Learning Resource Center: a place for all

By Kyra Garnich
Library Student Assistant, Learning Resource Center

Imagine a place that caters to toddlers and adults alike, where teenagers and elementary children go to learn, find adventures, and explore technology. The Learning Resource Center has something for everyone, no matter how young or old, no matter what their interests are.

The Learning Resource Center (LRC), a branch of University of Wyoming Libraries, is a little known gem for all of Wyoming’s citizens. “I stumbled upon this place and it’s awesome! There are fiction books here they don’t have at Coe Library, it’s really great and it’s too bad more people don’t know about it,” said UW undeclared student, Claire Balliro.

Located in the College of Education building on the UW campus, the LRC partners with Albany County School district to serve UW Lab School students from Kindergarten through ninth grade. Open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., the LRC also serves as the curriculum materials center for the University of Wyoming College of Education.

Open to the public, the LRC materials are available to all University of Wyoming students, faculty and staff members, as well as pre–service teachers and Wyoming residents.

“The people who use the LRC range from pre–school aged to Emeritus Professors,” said Director of the LRC Cass Kvenild, “There are no limits to who can enjoy our library.”

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A Message from the Dean

The 2012–2013 academic year ended on a high note for University Libraries. UW was accepted as a member of the Greater Western Library Alliance (GWLA) recognizing our status as a top research library. GWLA membership was made possible after several years of investing in collection funds by legislative appropriations and tuition increases. And we reaped the fruits of our labor with dynamic online collections that meet student and faculty needs. Increased collections have positively impacted our ability to provide current quality materials our students expect at a comprehensive research university.

UW Libraries Development Board hosted a campus lecture with author David McCullough. The event was dampened slightly by a snowstorm that prevented travelers from driving to Laramie. But attendance to the event was high, proving the popularity of a national author lecturer. The annual event is funded by the McMurry–Spieles Endowment for Library Excellence. Over the last eight years the event has grown into a premier author showcase for Wyoming. We are already planning for our next event; stay tuned for our 2014 author announcement.

University of Wyoming awarded Dr. Nancy Gwinn an honorary doctorate during the College of Arts and Sciences spring 2013 commencement ceremony. An English graduate from the class of 1967, Nancy is the director of the Smithsonian Libraries. A strong advocate for building research collections, Nancy has led the development of the digital Biodiversity Heritage Library (BHL). It was a privilege to recognize an international library leader during graduation activities.

UW’s FY14 budget reductions will impact library collections taking a step backwards after many steps forward. A proposed $1.2 million reduction will reduce our ability to acquire some unique collections, especially building retrospective and historical collections that UW lacks in comparison with older well established research libraries. We should be able to avoid journal and database cuts through the effective negotiations of our Collection Development Office that has kept our annual journal cost increases to a minimum. For a couple of years, we can probably avoid reductions to our monographic purchases as well. But we need to restore this budget when it is prudent to do so and to refocus our efforts on sustaining and building on the investment of the state. UW has been in this position before when collections were stable, but collection funding requires continued support to address reasonable inflationary measures. While UW has achieved GWLA status, we should continue to strive for national research status in the Association of Research Libraries (ARL).

I am pleased to note, that faculty and staff salaries are our top university priority. This is critical as we have lost ground after four years of no salary increases. We are not able to attract and retain quality faculty and staff on low salaries—we have already lost excellent librarians to other universities as a result of flat salaries. The elimination of three faculty and 12 staff positions has impacted our ability to provide quality instruction and to effectively support collection improvements. While collection funding is a critical need—without the requisite faculty and staff funding and positions, investments in collections are not fully realized. This hurts our students in a competitive, information dependent society. I hope that we are able to turn this dire situation around in the coming year.

I wish you a happy and productive summer and the promise of a rewarding fall 2014 semester!

Maggie Farrell
Dean of Libraries
Library Council provides advice on library services
By Maggie Farrell, Dean of Libraries

The Library Council is a UW Faculty Senate standing committee providing advice on the collections, services, strategic planning, and allocation of resources. Library Council is composed of faculty representing their colleges, a graduate student, an undergraduate student (both selected by ASUW), and a community representative.

As an advisory body, UW Libraries depend on faculty and student insights to help us in developing new services and providing feedback on how we are meeting university needs. Library Council serves that role very well and council members are forthright in bringing concerns and commendations forward. Library Council is a critical communication channel between the faculty and UW Libraries. Council members communicate with their respective colleges and areas which helps us in distributing information and promoting new collections and services. Library Council often deals with difficult matters such as priorities for collection improvements, advising on budget reductions, and working with the Law College Library on budget formulas.

For the past two years, Dr. Edward Janak, College of Education, has led Library Council. Under Ed’s leadership, Library Council has focused its activities on budget reduction principles, reviewing comments from the LibQual survey, and assisting with the development of online tools. Most notable is the work of Library Council in advocating for legislative and tuition funding to improve research collections. Council members supported the application for membership into the Greater Western Library Alliance (GWLA) and the requisite funding that would improve UW collections to the standards of western university library collections.

Dr. Erin Campbell–Stone, Department of Geology & Geophysics, will serve as Library Council chair in the 2013–2014 academic year. UW Libraries appreciate the service of many faculty and students who advise on library services and collections—their insights are another means to connect with the university community to ensure that teaching, research, and learning needs are effectively supported by the library. Visit http://tinyurl.com/UWLibraryCouncil for additional Library Council information, minutes, and reports.

UW student Megan House shakes the hand of Jack, a therapy dog owned by Cindy Moore, during finals week at W.R. Coe Library.
Learning Resource Center...

Curriculum materials at the LRC include elementary and secondary textbooks, tools, and kits that provide hands-on learning for students and realistic classroom experience for UW Education pre-service teachers.

The LRC offers a wide array of reading material including children's books, general novels, young adult-themed novels, non-fiction books and biographies for check-out. The expansive collection has something for everyone.

Study space is as diverse as the students who can choose to study individually on one of the soft stools scattered throughout the library, on the floor, or collaborate in groups at the various study tables. Lounge furniture makes an ideal retreat to curl up on and enjoy a book. A meeting room and electronic classroom are available to UW Education classes and Lab School classes by reservation.

“Pre-service teachers use the e-classroom to learn how to find books and materials for their lesson plans, and Lab School students use the electronic classroom to research, write papers, tell digital stories, and learn technological skills,” said Cass.

The LRC also provides story time and technology time for Lab School students, kindergarten through third grade, and information literacy classes. The library houses a cart of laptops and a cart of iPads for Lab School students. Technologically friendly, the LRC works with students and electronic media on a daily basis.

“Tech time is one of their favorite activities all week!” Cass explained about the kids that use the LRC.

Technology time, or “tech time,” is a perfect example of the LRC’s involvement in the progression and education of technology. Tech time gives the youngest students at the Lab School the chance to interact with and learn more about desktop computer technology once a week.

Tech time is run by UW student worker, Elise Jankord, who makes lesson plans tailored to compliment skills like math and spelling that are taught in the classroom.

“As an elementary education teacher, running tech time hasn’t only given me experience integrating technology, but I’m also getting the benefit of working with children,” Elise said.

Specific skills like mousing, dragging, dropping, and keyboarding are focused on so children can have an easy transition into using technology. The electronic classroom is managed and upgraded by the UW Information Technology department.

“Our collection is larger than those in most school libraries, and we offer more electronic resources than any local school libraries, so the Lab School students have a huge benefit in terms of quantity of information available,” said Cass.

The association of the LRC with the university provides better funding and staffing than any typical school library. Federal work study funds assist the LRC in hiring UW students and the LRC also benefits from UW Libraries’ collection budget, which funds many new books and electronics. In the Wyoming school library survey taken last year, the LRC’s collection of print materials was 32,000, whereas Laramie High School’s collection of print items added up to a total of about 14,000. In the numbers alone it is easy to see how the LRC benefits from being a UW branch library.

“The LRC is funded as a university curriculum materials center, which means that the collection and the book budget is quite a bit larger than you would see in other elementary schools this size,” explained Cass.

University of Wyoming students also benefit from the LRC. Not only does the LRC provide a hands-on model of a school library for pre-service education majors aspiring to be teachers, but the LRC works closely with Education professors to provide material that pre-service teachers will see at their teaching sites.
“Pre-service teachers use our curriculum materials in their methods classes, and they also can order those materials to be sent to them at their student teaching sites throughout the state,” Cass said.

Because of the services the LRC provides for UW and, vice versa, the children of the Lab School benefit and get something out of this coalition.

“Lab School students have access to a lot of UW resources and activities,” explained LRC Circulation Manager Cathy Dodgson. “The kids here are able to use any library on campus. Every year we take the small children on a trip to Coe library for a lesson on library manners and the kids feel really important when they get to go to the big library.”

Both the University of Wyoming and the Learning Resource Center are lucky to be connected to one another. This unique relationship gives an advantage to many people including children, pre-service teachers, and UW faculty and students.
An exciting new initiative being led by UW Librarian Kaijsa Calkins is the development of collaboration spaces that will assist students and faculty in jointly working on projects. UW Libraries currently offer group study areas in William Robertson Coe Library and in the Library Annex but there are not enough to facilitate how students collaboratively work together. To assist in meeting students’ needs and in recognition of how students work together, Kaijsa is studying the feasibility of adding group spaces in Coe Library. Joining us in this initiative is the UW Libraries Development Board. Members of the board have committed to funding a few collaboration areas and they are enthusiastic partners in determining how we might merge technology with group spaces that students will find engaging.

At the end of the spring semester, Kaijsa installed a temporary collaboration pod on level 1 of Coe Library. Complete with a large monitor and various computer connections, students used the space and provided comments on the functionality of the pod. Student comments were positive about the arrangement and they provided additional insights into how the pod was being used. Comments included “get more of these and install three on every floor” and “the table was too wide to effectively work together as a group.” Student comments with additional input from librarians and staff members will guide Kaijsa in developing a formal plan for adding collaboration pods to Coe Library. We hope to have more collaborative areas in place during the fall semester.

Members of UW Libraries Development Board at the Spring 2013 bi-annual meeting.

Back Row Left: Nathan Hammons, Bobbalu Hoefer, Darryl Bindschadler, Susan Kany

Front Row Left: Gay Mathewson, Lew Bagy (Chair), Beth Worthen

Members Not Pictured: Joe Jensen, Carol McMurry, Pat Spieles, and Terry Roark

BELOW: A collaboration pod installed on level 1 of Coe Library to gauge students’ reactions.
Despite steadily falling snow, the University of Wyoming Libraries Development Board was pleased with the attendance at a university lecture featuring author David McCullough, in April, 2013. This year the author event was arranged differently from past author events and featured a free public event. In the past the event was in the form of a ticketed luncheon, with attendance growing steadily since its inception in 2006.

David McCullough has been widely acclaimed as a “master of the art of narrative history,” “a matchless writer.” He is twice winner of the Pulitzer Prize, twice winner of the National Book Award, and has received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation’s highest civilian award. Mr. McCullough hopes his books bring history to the readers in an interesting and memorable manner.

Retired Senator Al Simpson led a question and answer period after Mr. McCullough’s lecture. Since they are old friends it was interesting and entertaining, they did not stick with the questions but also reminisced. Several people were heard to comment afterward that they could have listened to the two of them for another hour.

UW Libraries Development Board, chaired by Lew Bagby, is making plans for next year’s author event. The board members would like to continue to bring nationally recognized authors to campus.

A portion of the author event funds that the board has raised over the last several years have been earmarked for purchasing collaboration pods. These pods have flat screens with several computer connectors, so several types of technology can hook up, giving a group of students a place to work on a collaborative project.

The University of Wyoming Libraries’ Development Board serves in a working partnership with UW Libraries. Through their work, the board contributes to and strengthens UW Libraries’ efforts in soliciting and obtaining substantial funds that advance services and collections for UW students and faculty members.
Presentations:


Publications:


The University of Wyoming conferred its highest award, the honorary doctoral degree upon Sheridan, WY native Nancy Gwinn, director of the Smithsonian Libraries and UW alumna. Gwinn was recognized during UW Commencement Saturday, May 11, 2013.

Gwinn received her Bachelor of Arts in English at UW in 1967. She advanced through increasingly responsible positions at libraries in California and Washington, D.C., and began work at the Smithsonian Institution Libraries starting in 1984. She was named the director in 1997.

Maggie Farrell, dean of libraries at UW, says Gwinn has led the Smithsonian Libraries through significant technological changes that increased the profile of the libraries within the Smithsonian as well as within the profession.

As a leader in librarianship, Gwinn has been active in the American Library Association (ALA) and the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA). Since 2003, Gwinn has held several leadership positions within IFLA, including serving on the Publications Committee and serving on the Governing Board.

“Her work within IFLA and with national libraries attests that she is a global citizen extending Smithsonian collections and assisting libraries around the world to improve access to rich collections that benefit humankind,” Farrell says.

UW Libraries dedicated a commissioned work of art in honor of outgoing University President Tom Buchanan and his wife Jacque Buchanan.

A Low Soft Sound, was created by UW student Carli Holcomb. The piece is located on Level 2 of Coe Library, between the rotunda and the elevator. It was commissioned to honor the ongoing support of UW Libraries’ mission by Tom and Jacque Buchanan, and to honor their appreciation of student art.

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Deborah McCarthy, head of Technical Services at University Libraries, is the recipient of the University of Wyoming’s 2013 Milstead Distinguished Librarianship Award.

Recognized for her leadership in library technical operations, McCarthy oversees processing and provides order to millions of physical and electronic materials that comprise UW Libraries’ collections. Led by McCarthy, the entire department works efficiently as to be nearly invisible to the university community.

“She provides strong leadership to those library staff members she supervises, and it is clear that they like her and respect her very much,” says UW Law Librarian Deb Person.

A librarian at UW since 2004, McCarthy has seen many changes in the department, most notably the shift from print to electronic resources and reductions in staff members.

During this time, “Debbie, more than any other department head, has implemented adjustments to her departmental work–flows and the people involved in making those work–flows happen,” writes Stephen Boss, department head of Library Information Technology.

“A dedicated librarian, McCarthy represents the best of university librarians and is a valued member of the university community,” says Maggie Farrell, dean of Libraries.

McCarthy earned her MLS. (1989) at the Texas Woman’s University and her MBA (2003) at New Mexico State University.

Nancy Marlatt, marketing and public relations coordinator for UW Libraries, is the recipient of the 2013 UW Libraries’ Outstanding Staff Award.

The Outstanding Staff Award, funded by the McMurry–Spieles Library Excellence Fund, honors a University Libraries’ staff member who has “demonstrated exceptional service to UW Libraries and made significant contributions to the university and/or the community.” Individuals are nominated by their peers and a committee selects the recipient.

Marlatt coordinates marketing and public relations for library fundraising and student programming events, library resources and library services. She also designs and edits library publications and newsletters.

In 2012, she played a key role in the success of Manifold Greatness: the Creation and Afterlife of the King James Bible. In addition to handling the publicity for the exhibit and lectures, she contributed to the overall planning and organization of the related events as well as with the initial grant writing.

Martha Hanscom’s nomination noted, “The project owes much of its success to Nancy’s contribution. I am extremely grateful that she was a part of the planning team.”

Marlatt earned her BA in biology (1998) at the University of Colorado, Boulder and is currently enrolled in the BFA program at the University of Wyoming Department of Art.
University of Wyoming Libraries has partnered with the College of Agriculture to help preserve the history of wool research at UW. For more than a century the University of Wyoming has been making strides in the research and improvement of the wool industry through breeding, feeding, and proper wool scouring techniques. Since 1907, UW has boasted a wool scouring plant and laboratory on campus and wool growers have looked to the university to improve their flocks and increase the quality of wool and meat production.

Emmett D. Chisum Special Collections recently acquired the Wool Laboratory Collection which consists of papers and wool artifacts collected by personnel in the former UW Wool Department (now UW Department of Animal Science). The collection was previously housed in the College of Agriculture and consists of more than 1,000 books, including the 150-volume personal collection of Australian sheepman WT Ritch, who influenced wool processing in Wyoming. In addition to correspondence, papers and periodicals relating to sheep and wool, the collection’s showpiece is the 872 preserved wool samples dating back to 1830. These materials were collected by the late Dean of Agriculture John A. Hill, who founded the Wool Laboratory, as well as the late Dr. Robert H. Burns.

The collection is thought to be one of the most unique and complete collections of wool materials in the world. The College of Agriculture approached UW Libraries in the summer of 2012 in their search for a location with public access and professional oversight for this unique and historical collection. The collection was moved in September.
2012 from its location in the Agriculture B building and is being processed by Carly–Ann Anderson who holds an MA in American Studies and Environment and Natural Resources from UW.

In addition to processing and cataloging the collection, UW Libraries is working with UW Extension to film an oral history project documenting the wool industry in Wyoming. Former wool lab personnel and their families as well as industry representatives and sheep ranchers will be interviewed. The footage will appear along with digitized materials from the Wool Laboratory Collection on an interactive web platform hosted by UW Libraries and UW Extension. The project includes footage of the UW Wool Scouring and Processing Plant in operation narrated by Dr. Bob Stobart, a UW wool specialist.

The materials are a perfect fit for UW Libraries’ special collections which focus on university and state history, culture and research. At the peak of sheep ranching in the early 1900s there were more than 6 million sheep in Wyoming, which accounted for around 13 percent of all sheep in the U.S. Today, Wyoming is the 4th largest wool growing state. As part of understanding the importance of this collection, a team of librarians has been consulting with leaders in the sheep industry and representatives from wool labs and museums around the world. Once processed and cataloged the collection will become available for researchers to access.
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