



Dean's Performance Review Report

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February 2026

Introduction

The following report outlines the major accomplishments of the library since my last interim review in 2024. More details can be found in the [library's annual reports](#). Since these are collective accomplishments, this report begins by assessing progress toward building the underlying capacity, infrastructure, and culture that makes these achievements possible. I also took this approach because of the recent merger of the library with Academic Support Centers and Programs, creating a larger unit, Library and Academic Support (LAS). It is too early for me to provide a self-assessment of my leadership for LAS, but I outline the initial steps taken and future goals for building on our common strength: commitment to supporting students' academic needs from wherever we sit in the library, classrooms, tutoring and writing centers, testing centers, and other campus spaces. I also outline remaining challenges and work to be done moving forward.

As an academic dean, and one whose work requires supporting all WSU students, faculty and staff, I strive to take an active role in a wide range of campus conversations and identify the ways that LAS can support WSU's mission. The past two years have witnessed continued challenges, including a major change to general education, uncertainty about academic freedom in the context of HB 261, and HB 265 budget cuts and reallocations. While the work has often been heavy and marked by loss and uncertainty, I am grateful for a remarkable team and colleagues across campus who continue to focus on making sure that a life-changing education is accessible and achievable for all of our students.

Strengthening Capacity, Infrastructure, and Culture

In general, my responsibilities and contributions to this work include:

- Securing funding and other resources to support our work.
- Facilitating conversations internally and externally so that we can develop sound, creative, and sustainable solutions.
- Making hard decisions within challenging constraints and between competing ideas.
- Providing mentoring and support for managers across LAS.
- Representing LAS across campus and externally, educating stakeholders on what we contribute to the success of the WSU community, and advocating for sustained support for the work that we do.

1. Library strategic plan: focus and achievement

The library has made steady progress on meeting the goals of its revised strategic plan. Libraries can do many things in support of student, faculty, and staff success. But sometimes this can lead to an overwhelming number of initiatives which can burn out staff and faculty and dilute the impact of our work. We have tightened our focus on the initiatives that we think will have the greatest impact on the WSU and wider community: affordability; nurturing connection and belonging;

creating new curricula and approaches for information literacy education; and strengthening the library's role as a community anchor.

We have made real strides in using these strategic goals to make decisions not just about what to do, but what to stop doing. Feedback that I have received from library personnel suggests that many of them feel more connected to the larger goals of the library and WSU and they can see more clearly what they contribute. There is still unevenness, especially for library faculty, in feeling connected to our goals and strategies, which is an area for continued improvement.

2. Budget stability and securing new resources

The library faces the challenge of maintaining existing resources, especially library collections, with price increases and flat base funding. We have been able to secure valuable one-time funding for important initiatives, like OER and lending laptops. We have also been able to develop a stable and forward-looking budget strategy. We've been able to make strategic cuts in library subscriptions and provide just-in-time delivery, through interlibrary loan and single article purchases, without major disruption. I secured a \$100,000 base budget increase for collections, beginning in 2028, as part of the HB 265 reallocations. While this will not address the entirety of the budget gap, the college deans and provost have committed to developing a consistent plan for using RR funds for subscription price increases in the future. A stable funding strategy and commitment enables us to plan and make wise decisions.

The library also benefits from generous support from the Stewart Education Foundation and other donors. We have been able to use this funding to backfill gaps in our collection and student wage budgets. I also developed a multi-year capital expense plan, which has enabled us to manage regular staff and faculty computer upgrades, make timely repairs and updates to classroom and other library technology, and save funds for major capital projects. Careful budget planning will enable us to complete some much-needed improvements to Special Collections and University Archives storage and do some minor remodeling of the library's public spaces to meet current student needs. I have helped make small gains in expanding the donor base, including \$50,000 in the last two years to support OER and affordable course materials efforts and some smaller gifts from new donors to support library collections and programming.

3. Staffing changes

Staff turnover and VSIPs related to the HB 265 reallocation process prompted re-thinking about the way we staff library services, especially in the User Services department, which is responsible for staffing the main library service point, making sure the library is safe during operating hours, and managing all of the library's circulation functions. We could not fill open positions during the HB 265 reallocation process and had to experiment with using part-time hourly employees on evening and weekend shifts. While the hiring freeze placed a burden on User Services staff, the use of more flexible hourly employees enabled the department to think in new ways about how to schedule back up weekend and evening coverage. We are now fully staffed and have a more strategic and flexible staffing approach that uses salary dollars wisely while also providing the coverage needed to keep the library building open for nearly 100 hours every week. We will evaluate its effectiveness during the 2026 fall semester.

The reallocation process led to the restructuring of the library's technical services departments (IT systems, cataloging, acquisitions, interlibrary loan, etc.). We were able to distribute the work from a VSIP retirement across multiple departments and positions, with pay raises for those taking on new duties. We also streamlined and let go of some processes that were not meeting the needs of our

users and staff. While these changes were not easy, the creative thinking of library staff and faculty minimized the disruption and enabled us to continue to provide core library services and resources to the WSU community.

4. Operational coordination and communication

Like many complex organizations, the library faces challenges with communication across departments. The library leadership team, Library Council, focuses on strategy and policy decisions. But operational coordination sometimes failed. I implemented a monthly library operations meeting where department heads update each other on projects and coordinate cross-departmental functions and logistics. Feedback suggests that this has improved communication and operational effectiveness.

We successfully passed our seven-year internal audit, but it highlighted that we needed to improve documentation of processes and procedures. With the merger of the Library and Academic Support, I was able to secure an additional administrative support position to help manage the additional complexity. Prior to this, the entire library was supported by one full time administrative associate, who also handled marketing and programming, and a part-time budget specialist. The addition of a part-time administrative assistant has enabled us to better support dean calendaring, building access management, policy and process documentation, and HR and other process support for all library departments. This has also enabled us to maintain a more consistent in-person presence in the library administration office and facilitate coordination with Academic Support Centers and Programs.

5. Merger with Academic Support Centers and Programs

The merger with the library is the third reorganization or change in senior administrator assignment for Academic Support Centers and Programs in recent years, causing understandable stress and uncertainty. My primary focus has been getting to know my new colleagues and their work and facilitating points of commonality and potential partnerships with library colleagues. We have already identified potential collaborations such as exploring the creation of a Writing and Research Center in the library, cross-promotion of services, and sharing ideas to support student employees. Feedback from both academic support and library personnel has been very positive about the merger because we have quickly found considerable common ground.

Major LAS Activities and Accomplishments

All faculty and staff contributed to the accomplishments described below.

1. Affordability initiatives

For the past five years, the library has been recognized as a campus leader in promoting affordability. Highlights include:

- **OER Grants:** Since 2021, the library has administered a program that has awarded \$400,000 in grants to 54 faculty projects to adopt, adapt, or create Open Educational Resources (OER). To date, these projects have saved an estimated 35,000 students more than \$4 million.
- **Syllabi reviews and roadshows:** Library staff and faculty conducted nearly 40 syllabi reviews, which have led to faculty adoption or OER or other affordable course materials. They also conducted several OER roadshows in academic departments, where library and bookstore staff present affordable options. These efforts have led to several OER projects, adoption of library-licensed materials, and more timely bookstore adoptions, helping the bookstore to secure the lowest prices possible.

- **Textbook library:** We have dedicated a portion of the library's collection budget to purchase textbooks and make them available for short term loans. Usage has increased every year, reaching more than 2,000 checkouts in FY25.
- **Laptop and hotspot lending:** The library has built and maintained a laptop lending program that provided more than 1,500 checkouts last year.

2. Engagement, high impact educational experiences, and belonging

Since the reopening of the library after the pandemic, the library has been steadily building stronger relationships with student groups and campus partners in order to connect students to the library and create a welcoming environment. We have also revitalized in-person research help service. Highlights include:

- **Co-curricular and cultural programming:** We have expanded these events, including exhibits, speakers, and letter writing and crafting events. 900 people participated in these events in FY25, doubling attendance from the previous year. Feedback from students, faculty, and staff tells us that these events help them feel welcome and connected to WSU.
- **Space needs assessment:** We conducted a needs assessment to identify improvements that we can make to library spaces to better serve student needs. The library remodel was completed 8 1/2 years ago and student needs have changed. In Fall 2025, interior design students participated in a charrette competition and developed creative and concrete ideas for the library. We are now using that information to explore and plan for re-envisioning key spaces.
- **High impact student employment:** The library has expanded paid internships and other high impact employment opportunities for students in the library, especially in Special Collections and University Archives (SCUA).

3. Gen Ed changes and information literacy

In 2024, Faculty Senate voted to implement the minimal 27-credit required general education curriculum rather than implementing an additional 3-credit "institutional area." This effectively ended the required information literacy course as part of General Education. This decision has had a major impact on the library faculty.

The Teaching and Information Services (TIS) Department has developed a pilot collaboration with the English Department to integrate information literacy into ENGL 2010, a required course that will reach most WSU students and that has substantial information literacy learning outcomes. Building on strong relationships developed in the combined composition and information literacy course, ENGL 2015, TIS librarians contributed ideas that were incorporated into a new ENGL 2010 OER textbook and developed a sequence of online and in-person lessons that ENGL 2010 faculty can integrate into their courses. In Fall 2025 and Spring 2026, several librarians have been embedded in both online and in-person courses, where they teach information literacy skills and help students on their research-based assignments. TIS faculty and staff are collecting feedback from students and ENGL 2010 instructors and will assess student artifacts at the end of spring semester. Changing an information literacy instructional model that had been in place for decades has been hard and much work remains (see below), but the department has faced this challenge with creativity and an iterative, reflective approach.

4. Community anchor mission

The library continues to excel in its community anchor mission, especially in its role in documenting and educating the wider public about the history and culture of Northern Utah. Highlights include:

- Special Collections and University Archives (SCUA) exhibit about Ogden jazz musician Red Nichols in 2024.
- The expansion of SCUA's Ogden at its Core project, which continues to document the history of immigrant and ethnic communities in Utah.
- A multi-year project of exploring the indigenous history and culture of the region that culminated in an exhibit, Deep Mapping Eagle Village, about the site of the Intermountain Indian School in Brigham City. This project was built upon years of relationship building, listening, and learning with Native American students, alumni of the Intermountain Indian School, and local tribal leaders.

4. Improved library collections and access

Library staff and faculty have done considerable work in assessing the library collection in light of current needs and an updated collection development policy. They have also done much-needed cleaning up of cataloging and electronic resource records. Highlights include:

- The removal of out-of-scope material in Special Collections and University Archives, bringing their collection into alignment with their collection development policy and making room for their expanding collection from projects such as Ogden at its Core.
- Reclassification of the SCUA book collection. The original collection had been cataloged in Dewey Classification and needed to be updated to Library of Congress Classification to improve findability and storage efficiency.
- A recently completed inventory and reorganization of bound journals in remote storage.
- Weeding of out-of-date materials in the reference collection and purchase of \$20,000 of updated materials.

Campus-wide and external service and leadership

In addition to administrative oversight of LAS, I also serve in leadership roles in several campus and external contexts.

- Affordable Course Materials Task Force: I continue to serve as the chair of this task force, which has played an essential role in bringing faculty and staff from across campus to brainstorm ideas, identify urgent issues, and provide feedback on campus initiatives to lower the cost of course materials for students.
- Course Fee Committee: I have served as the Course Fee Committee Chair for 4 years. I led this thoughtful group through mandatory reviews of all of the colleges' course fees, following recommendations of the most recent audit report to strengthen documentation and ensure that fees are reasonable and directly benefit the students paying the fees. After four years of this work, I feel that the committee has a robust review process in place and can better help departments develop strong proposals and clear documentation.
- HB 265: While not a formal committee, I worked closely with my fellow academic deans to develop strategies for the HB 265 reallocation process.
- HB 261: I have also worked informally and on small working groups in response to HB 261. Specifically, I have brought the expertise of librarianship into conversations related to academic freedom in third spaces that don't look like formal classrooms but are important learning environments. I currently serve on a small working group tasked with developing guidelines and best practices for promoting intellectual pluralism and diverse perspectives across campus.

- Utah Academic Library Consortium (UALC): I continue to serve on UALC's Council and have taken a leading role in developing messaging and outreach related to legislative funding and aligning UALC with USHE's shared services strategy.
- I continue to participate in professional service as a member of the *Communications in Information Literacy* editorial board and as a reviewer of Conference on Academic Library Management conference proposals. I was also selected to participate in an Institute of Museums and Libraries grant funded project, *Identifying Gaps and Opportunities in Professional Development Support for Managers*, which included a two-day forum to identify issues facing library managers and potential opportunities for more person-centered leadership and management development.

Challenges and Areas for Improvement

The gen ed changes that led to the elimination of the required course has caused a rupture for library faculty in both the TIS department and SCUA. My response continues to be advocating with administration and faculty across the university that the library has an essential role to play in ensuring that our students graduate with the information literacy skills, including critical AI literacy, necessary for success in their careers, communities and personal lives. I have pushed back strongly against the discourse that the library no longer has a role in general education because of the end of the required IL course and have cited other institutions and scholarly research to demonstrate the possibilities and promise of a course-integrated approach.

The change has also led to confusion and uncertainty about teaching roles and library faculty status, which has major repercussions for definitions and documentation of credit equivalencies for faculty workload. I have worked closely with the interim provost to identify the areas in the PPM that will require change in order to ensure library faculty are not harmed by the end of the credit-bearing course. We have emphasized that there is strong continuity, even with the gen ed changes, because librarians have always done a wide range of non-credit bearing teaching, such as library instruction sessions and workshops and research consultations with students.

Library faculty have also expressed concerns about decision making as they chart a path forward. The overlapping policy and decision-making processes related to faculty status and library operations are confusing and I have tried to outline this complexity and reach a shared understanding of the library's overlapping governance practices. I also have made some structural changes to facilitate communication, such as proposing that the library's faculty senator become a voting member of Library Council so that they can weigh in on policy decisions that might affect library faculty as related to their employment classification. This was unanimously approved by Library Council.

Some progress has been made on the initial PPM changes, but much more work needs to be done. My communication has not always been as effective as I'd like, as confusion continues to mark our conversations. We need to continue to have hard conversations, work through difference, and make needed process, culture, and structural changes that will ensure library faculty are secure in their status and have clear expectations of their functional library responsibilities. I have been reflecting on my own role in this and have recently received excellent coaching and advice from colleagues about ways to improve communication and generate meaningful conversation. I am also committed to bringing in external experts who can assist with group dynamics and hard conversations. This will be my primary focus for the immediate future.

Future Goals

- Help get library faculty on stable structural and policy ground in the wake of the gen ed changes.
- Provide stability for the Academic Support staff so that they can do their best work.
- Facilitate further collaboration between the library and academic support units and build cohesive, student-facing services that take advantage of our commonalities and different strengths.
- Complete the documentation of library policy, procedures, and practices so that they are clear, findable, and easy to update.
- Continue to build on our communication and process improvements so that everyone understands how they can contribute to collaborative, consensus-based decision making.
- Secure a consistent base budget strategy for collections and student employee wages.
- Engage in succession planning and nurture future library and academic support leaders. I have been in this position for 8 1/2 years and, while it has been an honor to serve in this capacity, fresh perspectives are valuable and planning for leadership change will make the institution stronger.