



Dean's Interim Performance Review Report

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Introduction

Over the past two years, the library has worked toward greater alignment with WSU's strategic plan and a consolidation of initiatives to support the university's larger goals. During the pandemic, the library staff and faculty learned a great deal about the challenges our students face in accessing technology and course materials and balancing school, work, and care responsibilities. They have risen to the challenge and consolidated pandemic era emergency programs into core library services and initiatives, particularly in the area of affordable course materials and technology. Faculty have engaged in professional development to make their courses more inclusive and accessible. I have a colleague whose mantra is: think fewer, think bigger, think longer term. I am enormously proud of the library team as they have embraced this idea and focused their efforts on activities that have the highest impact on student success.

The library has also faced new challenges, often from external changes, such as the statewide general education reform that will profoundly affect the future of the required information literacy course that library faculty teach. The recent legislation on EDI will also have an impact on how the library approaches its commitment to making good on the promise of educational opportunity for all of our students.

I strive to enact a leadership philosophy that centers care and advocacy. I strive to create conditions in which staff, faculty, and student employees have a clear strategic direction and the necessary resources to do their essential work. I strive to be a visible and vocal advocate for the expertise of library faculty and staff and the role they play in WSU's mission and operations. I try to be transparent in my own decision-making, outlining my assumptions and making as much underlying information (the library budget, staffing models, policy constraints, etc.) available to all library personnel. I strive to help co-develop clear criteria for the decisions that library employees need to make, especially in determining where to direct resources and what to stop doing. I do not execute in all of these areas perfectly, but continue to listen to constructive feedback, learn from mistakes, and make needed changes.

The following outlines key achievements of the library as a whole since my last review. As collaborative work, I cannot take credit for anything individually. I have tried to emphasize my role as dean wherever possible.

Accomplishments, Spring 2022- Spring 2024

1. Equity Audit:

Aligned with WSU's Strategic Plan EDI goals

The library completed an initial review of key policies as part of an action-oriented training conducted by external consultants, completed in May 2022. Policies and services reviewed included:

- **A new collection development policy** that measures success by key learning and research outcomes, rather than focusing solely on the size of the library collection. The new policy

addresses affordability with greater emphasis on course materials. The policy also aims to promote a greater sense of belonging through diversifying the voices represented in both the general circulating collection and Special Collections and University Archives.

- **Removal of late fees** for most library materials and the development of reasonable payment plans for damaged or lost laptops that enable students to continue their educational progress by removing registration and other holds.
- **Post-pandemic operations** that address student needs for stable hours and service provision, as well as the continuation of curbside delivery, dedicated, Proctorio (remote) testing rooms, and other measures to protect medically vulnerable patrons and to support students in their ongoing hybrid schedules (a combination of face-to-face and online classes. As one example of implementing the new operations plan, we created a contingency for limited service desk operations in the case of a surge of COVID cases. The plan was designed so that students had continued access to the building and consistent online services, while also enabling social distancing for staff. After the return of the library to full operations in August 2021, we successfully implemented this plan in January and February 2022 during a surge of COVID cases in the community. We were able to maintain seamless library operations.

2. Programming for Belonging:

Aligned with WSU's Strategic Plan EDI goals

The library's equity audit consultants recommended that the library shift from a transactional to a relational approach in order to better understand and serve traditionally marginalized students. Much of this work has focused on creating a sense of belonging in library spaces and in the wider community. Examples include:

- **Honoring Tribal Sovereignty** (exhibit and programming): This project emerged out of meetings between key library personnel and the Native American Student Association and Native American Cultural Association Program Manager. I co-designed, with the library's Administrative Associate, a library exhibit asking the question: what would the library collections and spaces look like if we truly acknowledged that the library sits on indigenous land? The library also sponsored speakers throughout the year, including Darren Perry, former chair of the Northwestern Band of Shoshone, who served as the keynote speaker for Native American Heritage Month. The exhibit and related programming were designed to invite the campus community into a conversation about land acknowledgments and tribal sovereignty, with the culminating goal of a proposal to locate a permanent land acknowledgement somewhere on campus. The exhibit and programming have been well received, with thoughtful suggestions from the interactive elements of the.
- **Pop-up programming:** A wide range of library staff and faculty, have created small engagement events in the library, such as crafting events, film series, letter writing events, and other welcoming gestures such as free food during finals. Feedback from these events has been very positive, with students telling us that it creates an atmosphere of support and welcoming in the library. These activities are a result of the creativity and hard work of many library employees, including student employees, and I have been happy to support them with funding and, when time allows, participation.
- **Queering the Archives:** This Special Collections and University Archives initiative includes an ongoing oral history project and an interactive exhibit designed to highlight the lives and histories of the LGBTQ community in northern Utah. It aligns with our commitment to diversifying our collections to include voices that are traditionally erased or marginalized. This project was very well-received by the local community and the result of the creativity and

expertise of faculty, staff, and student employees in Special Collections and University archives.

3. Re-purposed library spaces

Aligned with WSU's Strategic Plan EDI goals

The library has re-purposed some under-utilized spaces (faculty carrels that had been unoccupied even before the pandemic) in response to requests from students for spaces that will help them stay on campus and contribute to a better learning experience.

- **Lactation room:** There was no publicly available lactation room in the library which meant that nursing parents had to leave the building to find an available space. Given that the library is one of two campus buildings open late at night and on Saturdays and Sundays, we created a lactation room in an unoccupied faculty carrel.
- **Temporary meditation/prayer room:** In response to a request from students, we turned two unoccupied carrels into spaces for quiet meditation and prayer. It is temporary until campus can determine a location for a more permanent space. Feedback from a room check-in survey demonstrates that it contributes to student well-being and a sense of belonging.

4. Affordability Initiatives

Aligned with WSU's Strategic Plan EDI and Retention and Completion Goals

The library has made important strides in institutionalizing the work around Open Educational Resources and affordable course materials and is in the process of planning the next phase of the technology lending program.

- A **textbook lending library** was established in Fall 2021. Instead of waiting for faculty to place textbooks on reserve in the library for short-term checkout, I worked with the library's Collection Manager and Course Materials specialist to adapt our budget and secured funding from the Friends of Stewart Library and other gift funds for a more comprehensive approach. Beginning with a focus on general education courses, the library purchased copies of print textbooks and multi-user licenses to e-books and made them available for short-term loans (up to 5 days). This program has expanded and now includes around 73% of the textbook adoption list available from the bookstore.
- The **Technology Lending Program**, established with CARES Act funding in 2020, continues to be an essential service for many students who need short- and long-term loans of laptops and Wi-Fi hotspots for internet connectivity. I have secured some additional funding to support this initiative and am working with the library's Head of User Services to assess the program's impact, determine a stable funding model for replacement costs, and expand the program to include a more holistic approach to advising students on the range of affordable laptop and internet connectivity programs that can supplement what the library offers.
- **Open Educational Resources Institute:** A Weber State team of faculty, library personnel, the WSU Affordability and Student Success Manager, and staff from WSU Online were accepted to the AAC&U's Open Educational Resources Institute, which ran from July 2022-July 2023. The team worked with a dedicated institute advisor to craft an OER Strategic Plan. This plan set clear goals and an action plan for institutionalizing OER practices at WSU. I served as the administrative representative and the library's Course Materials Specialist served as the team lead.
- **Open Educational Resources Grant Program:** I secured funding (a combination of one-time funding from the Provost and donor funding) to support grants for faculty to adopt, adapt, or

create OER. I have supported the Resource Sharing and Course Materials Manager and Course Materials Specialist in communicating the impact that OER have on student success, by lowering cost barriers and enabling all students to have their course materials by the first day of class. Since 2021, the program has achieved the following:

- Awarded \$228,000 in grants to faculty.
- Grant-funded materials are now being used in 517 sections, with an enrollment of 16,712 students.
- The estimated cost savings to students (assuming all students would have purchased the textbooks that OER materials replaced) is \$1.75 million. Per semester savings are estimated to be nearly half a million and growing as more OER materials are adopted.

5. Information Literacy Instruction

Aligned with WSU's Strategic Plan EDI, Retention and Completion, and Personal Connections and Academic Excellence goals

Library faculty continued to address feedback from their Program Review, specifically recommendations to examine the sustainability of the for-credit model of information literacy instruction and explore ways to share information literacy instruction with faculty in the disciplines.

- **ENGL 2015:** Library and English faculty continued to collaborate to improve curricular integration and reduce the duplication of effort in this co-taught course.
 - I continue to secure and provide funding for supplemental pay to support the extra work to prepare a co-taught course for those new to ENGL 2015 and when librarians are assigned new teaching partners.
 - I also secured funding to address pay inequities for overload and adjuncts. English instructors are paid (or get load credit) for 4 credits while library adjuncts and overload faculty were paid for 1 credit. The additional work of collaboration was compensated on the English side but not the library side. I worked with the Provost's Office to provide an additional .5 credit for overload and adjunct pay to address this.
 - I funded and facilitated a summer workshop for ENGL 2015 instructors (both library and English instructors) using a backward design model to refine integrated learning outcomes and create assignments and teaching activities that better address those learning outcomes. I received positive feedback for both supporting the dedicated time to engage in collaborative instructional design and for the workshop facilitation itself.
 - I continued to ensure that library faculty have a strong presence in ENGL 2015 courses, in compliance with the MOU with the English Department.
 - There remain significant issues with offering enough ENGL 2015 courses to meet student demand, including the assignment of library faculty sections at the last minute which makes preparation and collaboration difficult. Determining equitable teaching assignments across ENGL 2015, LIBS 1704, and subject-specific courses still needs to be addressed. These issues will be the focus on the ongoing planning for the changes to general education requirements and the renewal of the MOU with the English Department.
- **Concurrent Enrollment:** I secured funding from the Provost to hire a temporary instructor position to help oversee the library portion of the ENGL 2015 course in the high schools. The English instructors in the high schools needed more dedicated support to teach the information literacy content in the absence of school librarians. This has been very successful. The library CE instructor makes frequent visits to high schools for training and to provide instruction

directly to students, in collaboration with the library's information literacy coordinator.

- **LIBS 1504:** The test-out option of the general education information literacy requirement was suspended during the pandemic because of limited operations of the Testing Centers. As part of the library's equity audit, I asked the Teaching and Information Services Department to examine the DFWI rates for the test to see if it was having a disparate and negative impact on students. Since most students do not get college-level information literacy instruction in high school, the failure rate for the test was very high and had a disparate impact on underserved students. The department decided to discontinue the course.
- **Planning for General Education changes:** For the past two years, USHE has been working towards a major revision of the general education policy, which was approved in Fall 2023. The new policy reduces the number of credit hours to 27, with an optional institutional requirement of 3 credits. This policy change means that the 1-credit information literacy course that the library administers and teaches needs to be reconsidered, and possibly eliminated, as a WSU general education requirement.

In preparation for this possibility, I tasked the Teaching and Information Services Department and the library faculty in Special Collections and University Archives to work through three different information literacy instruction models: a 1-credit course (the status quo) which would need to be approved as part of the 3-credit institutional requirement; a completely non-credit model that would integrate information literacy across the curriculum through workshops, "one-shot" instructional sessions, and individual student research consultations tied to appropriate courses in all major programs and key general education courses like ENGL 2010; and a hybrid model in which library faculty might teach the information literacy portion of ENGL 2015 courses, first-year experience or seminar courses, as well as "one-shot" sessions integrated into other courses. The teaching team has met throughout the past year to critically examine the pros and cons of each approach for student learning and retention. The next step is to reach consensus on how to move forward with possible proposals to GEIAC and other campus stakeholders.

I have been co-facilitating some of these conversations with library faculty (including adjuncts) to help them explore and prepare for the considerable changes that would come with the elimination of the 1-credit information literacy requirement. I have also talked with my fellow deans and the provost about the importance of supporting library faculty through this potential change, including educating college faculty about the options for and importance of integrating information literacy in new ways into the existing curriculum. I continue to advocate for the essential role of library faculty in the educational mission of the university in all of these conversations, while highlighting the many roles that faculty librarians play in peer institutions. A potential change of this proportion has been unmooring and stressful for library faculty. I will continue to advocate on their behalf and provide support for the project of potentially re-imagining their work in information literacy instruction.

6. Budget Stability and Fundraising

- **Collection budget backfill:** I have consistently secured additional one-time funding to address annual price increases (up to 5%) for library journal subscriptions and other electronic resources. One-time funding is not a long-term solution, because if it is unavailable, we will

need to cancel subscriptions and/or reduce book and streaming media purchases. I continue to advocate for an increase to the base budget for library collections.

- **Aligned budget to new collection management policy:** I worked with the library's Collection Manager to implement the new policy. We shifted funding from some less frequently used journal subscriptions to streaming media, to meet increased faculty demand in that area. We ensured that our discovery mechanisms (specialized subject indexes) remain robust so that faculty and students can still discover articles from canceled journal subscriptions. We worked with the library's Resource Sharing Manager to ensure that her team has the support it needs to maintain speedy interlibrary loan services.
- **Small gains in expanding the library donor pool:** I worked with the Development Office to create case statements for affordability initiatives, including the textbook library, OER grants, and technology lending program. I secured donations from a new donor to support technology lending. The library also received a foundation grant to support no-cost course materials. This is an important step in diversifying the library's donor portfolio, which has heretofore been focused on collections, especially Special Collections and University Archives (SCUA). The donor relations for SCUA remains in excellent hands with the SCUA department heads.
- **E&G budget cuts:** Worked with the Provost and the Director of Academic Finance and Administration to minimize the impact of budget cuts in the library's base E&G budget through the use of one-time funding and reorganization. The library has been able to fund small equity increases for staff despite these budget cuts.

7. Organizational Effectiveness and Morale

The strains of the pandemic, the uncertainty of the general education changes, new legislative mandates, and budget cuts continue to impact the morale of library staff and faculty. This remains an area of deep concern for me, as I have observed the many ways in which library personnel have extended themselves without a restorative break for the last 4 years. I continue to advocate for improved pay and working conditions, while acknowledging that progress, especially in the area of salary, remains inadequate.

- **Salary equity model:** The library has made some progress in dedicating salary savings from retirements and turnover to advancing the staff salary equity model that we have been using since 2019. Through centrally- and library-funded equity raises, the library average ratio of actual-to-target salaries has increased from 90% to 97% in 2023. Both central HR and Library Council have focused "living wage" increases and limited equity raises on the lowest end of the salary ranges, which has produced compression for some library staff members who have been employed for more than a few years. Some of them are making only slightly more than people hired in the last year or two. Addressing this compression will be the focus of conversations with Library Council in upcoming budget planning sessions.
- **SCUA reorganization:** Special Collections and University Archives have been operating as two separate units for decades. They operated two separate reading rooms, which was confusing for patrons who did not know the difference between these two repositories of historical material. There was duplication in work, with staff in the two units doing identical tasks. The two units operated a single reading room during the pandemic, which led to the realization that they could have a greater impact as one unit, as well as recover much needed storage space. Working with Library Council, we prioritized one-time hourly and supplemental pay to complete a physical move of the collection and offices to the first floor in a shared space. The result has been reduced duplication in workflows and a staff re-organization that enabled the

reclassification of several positions from N26 to N27 to better reflect job responsibilities and expertise. There is also better access for the public and campus researchers in a common reading room and an improvement in unit team building and cohesion with shared space and a common vision for the department.

- **Resource Sharing and Course Materials Department Office move:** In collaboration with Library Council (the library's leadership team), we prioritized Repair and Replace (RR) funding to relocate this department to underutilized space on the second floor. The department had outgrown their offices with the expansion of course materials initiatives and document delivery as a key collection strategy.
- **Flexible work arrangements:** I continue to support and advocate for flexible work arrangements that enable the library to staff the many hours it is open, while also providing support for staff to have uninterrupted work time on projects.
- **One-on-one meetings:** When I first arrived at Stewart Library, I held one-on-one meetings with all library staff and faculty, so that I could hear their concerns and questions and feedback directly. I did follow-up meetings two years later. The pandemic interrupted this biennial tradition, but I have renewed these meetings in the last month. In my initials meetings, mainly with staff hired in the last two years, I am gratified to learn that there is a greater sense of community and support within departments (mainly a result of excellent department managers). I look forward to learning more as these meetings proceed about areas where I can continue to improve, especially in the area of communication and transparency.

8. Campus Leadership

In addition to participating in Dean's Council and other senior Academic Affairs leadership groups, I have played a leadership role in the following campus efforts.

- **Equity Audits:** Working with the former and current VP for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, I co-developed and refined the instrument currently being deployed in the campuswide equity audits that are a key goal in WSU's strategic plan. I am working with the implementation team to provide training and ongoing support for Academic Affairs units, including all of the colleges, as they complete the audits by the end of April. I will be working with this team to compile the results before July 1.
- **Course Fee Committee:** I have chaired the Course Fee Committee since Fall 2022. I led the committee through implementing process changes, including the need for more detailed cost estimate documentation that came as a result of the last state audit. I have received positive feedback from committee members and department chairs faced with the new audit requirements and the shift to Curriculog. They have expressed appreciation for my willingness to work with departments individually to meet the new requirements and to develop documentation standards that demonstrate how course fees are directly benefitting students.
- **Affordable Course Materials Task Force:** I have led this group since 2019 and it is reaching a good level of engagement and maturity. Most recently, the task force provided important feedback on the OER Strategic Plan, a potential proposal to mark courses as low- or no-cost in the catalog, assessment metrics, and communication and advocacy strategies.
- **First-Year Designated Courses working group:** I chair the working group on developing a proposal to identify courses that are commonly taken by first-year students and providing

support for faculty to "fortify" these classes with appropriate, integrated academic and social supports.

Areas for Improvement and Future Goals

I have already received some welcome feedback from staff and faculty on the following areas for improvement and greater attention.

- **Clarity and stability for library faculty navigating change:** Library faculty have experienced a profound amount of change in the last few years, with pandemic era teaching disruptions and organizational changes. The uncertain future of what the library teaching role will look like with changes to general education have been stressful, confusing, and destabilizing. I am committed to working with all library faculty, in the Teaching and Information Services Department and in Special Collections and University Archives, to clarify and address issues of faculty processes and governance, in addition to supporting any required changes to the information literacy instruction model. This includes working with campus administration and Faculty Senate to ensure that the PPM and other policy documents fully recognize and secure the essential role of library faculty at WSU no matter the outcome of the general education changes.
- **More communication about the "big picture":** I have received feedback from both faculty and staff that they appreciate my weekly update communications, but that sometimes they need to see the big picture on issues like the budget, the WSU strategic plan, and legislative changes. I am working on scheduling library town hall meetings to address these issues on a more regular basis, beginning with budget planning this spring.