as well as Charles Hughes, Head of Technical Services, represent involved Library personnel for that pilot.

August brought a difficult challenge in the form of Hurricane Laura. The administration closed campus on Thursday, August 27. However, in the wake of the hurricane, the residential side of campus entirely lost power, including the coliseum. There was at that time no clear estimated time of renewal of service. The loss of power meant that students in the residence halls (not to mention students who resided off-campus) were without power and Internet access. The Library opened that night from 7-11pm to provide students with a place to cool off, charge devices and/or use computers, and take advantage of the Library's wireless Internet. The Library was also open on Friday, August 28, 12-5pm.

Saturday, August 29, the Library opened at noon and was going to be opened until 5pm. However, the administration asked the Library to be open for 24 hours. Between available Library personnel, Student Affairs personnel (including then-interim Vice President of Student Affairs Dr. Valerie Fields), and several other members of the administration, the Library remained opened from 12pm on Saturday through its normal hours on Sunday, August 30, closing at 11pm. Power was restored to campus on Sunday, August 30. Campus remained closed the following week (August 31 – September 4), but the Library remained open for limited hours during that time.

Lake Charles was very negatively affected by Hurricane Laura, doing significant damage to the city and UL System sister institution McNeese. ULM and McNeese entered into a MOU in which McNeese students can make use of ULM resources to continue their schooling. The Library is included in that collection of resources that are articulated on the University's website (https://www.ulm.edu/mcneese/).

Phase 3 of COVID restrictions and guidelines began in September 2020. This did not affect the Library's hours of operation. September also saw Dr. Karen Arrant being named the chair of the Library Committee. September also saw the Library submit its AY2019-2020 annual report and its AY2020-2021 assessment plan to the Office of Assessment and Evaluation. The Library also submitted a (long-overdue) revised and updated version of its collection development policy for review by Academic Affairs and inclusion in the campus policies database. At that time, inquiries about extending the Library's hours or restoring them to normal hours were received. The Director responded by indicating that the Library's resources were not such that it was feasible as well as ongoing concerns about mask adherence and social distancing. The Library lost its 03 student budget in the wake of COVID-related budget cuts that made it difficult to staff both public service desks and the temperature check station. While the Library was able to hire 04 workers, that number was limited, and with certain library faculty continuing to WFH, the ability to provide back-up and coverage was difficult.

October was on track to be quieter than August. The Library was obligated to conduct a Fire Watch early in the month on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor because of issues with the sprinkler system, but these were rectified finally in conjunction with Shane Dykes, the Campus Safety Officer.

Additional requests from students for the Library to return to normal hours and to consider offering normal extended hours for finals were received. The Director continued to have

concerns about safety and staffing which were shared with Dr. Fellows, AVPAA. However, the end of the month saw the landfall of Hurricane Zeta that also resulted in a loss of power on campus again. The Library once again agreed to accommodate students, preparing a 24-hour staffing plan. However, the Library also lost power and was unable to serve in that capacity. Zeta was not as problematic for campus nor did it result in long-term closure like Laura.

In November, the Library was asked to potentially accommodate staff from Athletics during a period of work on their offices. Eight (8) spaces were identified for their use.

Ultimately, the spaces were not needed. However, the Library was contacted that same month by the College of Health Sciences (CoHS) about accommodating personnel from the college while Sugar and Caldwell halls are offline for work. Dean Simpson and Dr. Griswold reached out to identify spaces that could be used. With the help of the Library Director, many spaces were identified which the personnel from several CoHS departments will be able to use.

November also saw the return of the holiday candy guess game, carried out entirely online using social media. The Library also made the decision to reinstate the checking out of webcams as well as other small tech devices (like the charge banks). During this month, the decision was also made to not extend the Library's hours during final exams as the Library would usually do. This decision was made by the Library and campus administration to not extend hours owing to concerns regarding COVID, mask adherence, and social distancing.

In November, the Library's Special Collections and Archives was the recipient of a \$2,200 Rebirth Grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities (LEH). Coordinator of Special Collections and Archives Heather Pilcher had worked with students in a grant-writing course taught by Dr. Patrick Morgan that wrote the winning grant. This grant focuses on digitizing the *Pow Wow*, the student newspaper

now known as the *Hawkeye*. The grant provides funding for digitizing the years of 1931 to 1980. Coordinator Pilcher began working on this project and will continue to work on it, in conjunction with Hope Young from the Office of Marketing and Communication to enrich the collection with stories and video. (Please see Appendix A for a screen capture of the press release.)

December was largely quiet. The discussion of space use for CoHS personnel continued. The holiday candy guess continued, and the winner received a Starbucks gift card, provided by the Director. A couple of Library personnel were quarantined during this time owing to COVID exposure. The Director contributed to University Week planning activities for the spring. The fall semester ended quietly, with the state in a modified phase 2 for COVID precautions.

# **Spring 2021**

The Library started business for the spring semester with the same curtailed hours in deference to reductions to in-person faculty and staff. Several members of the Library's personnel self-identified as COVID-vulnerable and continued to work from home (WFH). The general hours for the spring were as follows:

Monday – Thursday, 7:30am – 11:00pm

Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm

Saturday, CLOSED

Sunday, 12:00pm - 11:00pm

The Library continued, per state mandate, to maintain the temperature check station in the lobby. The station remains staffed all hours the Library is open; it was largely staffed by 04 student workers. Occasionally, owing to shortages of student labor, Library personnel staffed the station. Reference services continued to not be offered in-person. Users can obtain reference and

research assistance via email (<a href="reference@ulm.edu">reference@ulm.edu</a>); via phone; via the Ask-a-Librarian link on the Library's website; and via Zoom. Some of the reference librarians physically staffed the desk to provide back-up for Circulation staff but in-person consultations were not offered.

The Library's very popular study rooms remained offline in keeping with state recommendations for COVID precautions in the state. Students continued to request that the rooms be reopened, but campus administration remained behind the Library in resistance to opening these rooms. The rooms were eventually repurposed for students who needed private, quite spaces to participate in Zoom-based online courses, to take exams, and to participate in interviews for courses and job opportunities.

January saw back-to-back inclement winter weather days on the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>. All of campus, including the Library, closed, and personnel were directed to work from home. Unfortunately, there was a physical security breach on January 12, when students gained accessed to the Library building through an unlocked front door. An investigation by campus police revealed that a janitorial employee usually stationed in another building entered the Library building through the unlocked administrative/executive-side entrance (an ongoing security issue about which the Library kept making the administration apprised), ostensibly in search of cleaning supplies. Once in the building, the individual was unable to exist the way he came in and so let himself out the Library's front doors (ignoring the signs that indicate that individuals who find themselves locked in should contact campus police to be let out). This left the building unsecured, and students came in and used the computer lab. Thankfully, nothing negative occurred, and the investigation identified the culprits involved in leaving the building unsecured. However, this prompted the Library Director to reiterate the security issues to the

administration and to prompt the Library facility manager to more closely monitor the security of the administration/executive-side entrance and keep the Director apprised.

In late January, Dr. Ruiz, Vice President for Academic Affairs, met with Library personnel. The Library had been under the purview of the Vice President of Information Services but was returned to Academic Affairs on July 1, 2020. Dr. Ruiz, along with Dr. Fellows and their administrative assistants, met with Library personnel who work on campus to generally meet and greet with the personnel. Dr. Ruiz also wished to discuss several points with Library personnel and update them on several topics including COVID-related issues, workflow topics, and chain of command. The Library Director took notes and shared the information with WFH personnel. This meeting and discussion prompted a review and update of Library job descriptions.

February yielded a discussion between campus police Chief Tom Torregrossa, Lt. Jeremy Kent, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs Judy Fellows, Vice President for Student Affairs Valerie Fields, Safety Officer Shane Dykes, and the Library Director. The focus of this discussion were the security issues with the administration/executive-side doors. Through the discussion, a solution was identified that Shane Dykes would spearhead – adding new locking solutions to the administration/executive-side doors. This process would take 3-4 weeks, according to Mr. Dykes, so the Library volunteered to continue to monitor the administration/executive-side doors and secure them as needed.

The Library Committee reformed in the fall but did not meet until the spring. While the Director was unable to attend their February meeting, the Coordinator of Public Services Maren Williams attended and took notes on the Director's behalf. This meeting yielded several inquiries that Ms. Williams communicated to the Director, who subsequently responded to those inquiries. They were largely normal inquiries from faculty regarding budget issues, the acquisition of new

resources, and a "revisitation" of the topic of moving the Library's musical scores collection to the Music Department.

The campus and the Library were closed from Sunday, February 14, through Saturday, February 20, for inclement winter weather once more. The Library reopened Sunday, February 21, while the rest of campus reopened Monday, February 22. The Library experienced a burst pipe in an external sprinkler system about which Shane Dykes kept the Director apprised. Consequently, Library personnel kept a fire watch in the outside areas of the Library while the sprinkler system was out of commission for repair.

March saw two requests regarding repurposing of Library spaces. First Lady Dr.

Christine Berry sought a space for a career closet where students can obtain professional dress clothes for job interviews and career-related events. The Director met with Dr. Berry, Dr. Fields, and Kristin Chandler, Director of Career Services, to view possible spaces and identify an ideal space. A space was identified on the second floor, overlooking Northeast Drive. Dr. Pamela Saulsberry, Executive Director of the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, has requested a space for the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. A space was identified, also on the second floor. At the suggestion of the Coordinator of Public Services, the Director reached out to the Ambitious Women Society (AWS), a RSO focused on women's issues, about partnering to stock and maintain the Library's lactation room. Chiemeka Onyemechara, the current President of AWS, was very receptive and responded positively. Onyemechara arranged for the group to decorate and stock the room in March and created a schedule for AWS members to regularly clean and check the space.

The Library also began its participation in an OER pilot grant sponsored by Lyrasis in March. Dr. Will Rogers and Dr. Jeff Anderson were selected to participate, with Director Lowe

serving as the Library contact. This program will continue through the summer and potentially into the fall. Drs. Rogers and Anderson and Director Lowe participated in a kick-off Zoom.

April was quiet. The Library received a request from Dr. Whorton for assistance with accreditation documentation for Dental Hygiene (the site visit will occur later in the year). The Library provided web support for the Student Research Symposium and the Research Council. Students continued to make requests for rooms for Zoom accommodation, though primarily for exams rather than classes. The University undertook course marking for AOER courses for Summer 2021 and Fall 2021 per Act 125. The Library provided support in the form of validating or vetting queries from faculty and answering student questions. Dr. Rogers in the English department contacted the Director and the Coordinator of Special Collections about creating a student work-based collection in the institutional repository (which is still under discussion as of June 2021). The Library had its annual fire drill, in coordination with Shane Dykes, the Library, and the various non-library departments housed in the Library. The drill took place on April 29, 2021, and was a success, with the whole drill taking 4:22 (the target is 5 minutes).

May was also quiet. The Library continued its participation in the Lyrasis OER pilot project, though Dr. Anderson had to drop out. Room requests for and during finals were not as frequent as anticipated. Some requests did come in after finals, mainly for students taking proctored exams such as the GRE or conducting Zoom interviews. Library personnel also began assessment and evaluation activities including planning expectation activities, unit evaluation, and data-gathering for the Library's annual report.

#### **Summer 2021**

June came with a significant shift in COVID-19 guidelines. This shift, which reflects a return to pre-COVID practices, did not greatly affect how the Library would operate in the

summer, which was decided at the end of the spring. The general hours for the summer were as follows:

Monday - Thursday, 7:30am - 7:00pm

Friday, 7:30am – 12:00pm

Saturday, CLOSED

Sunday, 1:00pm - 5:00pm

Study rooms were only made available to students for Zoom or test proctoring accommodation.

# **Statistical Highlights**

Needless to say, the Library's statistics are a far cry from last year. The Library reopened on July 1, 2020, but with limited hours. Fall 2020 saw longer hours but still nothing comparable to Fall 2019. Study rooms were not available, and many courses being offered were hybrid or online. Foot traffic remained lower than pre-COVID numbers but did increase in comparison. Spring 2021 retained the same hours as Fall 2020. Reference Services remained virtual only with no face-to-face components. Consequently, circulation statistics, reference statistics, and gate counts remain lower than pre-COVID numbers.

Continued concerns about lending and borrowing physical materials during pandemic meant that most Interlibrary Loan activity involved electronic resources, though physical lending did resume. The Library issued one LALINC borrowing card and honored one LALINC borrowing card. Owing to the efforts of LOUIS, the Library was able to acquire several e-resources (namely e-books and open source resources) and develop the collection in spite of budget cuts and restrictions. Nevertheless, two database subscriptions were discontinued in Fall 2020 – EBSCO eBooks Academic Collection and Annual Reviews.

This year this report will include information regarding the Library's social media profiles. The Library has two main social media profiles: Facebook and Twitter. On Facebook, the number of followers for 2019-2020 was 926; the number of followers for 2020-2021 is 1,117. The total number of likes in 2019-2020 was 54; for 2020-2021, the total number of likes was 3,152. On Twitter, the number of followers for 2019-2020, the number of followers was 141; the number of followers for 2020-2021 is 143. The total number of likes in 2019-2020 was 271 and retweets were 53. The total number of likes for 2020-2021 is 141 and retweets are 40.

With regard to followers, though the gains were not significant for Twitter, the Library nonetheless experienced an increase in the number of followers for both platforms. Facebook saw an increase in the number of likes but Twitter saw a decrease in the number of likes and retweets. It is not clear why there was a decrease from 2019-2020 to 2020-2021 in Twitter activity. It is possible that because activities on campus were restricted, there was little activity within the building itself physically speaking, that the Library was simply positing less. It could also be argued that the problems arising from COVID lockdown and Hurricane Laura also impacted the Library's ability to engage.

CIRCULATION		
<b>Total Checkouts</b>	1,598	
Circulation	1,293	
Reserves (including study rooms,		
headphones, webcams, and phone chargers)	305	
Directional inquiries	1,413	
Interlibrary Loan	888	
Borrowed	624	
Loaned	264	
Gate Counts	134,044	

REFERENCE	
Reference Inquiries Total	252
<b>Bibliographic Instruction: Groups</b>	6
<b>Bibliography Instruction: Students</b>	143

LIBRARY COLLECTIONS - PHYSICAL	
Print Volumes	142,432
Print Serial Subscriptions	3
Microformats	578,758
<b>Print Federal Documents</b>	106,724
<b>Print State Documents</b>	6,167
Audio-visual Units	208
Multicultural & Literacy Lab Collection	4,111

LIBRARY COLLECTIONS - DIGITAL		
E-Books, Unique Titles	491,070	
E-Textbooks, Unique (subset of E-books)	4,242	
E-Serials, Unique Titles	90,439	
<b>Electronic Serial Subscriptions</b>	96	
<b>Electronic Federal Documents</b>	121,445	
<b>Electronic State Documents</b>	205	
Databases	116	

SOCIAL MEDIA	
Facebook	
Followers	1,117
Likes	3,152
Twitter	
Followers	143
Likes and retweets	141; 40

# **Concluding Remarks**

2019-2020 taught us all how things can change quickly and catastrophically. 2020-2021 showed that we could survive and adapt, carrying on with our mission and goals. Fall 2020 was unlike any fall semester any of us had ever experienced, but Fall 2021 may be closer to Fall 2019. Spring and Summer 2021 saw steps toward that hope. Through all of this, the Library continued to support students, faculty, and staff to the best of its ability and within the safety guidelines established by different authorities. We learned and applied lessons that hopefully preserved the safety of our campus community while still facilitating research and learning. We look forward to returning to something like normal in the coming year and having study rooms, games and events, and longer hours once more.

# Appendix A: Press Release on Rebirth Grant, Nov. 18, 2020



https://www.ulm.edu/news/2020/class writes grant-111820.html

# Appendix B: LOUIS Participation Report, 2020-2021



# 2020/21 Partnership Participation Summary Report





## Integrated Library System



Provides access to books on the shelves, periodicals, and electronic resources that support the institution's mission.



### **Electronic Resources**

Electronic resources enhance research and learning for faculty and students. Access them from anywhere at any time. Formats such as eBooks and eJournals, full-text, indexing and abstracting, and reference databases, statistical databases, and multi-media collections.



# **OCLC Services**



Allows library users to search for items in libraries worldwide. Provides librarians with tools for cataloging and interlibrary loan functions.



### Affordable Learning Support

By providing e-textbooks and Open Educational Resources (OERs) support LOUIS enables libraries and faculty to reduce the cost of education for students.

**\$94,707.15** in student savings\*

\*cumulative total for ULM from 2012 to present



Actual Cost Through Partnership: \$200,319.13
Cost Without Partnership:

\$1,849,941.29



### Discovery Service



Brings together consortium-licensed electronic resources (ER), locally purchased ER, and print collections. Provides a single, customizable, simple search interface.



#### Inter-library Loan



A resource sharing management software that automates routine interlibrary loan functions. Enhances member libraries' collections through resource sharing.



# Professional 70+ hours/ Development Support

LOUIS provides a wide range of learning opportunities to ensure members get the most from the technology, services, and resources acquired through LOUIS.

Members have access to high quality, relevant inperson and virtual professional development.



#### **LALINC Card**

Reciprocity Level = 4

A reciprocal borrowing program, which allows the holder to borrow library materials from participating member libraries. Each institution determines its level of reciprocity.

list prices based on best available vendor supplied data

# 2020/21



# Electronic Resources Access



#### American Mathematical Society

MathSciNet

#### Credo Reference

Credo Academic Core

#### eBook Collections

e-Duke Books Humanities and Social Sciences Collection

Now Publishers Foundations and Trends®

Technology eBooks Library

SAGE Knowledge Complete Social

Sciences

Project Muse Frontlist Scholarly eBooks Books at JSTOR Academic Publishers Oxford Scholarship Online eBooks

#### **EBSCO Information Services**

Abstracts in Social Gerontology Academic Search Complete Advertising Periodicals, 1815-1888

Agricola

AHFS Consumer Medication Information

Alt HealthWatch

American Antiquarian Society (AAS) Historical Periodical Subset Collection

Art & Architecture Complete

Art Index Retrospective

**Biological Abstracts** 

Book Collection: Nonfiction

Business Source Complete

CINAHL Plus with Full Text

Computer Source

**Educational Administration Abstracts** 

Environment Complete

European Views of the Americas: 1493-

Family Studies Abstracts

Fuente Academica

Funk & Wagnalls New World

Encyclopedia

GeoRef GeoRef in Process

Health Source: Nursing/Academic Edition

History Reference Center

#### EBSCO Information Services cont.

History Reference eBook Collection

Hospitality & Tourism Index

Human Resources Abstracts

Information Science & Technology

Abstracts

Learning Express PrepSTEP

Legal Source

Library Information Science &

Technology Abstracts with Full Text

Literary Reference Center eBook

Collection

Literary Reference Center Plus

MAS Complete

MAS Reference eBook Collection

MasterFILE Complete

MasterFILE Reference eBook Collection

MedicLatina.

MEDLINE

Mental Measurements Yearbook

Military & Government Collection MLA Directory of Periodicals

MLA International Bibliography

Newspaper Source Plus

Newswires

**OpenDissertations** 

Peace Research Abstracts

Primary Search

Primary Search Reference eBook

Collection

Professional Development Collection

Psychology & Behavioral Sciences

Collection

**PsycINFO** 

**Public Administration Abstracts** 

Public Administration Abstracts

Race Relations Abstracts

Referencia Latina

Regional Business News

Religion & Philosophy Collection

Research Starters

Science & Technology Collection

Shock & Vibration Digest

SocINDEX with Full Text

Supplemental Index

#### EBSCO Information Services cont.

Teacher Reference Center The Serials Directory

**Urban Studies Abstracts** 

Vente et Gestion Violence & Abuse Abstracts

Web News

#### Gale Cengage

Biography in Context Gale Virtual Reference Center Library Literature Resource Center

Scribner Writers Series

Twayne Author Series

#### **JSTOR**

Arts & Sciences I Collection

Arts & Sciences II Collection

Arts & Sciences III Collection

Arts & Sciences IV Collection

Arts & Sciences V Collection

Arts & Sciences VII

#### LexisNexis

Nexis Uni

#### Literacy Minnesota

Northstar Digital Literacy

#### Oxford University Press

Oxford English Dictionary

### Proquest

Digital Sanborn Maps of Louisiana Dissertations & Thesis A&I Nursing & Allied Health Database

# Readex

African American Newspapers, 1827-

AHN: Louisiana Historical Newspapers,

1805-1922 Access

#### Sage Publications

CQ Researcher Online

#### SirsiDynix

CloudSource OA