Changing the world in a world-changing year

The SMU campus returned to a mix of in-person and virtual learning beginning in Fall of 2020. Just like the rest of the world, our campus community and library staff learned to live and work from home in spring of 2020. And along the rest of the world, we slowly began to reemerge and figure out the process of hybrid learning and teaching. SMU Libraries staff returned to campus June 1, 2020 to begin preparations for the arrival of students on campus in July. With the new world that the SMU Libraries were facing, staff had to quickly redesign services to keep students safe while also providing high-quality levels of support.

The SMU Libraries saw the COVID-19 pandemic as a catalyst for implementing services and solutions that support the SMU Libraries Strategic Plan, 2019-2024. Some of the COVID library models created during the pandemic are here to stay: curbside service, home delivery options, proactive chat services and online research consultations are just a few of the services created or honed during the pandemic that support SMU Libraries’ strategic goals to connect our communities, ignite discovery and impact student success.

SMU Libraries by the Numbers

- **356%** increase in primo search sessions
- **7,636** interlibrary loans sent to other libraries
- **39,653** physical materials usage
- **5,901** total Ask Us transactions
- **38%** increase in E-books
- **37%** increase in presentation attendance
- **1,532** curbside pickups
GOAL 1
Activate cultural heritage

We embrace inventive strategies to align, integrate, and activate use of our distinctive cultural heritage collections in pursuit of the University’s research, teaching, and leadership mission.

- SMU Libraries cultural heritage collections were prominently featured in the Fossils to Film exhibit at Meadows Museum in Spring of 2021.
- Norwick Center for Digital Solutions (nCDS) and the SMU Archives continued to serve as active partners in the Voices of SMU oral history project collecting stories from underrepresented mustangs. The team also created the Class of COVID oral history project to record the experiences of students, faculty and staff during the global pandemic.
- The G. William Jones Film & Video collection welcomed virtual audiences into the vault with virtual talks, tours and gallery audio guides.
- Behind the scenes, SMU cataloging librarians received Library of Congress’ NACO contributor status which allows our expert librarians to submit original records to a large database which can be used for books cataloged worldwide.
- Through a highly competitive process and the leadership of the Bridwell Library, SMU Libraries acquired the World Methodist collection, which will be preserved and made available to the world.

GOAL 2
Champion research innovation

SMU Libraries organizes and facilitates a seamless, interdisciplinary, and university-wide collaborative network to support the scholarly and creative research lifecycle to accelerate student and faculty success.

- Digital Collections staff created digital object identifiers for selected journals in SMU Scholar, elevating the presence of our authors. They also improved the submission and approval process of electronic theses and dissertations in SMU Scholar. SMU Scholar continued to introduce graduate students to the world of publishing.
- The Information Literacy Team transitioned all research workshops and the Digital Humanities Research Institute to the online environment to support distance-learners.
- Collections and Technical Services staff supported research from home through the HathiTrust emergency temporary access service collections and by working with other vendors to expand access to e-books.
- The Research Studio project is one step closer to reality with the development of renderings for this newly-designed area to support research and digital scholarship.
- SMU Libraries joined exclusive Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) Express Digital Delivery Program for delivering digital resources within 18 hours.
GOAL 3: Impact student success

SMU Libraries maximizes student academic success through strategic partnerships, impactful services, and promotion of information and data literacy fluency in teaching, learning, research, and creative pursuits.

- SMU librarians assembled a team and designed instructional materials for the new WRTR writing course requiring every student to meet with a librarian. Now, every undergraduate student will receive library instruction within their first year at SMU.
- The SMU Libraries Information Literacy teams developed workshops for the University Honors program and created programming for voter education during election season.
- The libraries’ supported SMU Red & Blue Flex instruction by expanding study room usage to serve as Zoom Spaces and further adapting and implementing assessment of Ask Us services to support long-term distance learning.
- SMU Libraries staff continued to meet with the Student Advisory Board on Zoom to get feedback on library services and support during the pandemic.
- New permanent services including curbside pick-up, home delivery, locker pickup and proxy borrowing.

GOAL 4 Connect our communities

Our libraries cultivates inclusive, equitable, and accessible spaces, services, programs, and resources so that our libraries exemplify the SMU welcoming and supportive community.

- SMU Libraries partnered with the Health Center and other campus partners to provide wellness activities for students.
- SMU Libraries created a new Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (EDIA) committee and appointed the libraries’ first EDIA Officer to represent the SMU Libraries on the University Diversity Council.
- Accessibility Committee continued to improve accessibility across all areas of the libraries in physical and digital spaces and services.
- Major accomplishments during this time period:
  - Surveyed/evaluated a range of accessibility training
  - Created accessibility online training module and distributed to all SMU Libraries staff
  - Added assistive tech - high contrast keyboard
  - Access Services added option to request home delivery for patrons with disabilities
  - ILL provided 70 PDFs for screen reader users in first 6 months of offering remediation service.
GOAL 5

Ignite discovery

We provide an intuitive virtual library experience that empowers all users to easily discover library expertise, services, and collection resources.

- SMU Libraries launched proactive chat in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and saw an increase in chats of nearly 600%.
- The web team redesigned the SMU Libraries homepage, which provided improved search capabilities and greater discovery.
- Teams were charged with year-long projects to redesign all of the research guides and the entire SMU Libraries’ website.
- Hired a discovery and systems librarian.

GOAL 6

Cultivate organizational excellence

We are transforming our organization to align with and support the research, creative, and impactful aspirations of our SMU community, Dallas, and curious minds worldwide.

- In response to the pandemic shutdowns, SMU Libraries’ staff moved to Microsoft Teams for online collaboration and knowledge management.
- SMU Libraries continues to infuse more data science and business analytics practices into day-to-day use in order to measure and assess the overall impact of the daily operations of the libraries.
- SMU Libraries created a permanent head of Access Services position to streamline policies and services in support of the university community.
- The libraries created a new Collections Team and launched the new “One Library – One Collection” initiative across all campus libraries to identify and remove duplicates in collections across libraries.
Mustang Strong: SMU Libraries pandemic response

FEBRUARY 2020
Dean’s Cabinet begins discussing possible impacts of the pandemic as first cases arrive in Washington.

MARCH 2020
SMU Libraries begins to increase disinfectant and cleaning of spaces. University announces move to online on March 12 with the intention to return to in-person on April 6.

APRIL 2020
All instruction, reference, and consultation services occur online.

MAY 2020
SMU Libraries establishes re-opening committees to research and determine how to bring students safely back into the libraries.

JUNE 2020
SMU Libraries brings back staff to prepare for reopening in July.

SMU Libraries launches curbside and home delivery services.

JULY 2020
SMU Libraries reopens to faculty, staff and students and requires active ID cards for entry.

AUGUST 2020
SMU brings back students to campus under the Red & Blue Flex schedule with half of students attending classes online each day.

FALL 2020
18,979 Study Room Reservations
159 Instruction Sessions & Workshops
603 Consultations
6,401 Reference Transactions

SPRING 2021
20,717 Study Room Reservations
246 Instruction Sessions & Workshops
692 Consultations
5,758 Reference Transactions

SUMMER 2021
SMU Libraries reopening to the broader community.

SMU Libraries self-guided Canvas modules to support research launch for Fall 2021.

Data – 2020-21
1,375 New signs installed
159 Sanitizing stations
299 square feet of Plexiglass shields installed

Data – 2020-21
1,532 appointments Curbside pickups

Data – 2020-21
537,765 visitors
Gate count (52% decrease from previous year)
Staff accomplishments

**Heather Barrett**  
*Head of Acquisitions*
Presentation September 23, 2020  
- Rialto panel for Ex Libris’s ELUNA Learns Series

**Megan Heuer**  
*Director of Educational Initiatives*
Heuer, M. et al. (2021). “It would be horrible if I printed something that wasn’t true”: Examining the research behaviors of journalism students. Presentation at IFLA News Media Virtual Conference. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZJKz6Lsft00

**Melissa Johnson**  
*Instructional Design Librarian*
ACRL TULS TechBits sidebar on Crowdsignal, December 2020 issue of C&RL News
“Cross Timbers Library Collaborative 2020 Conference: Learning with LibWizard: Anyone can do it. Lightning Talk 2021 Texas Distance Learning Association Virtual Conference - Canvas, the Commons, and Course Design, Oh My!”

**Rahni Kennedy**  
*Music and Media Catalog Librarian*  
*Physical Processing Manager*
Chair, Texas Chapter of the Music Library Association  
Member, Encoding Standards Subcommittee/Cataloging and Metadata Committee, Music Library Association

ACRL Technology in University Libraries (TULS) committee  
ACRL Excellence in Academic Libraries Awards committee  
LIRT Teaching Learning and Technology committee  
Co-editor of ACRL TULS Tech Bits Sidebar
Karen Leeseberg  
_Sr. Instruction & Outreach Librarian_

Reinforcing Relationships with Business Librarians  

Russell Martin  
_Director, DeGolyer Library_

For Study, Research, and Pleasure”: An Introduction to the DeGolyer Library, Prudence Alexander Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, April 23, 2021  
Editorial board, Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America

Sandal Miller  
_Library Director, Business Library_

Co-guest editor of Ticker: The Academic Business Librarianship Review – Online Instruction Special Issue, 5:2, Spring 2021; along with Christina Sheley, Director - Business, Engineering, and Entrepreneurship at Cornell University Library. The special issue focuses on detailing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on business reference or instruction.

Rafia Mirza  
_Humanities Librarian_

Reviewer, NEH’s Office of Digital Humanities, Digital Humanities Advancement Grants (Spring 2021)

Beverly Mitchell  
_Assistant Director, Art and Dance & Hawn Gallery Curator_

Exhibition held at The National Gallery of Art, Washington DC and continuing on at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.  
Nominating committee member, ARLIS/NA Distinguished Service Award 2020.  
Awards committee member, Kress Foundation Travel Awards.

Ada Negraru  
_Archival Assistant_

Website & Technology Subcommittee report presentation at the Texas Archival Resources Online Brown Bag, Society of Southwest Archivists Annual Meeting, May 19, 2021 – “Oh, great... another exam: why you should consider taking the archival certification examination,” outreach event on behalf of the Academy of Certified Archivists, University of North Texas Library and Information School graduate student virtual happy hour, November 9, 2020.  
History Day Region 21 (Fort Worth and Arlington) judge, March 6, 2021 (virtual competition)  
Steering Committee and Nominations Committee at-large member (2020-2021), Texas Archival Resources Online (TARO) Chair, Website & Technology Subcommittee, charged with testing the TARO 2.0 website with the support of a $348,359 National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) grant awarded to the TARO consortium (2019-2022)  
Sub-committee member, Summerlee Foundation grant implementation/Quality Assurance
**Marja Pietilainen-Rom**  
*Library Specialist*
Degree awarded from University of North Texas, M.S. Library Science, Information Organization concentration (=technical services) and Graduate Academic Certificate in Digital Curation and Data Management May, 2021

**Tracey Rinehart**  
*User Experience Librarian*

**Tyeson Seale**  
*Assistant Director of Community Engagement*
Degree awarded from SMU’s Cox School of Business, M.B.A. dual concentrations in Business Analytics and Marketing, May 2021
Professional MBA Student Advisory Executive Board Member, Student Experience Chair
SMU Cox Student Ambassador
Mustang Mentor, Office of Engaged Learning

**Cassie Walker**  
*Assistant Director for Scholarly Initiatives*
American Association of Law Libraries, Presidential Certificate of Appreciation (July 2020)

**Breanna Webb**  
*E-Resources Management Librarian & Authorization Control*
SCELC Program/Professional Development Committee member