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Go *anywhere.*

SMU Libraries

SMU LIBRARIES 2023-24
YEAR IN REVIEW

YEAR IN REVIEW

FY 2023–24

Rooted in Excellence, Reaching Higher

While the 2023–24 academic year brought change to SMU Libraries, one thing remained constant: our steadfast dedication to excellence in every area of our work. Guided by our strategic goals—activating cultural heritage, championing research innovation, impacting student success, connecting communities, igniting discovery, and cultivating organizational excellence—we continued to elevate our role at the heart of the university. Our subject librarians delivered tailored instruction sessions that empowered students in their academic journeys. Our world-class collections were showcased through engaging exhibitions that welcomed visitors from across the campus and beyond. We remained a hub for research and innovation, supporting the intellectual pursuits of students, faculty, and the broader SMU community. In many ways, the more things changed, the more our core mission held true. What stands out most this year is not simply that we sustained our high standards—but that we continued to grow, striving to do even better for the communities we serve.

SMU Libraries by the Numbers

15,000

media assets donated
by KERA TV

1,300

visitors to the Hamon Arts
Library to view the
Torn Apart exhibit

528

new works
added to
SMU Scholar

430

instruction sessions by
research librarians

Approximately
92,000

items in the SMU Libraries
Digital Collections

750

research
consultations

915,113

downloads from
SMU Scholar

FONDREN LIBRARY CENTER

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 missions.

Expand our Digital Collections: The SMU Libraries Norwick Center for Digital Solutions continues to digitize and make primary resources from special collections accessible to the global community of researchers. As a result, the SMU Libraries Digital Collections grew **5%** during 2023-2024, reaching **~92,000 items**.

Build our team: Allie Wilkins was hired in the permanent position of Digital Preservation Archivist at SMU Libraries (Norwick Center).

New acquisitions:

- The Rees-Jones Collection expanded its holdings in masterworks by pioneering photographers of the American West with the acquisition of *Yosemite: The Manchester Album*.
 - *Yosemite Valley from the "Best General View"* (1866)
 - *Mirror View of North Dome, Yosemite* (1865-66)

- The Archives of Women of the Southwest acquired the papers of Karen Blumenthal '90, as well as research files, manuscript drafts, interviews and more.
- The DeGolyer Library expanded its African American history collection with items from pioneering authors and family histories.
- A donation of approximately **15,000 media assets** from KERA TV becomes one of the single largest donations in the history of the G. William Jones Film and Video Collection at Hamon Arts Library.

SMU Libraries on display: Attendees had the opportunity to explore rare and unique materials through multiple curated exhibits hosted by SMU Libraries, including Hamon Arts Library's *Torn Apart: Punk + New Wave Graphics, Fashion & Culture: 1976-1986*, which drew nearly **1,300 visitors** to the library. Other notable exhibits include Bridwell's World Methodist Museum collections exhibit; DeGolyer's hosting of *Taming the Tongue in the Heyday of English Grammar* (1711–1851), previously on display at the Grolier Club, and *"I Hear of Sherlock Everywhere": Collecting the Multilingual Canon*; and *What We Keep: The Objects of Immigrants to America*, an installation of fifteen drawings by artist Jane Chu.



Left (top) SMU Libraries visitors viewing a collection in the Elizabeth Perkins Prothro Galleries of Bridwell Library. **Left (bottom)** Visitors at the *Torn Apart* exhibit at Hamon Arts Library. **Right** "Yosemite Valley from the 'Best General View'" (1866)



Champion research innovation

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

Investigate big data: The Research and Scholarly Initiatives Team collaborated with the Office of Information Technology's research team to investigate big data storage options for faculty researchers, and established deeper partnerships with the Moody Graduate School, the Office of Research, the Dedman College Interdisciplinary Institute, and Dedman College department chairs to support faculty and graduate student research.

House innovative research: 528 new works were added to the newly-redesigned SMU Scholar, including new journal issues from the *Journal of Undergraduate Research*, *SMU Data Science Review*, *SMU Annual Texas Survey*, *SMU Law Review*, *SMU Law Review Forum*, and the *Journal of Air Law and Commerce*. Overall, materials in SMU Scholar were downloaded **915,113 times**.

Form meaningful research partnerships:

- SMU Libraries signed new agreements with publishers to make the scholarship of our researchers available as open access immediately upon publication, increasing the reach of this research;
- joined the Western Regional Storage Trust, a shared print repository focused on print journals with online versions available that many libraries hold as part of our collaborative collection building;
- and partnered with the Texas Data Repository to create the SMU Dataverse Repository to promote teamwork, increase scholarly impact, offer research support from SMU librarians, and more.

Impact student success

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

Provide students with resources: To support student learning, the Teaching Team created **4 Canvas modules** related to data, generative AI, scholarship, and academic writing for faculty to integrate into their course, also creating **13 videos** to instruct students on specific research strategies. Libraries staff also helped to make "Readings & Resources" available by default in every Canvas credit course.

Increase instruction and research support: To support our goal to integrate Information Literacy instruction into the university curriculum, teaching and research librarians increased the number of instruction sessions from **271 to 430** compared to the previous fiscal year, an **increase of 58%**. The number of research consultations **increased 33%** from **561 to 750**.

Hear from our students: The SMU Libraries Student Advisory Board with approximately **15 student members** from various academic programs provided feedback on barriers to student learning, improvement to library spaces, and student perspectives on our plans for the future of SMU Libraries.

Empowering students to read critically: SMU teaching librarians investigated how critical reading skills affect student success, with a focus on their connection to information literacy and the librarian's role in teaching research skills. The study's findings informed the development of new workshops for undergraduate and graduate students on reading scholarly texts.



Connect our communities

SMU Libraries cultivates inclusive, equitable, and accessible spaces, services, programs and resources so that our libraries support the SMU welcoming community.

Support the next generation of library leaders: The Friends of SMU Libraries awarded **\$25,000** to the SMU Libraries internship program in 2024, raising funds at the annual Tables of Content dinner featuring community sports legend Norm Hitzges.

Partner with on- and off-campus groups to support students: SMU Libraries is dedicated to enhancing the student experience, having engaged in numerous collaborative efforts this spring with SMU academic departments, the Dallas Public Library, and other community partners. Libraries staff also initiated outreach with organizations such as the Student Advisory Board and the Undergraduate Education & Academic Success department.

Create spaces that suit all students' needs: SMU Libraries staff designed a classroom space to encourage collaboration, allowing students to learn together and create a community around their research. The classroom is a bookable space for librarians and faculty for classes doing research, learning about research, or using our collections, with a range of seating options included to accommodate differing learning preferences.



Strengthened our connection to community networks: The Libraries enhanced their communications to external audiences, creating and adapting outreach to the needs and interests of various external networks (including events and exhibits, special collections, and more), both near and far from the Hilltop.

Help all visitors feel at home at the Libraries: SMU Libraries hosted their annual homecoming event, Pastries with Peruna, welcoming SMU alumni, community members, and other visitors to SMU and the Libraries.

Look ahead to the future with regional stakeholders: The Underwood Law Library hosted the Southwestern Association of Law Libraries Annual Meeting, which achieved its highest attendance since 2016 and was widely regarded as a success, also hosting law librarians from across the country at *AI and the Future of Law Libraries*.



Ignite discovery

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

Improve website design: To create an intuitive and accessible SMU Libraries web presence, the Web Team improved the look and feel of the SMU Libraries home page and implemented a fresh design. The team also updated and refreshed our blog and exhibit pages for increased cohesion across all libraries.

Account for user experience: The Web Team hosted biweekly user testing with students to ensure our digital presence meets their research and other needs.

Strengthen our digital preservation to preserve stories: At the Norwick Center for Digital Solutions, **94,400 additional files—totaling 4 terabytes**—were preserved this year, bringing SMU Libraries' digital preservation system to **over 623,000 files and 60 terabytes**. These preserved materials, including the John Arnone Artwork and Papers and the Sam Johnson Congressional Papers, ensure that the stories and histories from across SMU's campus libraries remain accessible for future generations.



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.

Encourage discovery and advancement for staff: The SMU Libraries Innovation Grant was established to support the professional growth and development of library staff interested in conducting original research projects.

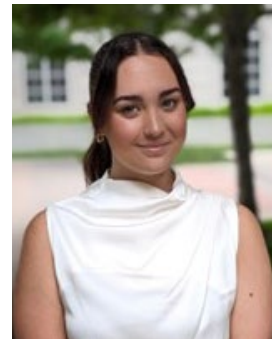
LEADing in supporting Libraries staff:

- The Libraries Education and Development (LEAD) team held their first *So What Do You Really Do?* session, a series designed to engage staff in informal learning and covering diverse topics such as library trends, technology, and services.

- The LEAD team held the first Connected Learning community session, featuring interactive group sessions and discussions aimed to enhance a sense of belonging and respect among staff.
- The team successfully introduced Skilltype as a professional development resource for library workers, providing a platform for staff to track their learning and access various training opportunities.

Engage our communities while supporting our team: After a successful year of programming and fundraising, Friends of SMU Libraries awarded the following scholarships, among other grants

- **The Jalesia Horton Memorial Library School Scholarship:** Shruthi Hemasundar
- **SMU Libraries Student Worker Excellence Awards:** Lillian Nelson and Pavani Palla



Left Sylvia Jones with Peruna **Above (top)** Lillian Nelson, **(bottom)** Pavani Palla

Staff Highlights

Scholarly publications and book chapters

- Keralis, Spencer D. C., **Mirza, Rafia**, & Seale, Maura (2023). Illegible Labor: Toward a Documentary Practice of Digital Scholarship. *Debates in the Digital Humanities 2023* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press), pp. 305–323.
- **Mirza, Rafia**, Nicholson, Karen P., & Seale, Maura (2023). Acting “As If”: Critical Pedagogy, Empowerment, and Labor. *The Critical Librarianship and Pedagogy Symposium: Reflections, Revisions, and New Works*, edited by Yvonne Mery and Anthony Sanchez (Chicago: Association of College & Research Libraries), pp. 111–126.
- Seale, Maura, Pagowsky, Nicole, **Mirza, Rafia**, & Nicholson, Karen P. (eds., 2024). Special Focus on Libraries and/as Extraction. *Canadian Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 10.

Conference presentations and poster sessions

- **Boeke, Cindy** (2024). SMU Libraries Digital Collections: Making a Difference. Poster presentation at the Texas Conference on Digital Libraries 2024.
- Creelman, Kerry, Litsey, Ryan, & **Sanabria, Sarah Haight** (2024). Renovations, Offsite Storage, and the Future of the Research Collection. Presentation at the Greater Western Library Alliance Joint Conference.

- **Johnson, Melissa** (2024). Let's ChatGPT: Incorporating Generative AI in Information Literacy Instruction. Presentation at LOEX 2024 national conference and published as proceedings paper.
- Johnson, Paula, **Jones, Sylvia**, & Pixton, David (2024). Preprint Repositories for the Engineering Researcher. Presented at American Society for Engineering Education - Engineering Libraries Division.
- **Johnston, Carrie** (2023). Leadership in Library Careers. Invited panelist at the Leading Change Institute.
- **Johnston, Carrie** (2023). Be Nimble: Strategies for Job Seeking. Presentation at the American Studies Association Annual Meeting.
- **Kennedy, Rahni B.** (2024). Bye-bye Gamble Music Folders: Better Care for General Sheet Music Collections. Presentation at the Music OCLC Users Group Annual Meeting.
- **Kennedy, Rahni B.** (2023). Suffragist Sheet Music: Lessons in Special Collections Cataloging. Presentation at the Texas Chapter of the Music Library Association Fall Meeting.
- **Pietilainen-Rom, Marja** (2024). ORCID Project at a Law Library as a Part of Faculty Support Services. Presentation at the Southwestern Association of Law Libraries annual meeting.
- **Walker, Cassie**, Keele, Ben, Hickman Pierson, Annalee, & Carlson, Ben (2023). Building and Strengthening Partnerships Between Libraries and Law Journals. Virtual panel for the American Association of Law Libraries.
- **Williamson, James** (2024). Integrating Rosetta-ALMA: Taking Steps Towards Digital Collections Discovery. Presentation at ELUNA 2024 Annual Meeting.
- **Williamson, James, Franco, Cynthia**, & **Wilkins, Allie** (2024). Incorporating Digital Solutions to Advance Archival Practices: Building a Collaborative Digital Preservation Program Across Multiple Special Collections. Presentation at the Society of Southwest Archivists 2024 Annual Meeting.

Degrees and awards

- **Boeke, Cindy** (2024). TDL Individual Impact Award Recipient, Texas Digital Library.
- **Elder, Jane** (2024). Faculty Senate Outstanding Staff Award, SMU Faculty Senate.
- **Elder, Jane** (2024). Completed Master of Theology (Th.M.).
- **Glenn, James** (2024). Completed Master of Science in Library Science (MSLS).
- **Heuer, Megan** (2024). Accepted proposal to the Institute of Research Design in Librarianship.