



# A Message from Catherine

As I write this to you, the context in which we are operating and supporting research and student success has changed considerably. Early 2020 brought a global pandemic that required us all to adjust to a new, often challenging, daily reality. This report of activities for 2019/20 is a welcome opportunity to reflect on the extraordinary work of the Western Libraries team and to highlight stories of achievement, big and small, that have made a difference to the campus community.

Inside our annual report, you will read about the migration of our legacy catalogue to a new, collaborative library services platform and search tool with partners from across the Ontario Council of University Libraries. Staff from across the library system are to be congratulated for their efforts managing this complex data migration and system implementation that impacted nearly all areas of library service. The launch of Omni – the new, online search tool – provides fast, easy and enhanced access to millions of scholarly resources across the partner universities. Building upon stakeholder consultations, we completed the design development for the new Learning Commons and conducted a major collections management project to prepare for the first phase of the Weldon Library Revitalization. These demanding projects are significant accomplishments that promise to advance and enrich the virtual and in-person library experience for future generations.

Beyond these major undertakings, you will see that Western Libraries staff had a fulsome year. Our team conducted user experience studies, curated exhibitions, and digitized gems from special collections and archives. We worked to advance open access and sustainable publishing models, and continued to develop our collections to support scholarship. We provided data sets and expertise for statistical and geospatial analysis, and worked collaboratively to support research data management. And, we provided critical information literacy instruction to enhance students' learning outcomes and research skills.



I think you will agree that much was accomplished by mid-March, when, in response to the pandemic, the province required the closure of libraries and, soon after, the entire University. Along with the rest of campus, we responded swiftly and shifted to remote work and online delivery of collections and services to support the successful conclusion of the winter semester. We then adapted priorities to meet the transition to remote delivery of spring and summer courses and the resumption of the research enterprise. You can read all about this unanticipated final chapter of 2019/20 at the conclusion of this report.

Looking to the months ahead, Western Libraries will continue to respond to the needs of campus researchers, teachers and students amid pandemic circumstances. We will build on our online programs and services to showcase our breadth of research collections and expertise, while ensuring that safety and public health remain at the forefront of on-site library access.

Thank you for sharing the past year with us and for your continued engagement and support as we work together to define how to best support student success and research in these unprecedented times.

Catherine Steeves  
Vice-Provost and Chief Librarian

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## Contributors

Articles written by or adapted from: Matt Barry, Tom Belton, Magnus Berg, Katrina Fortner, Robert Graves, Jessica Jones, Julie Kiser, Jennifer Robinson, Harriet Rykse, Will Sharpe, and Kristi Thompson. Editing by Jennifer Robinson, Julie Kiser, and Katrina Fortner. Photographs by Nina Nouwens and Rayanne Tipert.





# Disappearing Data? Librarians to the Rescue!

Got data? Your options for storing, publishing and sharing it are about to change in Canada, thanks in part to the work of librarians.

“There’s so much going on,” says Research Data Management Librarian, Kristi Thompson.

“You’ve got policy changes and infrastructure development. One of the biggest concerns now is preservation – archiving research data that could otherwise be lost.”

As you’re reading this, Canada’s major funding agencies are developing a policy that will require researchers who collect research data using public funds to archive their data in a public data repository. Open data promotes research

transparency, facilitates collaboration, and allows data to be reused to make new discoveries. But for data to be accessible, researchers need a place to put it, and Canada has never had a national data archive. Librarians are working to solve this problem. Through a number of working and expert groups in the Canadian Association of Research Libraries, Canada’s data librarians have been driving the development of data infrastructure, working directly with software developers.

“We’re currently developing two archiving solutions,” explains Kristi. The first is the Federated Research Data Repository (FRDR). It’s a national system that will store really large



data sets – in the terabytes. “As a member of the policy team I was responsible for the collections policy and helped with several others, like the information security and the deaccession policies. On the development side, I’m a part of the user testing working group. We’re developing testing protocols to help us make sure that the interface is as user-friendly as possible.”

The second archiving solution in development is Dataverse North. While FRDR is for big data, Dataverse North is on a smaller scale. It’s a Canadian implementation of a very popular archiving system that was developed at Harvard. Individual institutions administer their own local Dataverses as part of an integrated system, and Western already has a Dataverse that can accept data from every Western-affiliated researcher.

Western hosts a number of data collections, on topics ranging from geomorphology to

urbanization. Eventually these collections will be rolled into the national network. That’s where Kristi comes in.

“I’ve been working on Dataverse North’s preservation policy. We do a lot of research when we develop these policies, and of course many archives around the world have dealt with similar issues. It’s important to make sure that we are covering all the bases and doing it in a way that’s adapted for the Canadian context,” said Kristi.

Open data is a key component of our commitment to open access and a priority for the University. Last fall, Western appointed its first Special Advisor to the President on Data Strategy, Mark Daley. Kristi, alongside the rest of our Research and Scholarly Communication team, is excited to partner with Mark to help campus researchers master research data management and preserve knowledge for future generations. **Q**

### **Meet Kristi Thompson, Research Data Management Librarian**

As a member of the Research and Scholarly Communication team, Kristi works with faculty and students from across campus to help them manage their research data and incorporate sound data practices into their research grants. She teaches workshops on data handling, administers Western’s data archiving software, and is known for her work on Canada-wide data infrastructure projects. Her favourite part of the job is digging into disorganized data. “I love the little data problems people bring me. I enjoy taking a pile of messy spreadsheets and showing people how to create order and structure, and how that makes it possible to derive meaning from data,” explains Kristi. Currently, she’s working with a faculty member on a database looking at historical weather through documentary evidence. “It’s fascinating to get these glimpses into people’s research.”





# Site Maps Migrations in the American Revolution

Travel back in time and across an ocean with the [Loyalist Migrations mapping project](#). It tells a timely tale: the journeys of thousands of families displaced by war and conflict.

The story begins in 1783, when the American Revolution shattered British control over the Thirteen Colonies and sparked a migration of approximately 60,000 Loyalists – colonists who remained loyal to the British Crown. Defeated and exiled, thousands of Loyalists travelled north and settled in British North America, present-day Canada. Approximately one in 10 Canadians can claim Loyalist heritage.

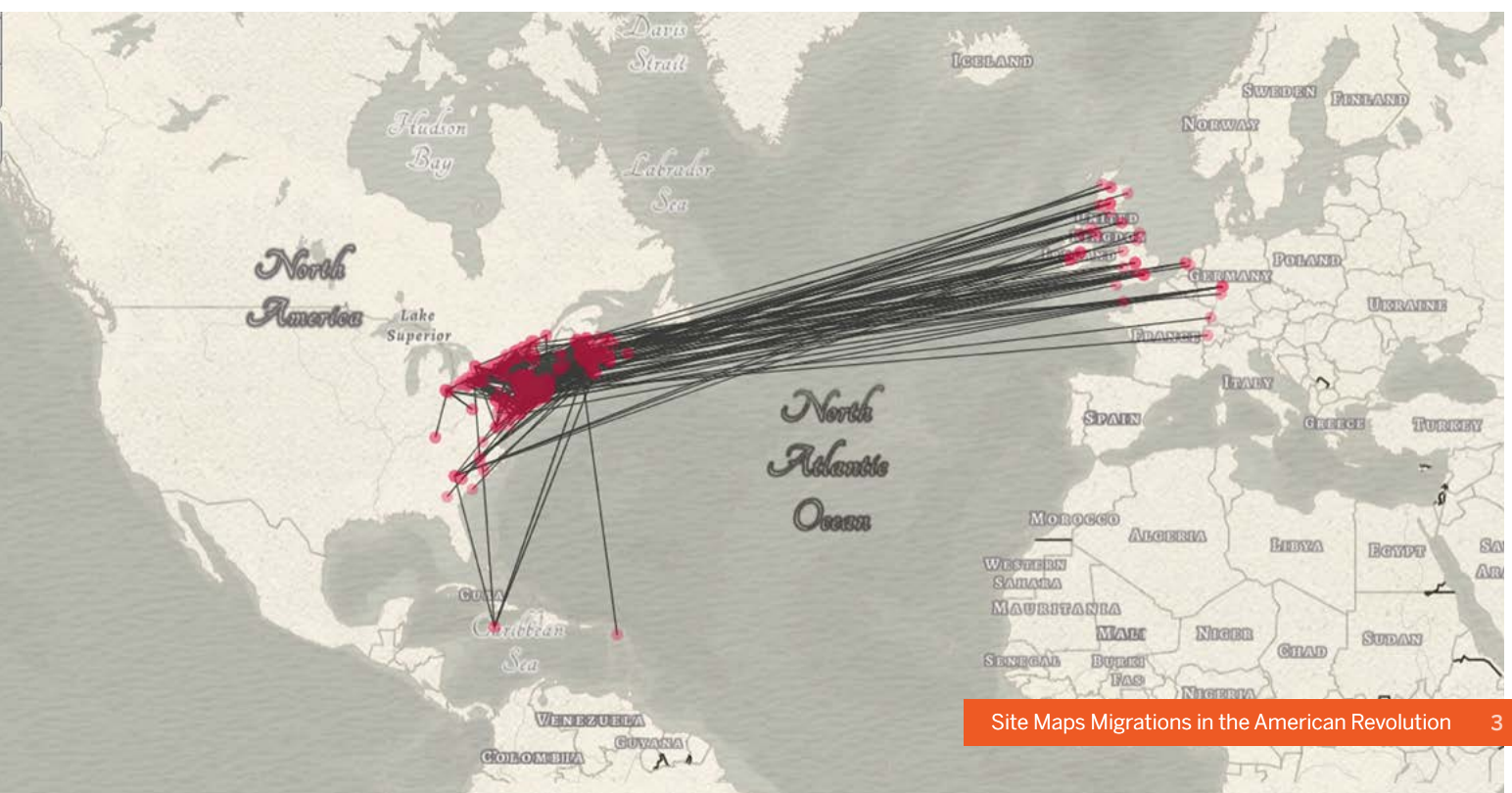
The Loyalist Migrations project plots the journeys of thousands of these Loyalist families. It's a collaborative venture between The United Empire Loyalists Association of Canada (UELAC), Dr. Timothy J. Compeau, students at the Huron Centre for Community History, and

Liz Sutherland, Western Libraries' Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Technical Specialist.

"I was fascinated by the story, by the movement of these people," said Dr. Compeau, a history professor at Huron University College. "Wouldn't it be interesting to visualize this migration?"

The web map is a stunning visualization. Lines span the Atlantic from Britain to the Northeastern United States and then disperse across North America. "Each of these lines represents a family," Dr. Compeau points out. "We can click on one and get a small snippet of a life turned upside down by war and displacement. These are not abstract names and dates: these are stories that still have a life."

The UELAC provided the family data and genealogy that made this project possible. Their directory of over 9,000 families who left the United States at the end of the American



Revolution provides the foundation for this interactive map.

“This past summer, our Community History research fellow, Tom Lang, meticulously went through the data provided by the UELAC, noting the places of birth, settlement, and death for hundreds of people,” Dr. Compeau explains. “It’s these events that are plotted on the map.”

Dr. Compeau also sees the Loyalists’ movements as part of a broader human migration story. “Once you’ve visualized data like this, you can begin to look for patterns. As the map fills in, we hope to see new patterns emerge that perhaps weren’t as clear before.”

Liz Sutherland built the project’s interactive web map. It was the first time she had applied GIS data to a field like human migration, and she immediately recognized the potential. “We’ve created something visual and spatial that can be applied to a lot of different humanities and social science research projects. It’s about more than just people — we could track animals, ideas, anything.”

For Liz and Dr. Compeau, Loyalist Migrations is an opportunity to involve the public; it’s a collaborative project that brings together academics, public historians, and community groups to share Canada’s collective history.

“The fact that the Map and Data Centre is here, that we have the resources to support research like this is incredible,” Dr. Compeau said. “The resources are here at Western to facilitate this kind of research. It really is amazing.” **Q**

The Research and Scholarly Communication team collaborates with researchers across campus to advance the creation, management, dissemination, and preservation of research and scholarship. They assist with open access publishing, GIS and statistical data, data management, researcher identifiers, research impact, and copyright.



# Advancing Research and Open Access

Western Libraries is proud to serve the research mission of the University. In addition to our collections, we have many colleagues who contribute their expertise to research at Western. In 2019/20, we saw an increase in cross-unit partnerships, enabling us to expand our capacity to engage in innovative and exciting initiatives.

For example, we are proud of our partnership with Western Research where, as part of the Knowledge Exchange School, we teach faculty how to increase their scholarly impact, preserve their work, and meet grant funding agency requirements. We show faculty the structure of the scholarly publishing system, how to preserve and disseminate their work and meet open access requirements through the repository, and how to incorporate techniques such as GIS and research data management planning into their research. The library plays an important role in the dialogue about knowledge exchange, how research benefits society, and how the production of new knowledge is cyclical.

Among our most significant activities to support the University's research mission was leadership in the Provost's Open Access Task Force. Established in spring 2019, the Open Access Task Force was charged with creating a better understanding of the needs and perspectives of Western's researchers and academics with respect to scholarly publishing, making recommendations for how Western can move towards more open methods of scholarly dissemination, and addressing financial sustainability and improved access to the scholarly output of Western's researchers.

Over the course of its first term, the Open Access Task Force identified and drew upon the expertise of many colleagues across Western Libraries and numerous faculties. One of the most interesting aspects of this exploration was a growing understanding of the scope of the variety of perspectives on open access and scholarly communications and the complicated issues surrounding academic publishing, academic freedom, and promotion and tenure.

At the end of its initial term, the Task Force issued [an interim report](#) and concluded that more time was needed to investigate the issues, to undertake consultation with campus partners, and to develop a comprehensive proposal as to how Western can best succeed in this important area. In recognition of this, the group's mandate has been extended into 2021. We're excited to continue this work that champions open access and the transformation of scholarly communication. Q







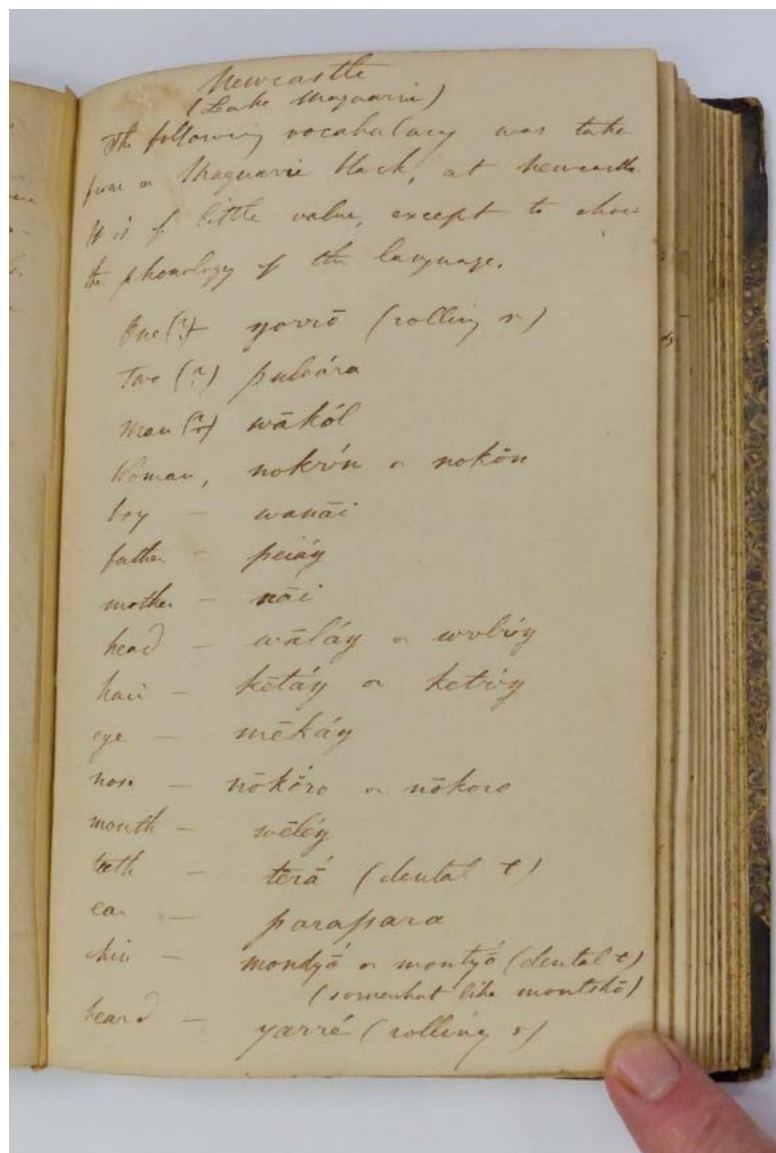
# Rare Notebook Journeys to Australia

Approximately 180 years after its creation, a modest-looking notebook containing a unique set of Aboriginal linguistic data has made its way [back to Australia](#) after being in Canada since the 1850s. How did the notebook arrive here? For answers, we turn to its creator, Horatio Hale.

Hale was an American ethnographer who served on the United States Exploring Expedition to the Pacific Ocean between 1839 and 1842. Hale's role was to gather information about the languages of the peoples indigenous to the Pacific. He compiled this data in multiple notebooks, recording words that he and others gathered from their contacts, along with notes on heritage, anthropology, and geography. Hale eventually married a Canadian, Margaret, and settled in southwestern Ontario, where he practiced law and raised a family until he died in 1896.

Hale's notebook, "Notes on the Natives of Australia and their Dialects," was one of many he kept on the expedition and contains the earliest known records of endangered Australian Aboriginal languages. Its unique record of vocabularies and dialects is of significant cultural importance to Australian Aboriginal people, as many languages are no longer used, or are repressed, after years of colonization and residential schooling.

While most of Hale's notebooks are scattered across the globe in various repositories, this particular notebook found its way to Western Libraries' Archives and Special Collections (ASC). In 1940, decades after Hale's death, a family descendant donated the notebook to Western



⌘ Example of Horatio Hale's notebook.

University. It remained here until summer 2019 when it made the return voyage to Australia.

We partnered with The State Library of New South Wales in Sydney to loan Hale's notebook to be part of an exhibit, *Living Language: Country, Culture, Community*, co-curated by its Indigenous Engagement Branch with Elders and language custodians. The loan was then extended so the book could go "on tour" to enable Aboriginal

elders to see evidence of their ancestral languages from the early 1840s. Unfortunately, this tour never took place due to the COVID-19 pandemic; however, the State Library has digitized the notebook to facilitate virtual conversations.

“The possibility of taking the time to present this material to [Aboriginal] communities outside of an exhibition context is an exciting one for our Indigenous staff and for the relevant communities” said New South Wales State Librarian, Dr. John Vallance. “Consultation and recent conversations with various Elders show that there is a great need to allow more time for Elders to work with original materials that have been derived from their language and culture. This is particularly true of materials which have

not been accessible to them physically or online such as the Hale notebook.”

While ASC has extensive experience with international loans, shipping a one-of-a-kind artifact halfway around the world was no easy feat. “There’s never been the level of detail and documentation and handling as with this exercise,” former Western University Archivist Robin Keirstead told Western News. For the team, there’s no question it was worth it. The loan stands out as an example of how international collaborations can go beyond research opportunities to make an important cultural impact, and ensure that the words and languages of the world will not be lost to time. 🌐

## New Site is Next Chapter in Barnett’s Story



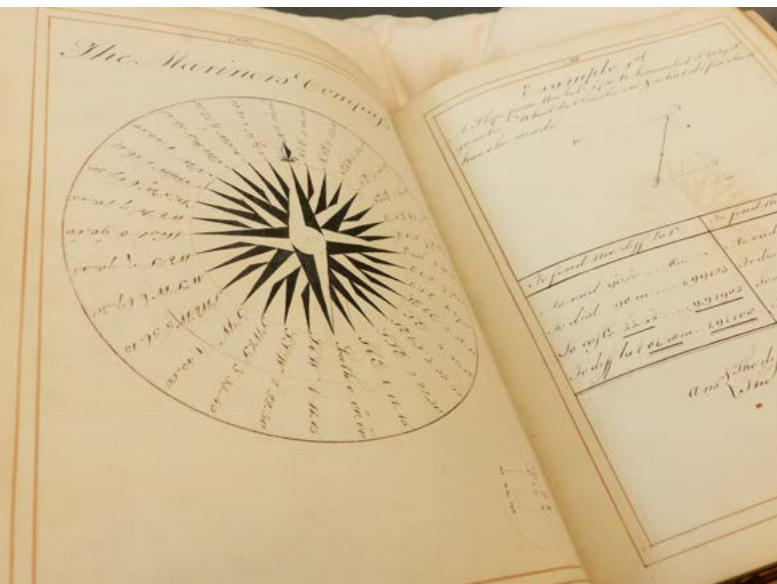
In 1918, John Davis Barnett donated 40,000 books and other items to Western, turning our 3,000 volume collection into an academic library. In 2018, we celebrated the 100th anniversary of his gift and with the generous support of our donors, developed the Barnett Legacy Digitization Project. For 2019/20, we launched the [Western Libraries Digitized Collections website](#), an important initial step towards Barnett’s goal of making every page available to “any earnest seeker of knowledge.”

With funds raised through the Barnett Legacy Digitization Project, we purchased a high-resolution scanner — affectionately dubbed “Scandalf” by library staff — and hired a Master of Library and Information Science student, Rebecca Power.

« Rebecca pictured with “Scandalf,” our new high-resolution scanner.

Rebecca worked as a co-op student under the supervision of Digitization and Digital Preservation Librarian, Leanne Olson. She digitized three manuscripts from Barnett's donated collection, all unique items from Western's Special Collections.

The works include a two-volume set on Jewish history, *Jewish Antiquities*, written in a combination of shorthand, Ancient Greek, Latin, Hebrew, and English; *The Elements of Navigation*, handwritten by Patrick Crichton, a student from early nineteenth century England; and a volume that contains title entries from the personal library of Bishop Isaac Hellmuth, founder of Huron University College and Western. All three of these manuscripts are excellent examples of how a book can be valuable not just for its content, but also its form as an artifact.



⌘ Example from *The Elements of Navigation*.

"We chose to digitize these manuscripts because we wanted to make sure we were presenting something completely unique," said Deb Meert-Williston, Special Collections and Rare Books Librarian. Deb believes that digitizing unique items in the collection will "increase the reputation of Western as having an important library research

The Archives and Special Collections team acquires, preserves, and provides access to special collections and archives — including rare and unique materials in all formats — to support the teaching and research missions of the University. They also engage with and welcome use of the archives and special collections by members of the broader community.

collection, as well as assure our donors that their contributions to the library are being utilized and appreciated."

She also sees the site as valuable to the growing field of Barnett research. "There are lots of people doing work on Barnett, all these different angles, and I see this website as a potential hub to connect these researchers with his collections and with each other."

When building the website, Rebecca envisioned collaboration between curious readers and researchers alike. "The site is open-access, anyone can see and use it. Especially with the coded Jewish antiquity lectures, we want to see if anybody knows anything that can help unlock these books. They're a fascinating puzzle waiting to be solved."

Now that her co-op term is complete, Rebecca looks forward to more work in this field. "I'd love to be part of a digitization team. There's a prestige that comes with showing off a collection, and I want to be a part of that. Digitization projects also have the potential to make these amazing books available to everyone — it's about open access and sharing information."

Rebecca echoes the essence of Barnett's legacy. And with digitization, we can share more knowledge than he could have ever dreamed. 🌐





# Bringing the Past to the Present

Archives and Special Collections (ASC) curated or oversaw several public exhibits in The John A. Schweitzer Gallery and The D.B. Weldon Library Reference Hall throughout 2019/20.

In the spring, undergraduate public history students curated an exhibit on the history of nursing at Western as part of a class assignment.

ASC staff created an exhibit displayed in University College for Founder's Day in March that was later installed in the Schweitzer Gallery until September.

In the fall, two new exhibits with gothic and macabre themes were installed: The ASC-curated *Tonics, Potions and Elixirs* and *Western's Discovery of Witches*, curated by Caroline Diezyn.

We also hosted an exhibit on Walt Whitman, featuring rare items from Western's collections and assembled by the students in *American Cult Classics*, an undergraduate English course offered by Professor Joshua Schuster.



✧ Alyssa and her class preparing the *Black Thought in the Great Lakes Region 1790-1890* exhibit.

In the winter term, a new exhibit was installed to commemorate 100 years of nursing at Western.

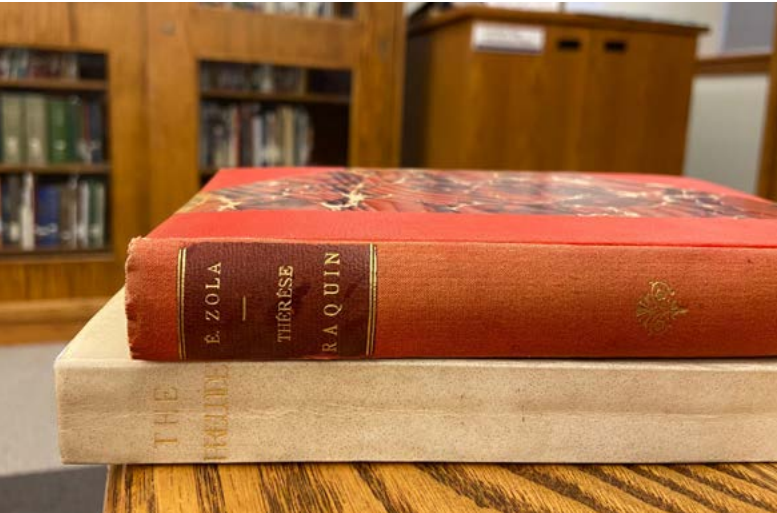
And graduate students from English Professor Alyssa MacLean's *Representing Slavery* course created *Black Thought in the Great Lakes Region 1790-1890*, an exhibit featuring rare books and archives from our collections. 📖

✧ Checking out the operating room diorama that was part of the exhibit commemorating 100 years of nursing at Western.



# Featured Acquisitions

Each year, Western Libraries continues to build world-class collections with the addition of print and digital materials that support the teaching, learning, and research of our campus community. What follows is a snapshot of significant acquisitions and a few gems acquired in 2019/20.



## Archives and Special Collections

### ***Thérèse Raquin, La Terre, and L'Assommoir, Emile Zola***

In consultation with Dr. Genevieve DeViveros from the department of French Studies, Deb Meert-Williston facilitated the purchase of three rare, early volumes by author Emile Zola (*Thérèse Raquin*, *La Terre*, and *L'Assommoir*) from booksellers in Canada and France. These volumes support teaching and research within the French department.

### ***The Prelude, William Wordsworth***

Using funds donated by Dr. James Good, Western Libraries purchased a 1915 First Doves Press edition of *The Prelude* by William Wordsworth from a bookseller in England. This rare edition, limited to 155 copies on handmade paper, continues to build on the Dr. James Good Collection of William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

## General Collections

### **JSTOR Journal Packages**

Aligning with our strategy to provide permanent, stable access to digital back files of academic journals, Western Libraries purchased five disciplinary packages of journal content from JSTOR. Ownership of these files enhances access to critical journal content for teaching and research across a number of faculties, most strongly supporting Arts and Humanities, Music, and Social Sciences.

### **Harvard Business Collection**

A collection of over 600 e-books published by Harvard Business Review Press, providing unlimited user access with no turnaways, regular e-book additions, and an optimized search and reading experience.

### **TumbleBook Library**

A curated database of children's e-books with over 1,100 titles for elementary school children, including animated and talking picture books, chapter books, graphic novels, non-fiction books, and books in Spanish and French. This collection supports students in the Bachelor of Education program.

### **STEM and Medicine E-books**

Western users will have access to the complete catalogue of e-book collections from several STEM and Medicine publishers for 12 months, after which Western Libraries will retain the highest used titles in perpetuity. This is one example of demand-driven acquisition, which initially sees users having access to over 61,000 e-books from American Chemical Society, Elsevier, IGI Global, and Wiley.

### ***Future History: Reclaiming Our History, Harnessing Our Future***

In response to requests for more streaming video content, Western Libraries purchased a number of video series including the documentary, *Future History: Reclaiming Our History, Harnessing Our Future*, which explores Indigenous knowledge and indigenizing the future. 📺

# Connecting Through Collections

Developing and managing collections is a foundational role for libraries. Although building strong collections to support research, scholarship, and teaching largely takes place behind the scenes, it's key to upholding the academic mission of Western University. Every year, we acquire the latest publications and manage ongoing subscriptions and licenses to a variety of content. A selection of these acquisitions from the past year is showcased on [page 10](#).

Western Libraries collections management and development is guided by a series of [public collections policies and strategies](#) to support the academic and research profile of the University, refined over time by librarians and archivists. The broader collecting environment, characterized by information over-abundance, increasing costs, and space constraints informs these policies. In 2019/20, we undertook a number of collections projects designed to continue connecting scholars with the research they need to be successful and to manage within available resources.


The [serials review project](#) that began in 2019/20 aims to identify the most relevant journal collection for Western and to manage costs within budget, in the face of unsustainable annual publisher price increases. Through this project, we are identifying content that brings highest value to the scholarship at Western and exploring new ways of securing access to content, such as through evidence-based acquisition and articles on demand. We appreciate the contribution faculty and graduate students made to this process over these past months, and look forward to continued engagement as we complete the review in the coming year.

In 2019/20, we conducted a significant collections maintenance project in Weldon Library to enable the construction of a new Learning Commons ([page 21](#)), following the principles outlined in our [Physical Collection Preservation and Storage Strategy](#). This project involved the movement of low-use materials to retrievable storage and preservation facilities. A significant lesson learned for Western Libraries was the missed opportunity to fully engage with faculty and effectively

communicate the collections management decisions necessary to support the revitalization. The collections shifts and the movement of materials to offsite storage and the [Keep@Downsview](#) preservation facility raised concerns in some faculties and led to discussion and debate on the Senate floor.

Recognizing our shared commitment to Western's collections, we worked to improve communication channels between librarians and faculty members, including participation in newly formed faculty and department-based library committees, and continued participation in departmental meetings and Faculty Councils.

We have also released a new [collections strategy](#). This strategy provides overarching context and clarity to the work of managing library collections, and highlights the different ways in which librarians engage with faculty on collections activities. It outlines the principles and policies we've adopted to develop and manage general collections.

World-class research requires world-class collections. Guided by continually updated collections strategies, reflecting the evolving higher education, research, and scholarly publishing landscape, and informed by key stakeholders, Western Libraries collections continue to advance student success and the research of today and tomorrow. 

Collections Management, Discovery, and Access is committed to providing seamless and convenient access to information to support research, scholarship, and teaching. They work with users to select and acquire materials to meet their changing needs and ensure thoughtful management and preservation of resources for future scholars.





# Omni – Discover it All

In December, Western's access to library materials increased by millions of items thanks to Omni, our new academic search tool. An outcome of the Ontario Council of University Libraries Collaborative Futures initiative, Omni provides fast and easy access to a vast collection of diverse print and digital academic resources from across 14 partner institutions.

After more than 20 years, Western's previous catalogue was outdated and unable to realize the full potential of our networked digital world. Omni provides direct access to online resources at the article level and will be able to provide seamless delivery of materials to any location selected by the user at any partnering institution. With this shared system, scarcity of general materials is less of a concern and loan periods are now 120 days with unlimited renewals, and fines have been eliminated.


Omni also offers enhanced features for many items including book reviews, author information, and virtual browsing – a feature that has been particularly useful since the closure of library shelves due to COVID-19. Browsing in Omni enables our users to see print and digital items together on a virtual shelf for the most complete discovery experience possible and integrates

options for requesting these materials seamlessly from within item records.

Skilled staff members across many departments, including acquisitions, cataloguing, information technology, and user services dedicated hours of time over many months, including evenings, weekends, and holidays, to bring this project to life for the Western community and beyond.

For our Discovery, Description, and Metadata team in particular, the transition was a massive undertaking. In one year they cleaned over 24 years of cumulative data to prepare more than 11-million records for migration to the new system. Team lead Christina Zoricic describes it as a once-in-a-career migration. "There were a lot of highs and lows," she said. "As a team, we would celebrate each new thing we learned and take the mistakes we made as an opportunity to learn and try doing something new."

Omni went live in December and, as is common with any large-scale system migration, some significant clean up of records was required, particularly related to e-resource links, post-launch. The support of our users was critical in helping us to identify and address problems with e-resource access. We will be working to continually improve the user experience of our new academic search tool.

With Omni, Western Libraries can offer broader access to resources for our communities and explore new ways of discovering information. Rather than working in isolation, Omni enables us, with our partners, to consider innovative ways to provide enhanced and increased access to world-class resources. We'll have the common infrastructure needed to work together in new ways, share expertise, and collaborate more efficiently in managing and preserving our collections. 



# Adventures in Experiential Learning



## **Jessica Jones, User Services Co-op Student**

During my co-op placement, I assisted users at the C.B. “Bud” Johnston Library and helped them navigate Omni, the newest library search tool. I also helped the Content Management, Discovery, and Access team with serial and database reviews, evaluations, and compiled a list of resources for a Recreational Resources Research Guide.

The shift to providing online assistance and working from home due to COVID-19 provided me with a unique experience. I witnessed the library adapt to ever-changing situations to continue providing access to integral resources and services. My co-op has influenced my outlook on librarianship. It’s re-affirmed my desire to work within collections management and helped me realize my interest in working directly with users.



## **Magnus Berg, Archives and Special Collections Co-op Student**

Working for Western Libraries’ Archives and Special Collections (ASC) allowed me to grow both professionally and academically while pursuing my Master of Library and Information Science. I completed several projects, including arranging and describing archival fonds, providing reference services, and performing outreach in person and through social media. I also learned how to create research guides and digital exhibits, including a LibGuide on primary source literacy, an exhibit on the centenary of nursing education at Western, and a digital acquisition and exhibition site that collects community materials related to the COVID-19 pandemic. I learned so much from the archivists and librarians in ASC and can’t wait to apply the skills I gained in my new position as a Digital Asset Archivist!



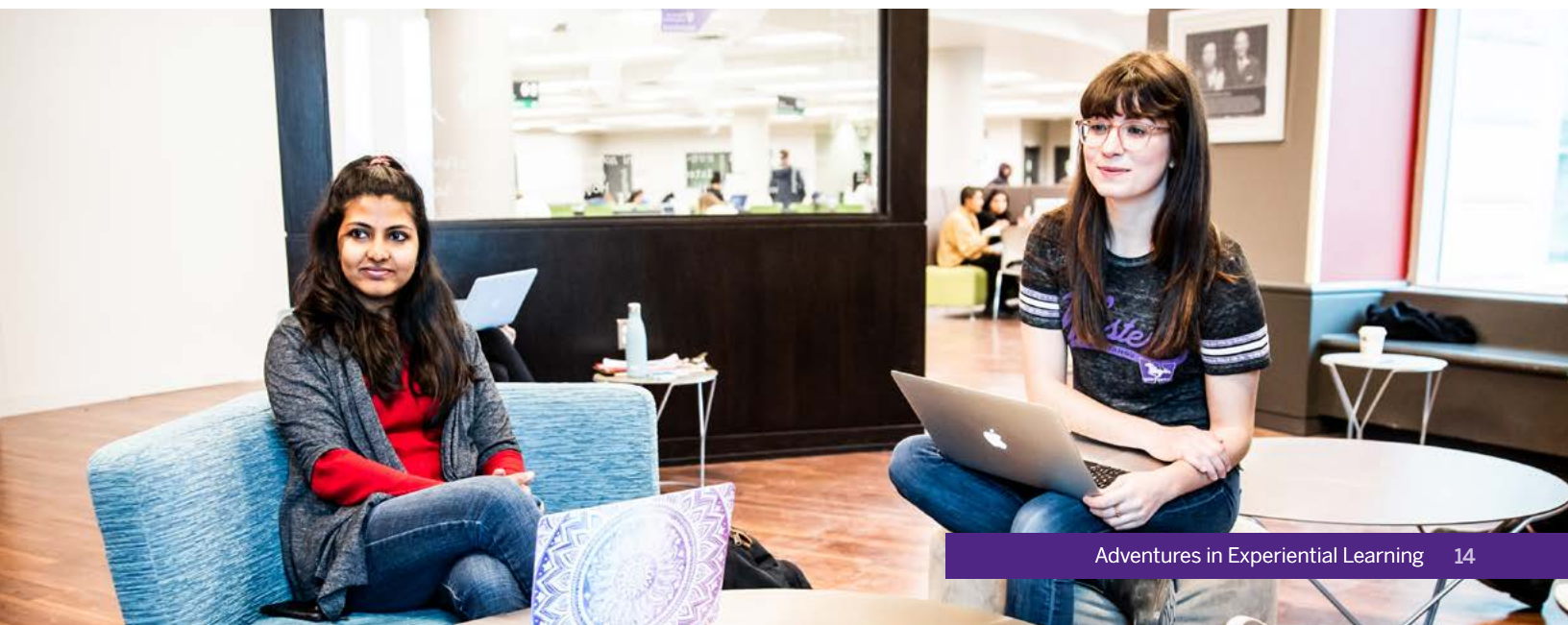
### **Will Sharpe, Marketing and Communications Intern**

I spent eight months as a marketing and communications intern with Western Libraries, and I couldn't imagine a better learning experience. I benefited from a behind-the-scenes look at the library system and I've come to appreciate it as a truly special place.

My tasks focused on drafting copy and assisting in the production of graphics for social media and other communications. I completed several projects that I'm very proud of, including news articles about the Barnett Legacy Digitization Project and Loyalist Migration Project – the latter of which was published by Western News.

Almost all of my projects at Western Libraries spanned departments, and I owe much of my experience to the wonderful people that work there. My colleagues pushed me to take on projects outside of my comfort zone, and they helped me feel like a valuable addition to the team.

Western Libraries understands the importance of experiential learning and we are committed to providing meaningful opportunities for students to develop their skills and strengthen their employability. We are grateful for the fresh ideas and modern skills our students bring to the table and for the many meaningful contributions they make to our organization.





# Putting the “You” in User Experience

While it's easy to think of the library as the place you go to pick up books, in reality the modern library has many moving parts. Over the past year, Western Libraries welcomed more than one million visitors to our physical spaces and fulfilled almost 69,000 service desk requests, helping in-person visitors find materials, learn how to use library technology and locate resources, and access study and meeting areas. Online, we had more than one million visits to our website, where users reached out for online support with an additional 39,257 questions for staff.

User Services designs and delivers a suite of virtual and in-person library services that support the teaching, learning, and research goals of the Western community. The team continually studies and assesses user behaviours, needs, and interactions to design services that deliver an optimal user experience.

The User Experience team supports evidence-based decisions about the library, keeping user perspectives, and observed behaviours at the forefront when it comes to the design and development of library spaces and services.


Western Libraries can be a complicated environment, with a number of services and a variety of digital and material resources and collections available via multiple channels. For the librarians and staff who support these services every day, it can be easy to forget the challenges of navigating between them. To ensure we're

providing a great experience, we turn to the expert on using the library: you.

In February 2020, our User Experience (UX) team launched the first UX Café. Armed with a sign, a laptop, a box of granola bars, and a lot of coffee, UX Librarian Matt Barry sat down at The D.B. Weldon Library's front entrance and asked passing students to try their hand at searching using Omni, the new library search tool.

“The goal of the UX Café is to make talking to users a more accessible part of how we offer our services,” said Matt. “When the Library is busy making sure our search tool works, it's hard to make the time to set up a big user study to assess that it's working effectively. By having the UX Café as a running event that happens weekly, we can quickly transform questions about what works, or doesn't, into answers based on real users' experiences.”

The UX Café ran three sessions before the COVID-19 pandemic limited in-person library access, making it difficult to keep meeting face-to-face with students. But in that time, we learned about areas where students were getting stuck when using Omni, what draws students to events on campus, and what works or doesn't work when trying to log into databases that require separate passwords. In all of these cases, talking to students helped us discover problems, and arrive at solutions, that we may not have otherwise.

Regardless of what the world looks like, we want to be sure to provide the best Western Libraries experience possible and we're continually consulting experts – our users – when it comes to what it's like to use the library and how to improve every interaction. 



### Meet Matt Barry, UX Librarian

Matt and the rest of the UX team work with librarians, students, faculty, and others from across campus to understand the ways our users interact with our programs and services, identify user issues and work to fix them, and look for gaps between Western's strategic goals and the help that we're actually providing to our users.

Matt's passion for adopting a user-centered design methodology comes from the belief that the strongest form of expertise is the experience of actually using a service, participating in a program, or living in a city.

For Matt, any good solution relies on understanding specific problems through lived experience, and seeking out and amplifying the solutions that users come up with for themselves.

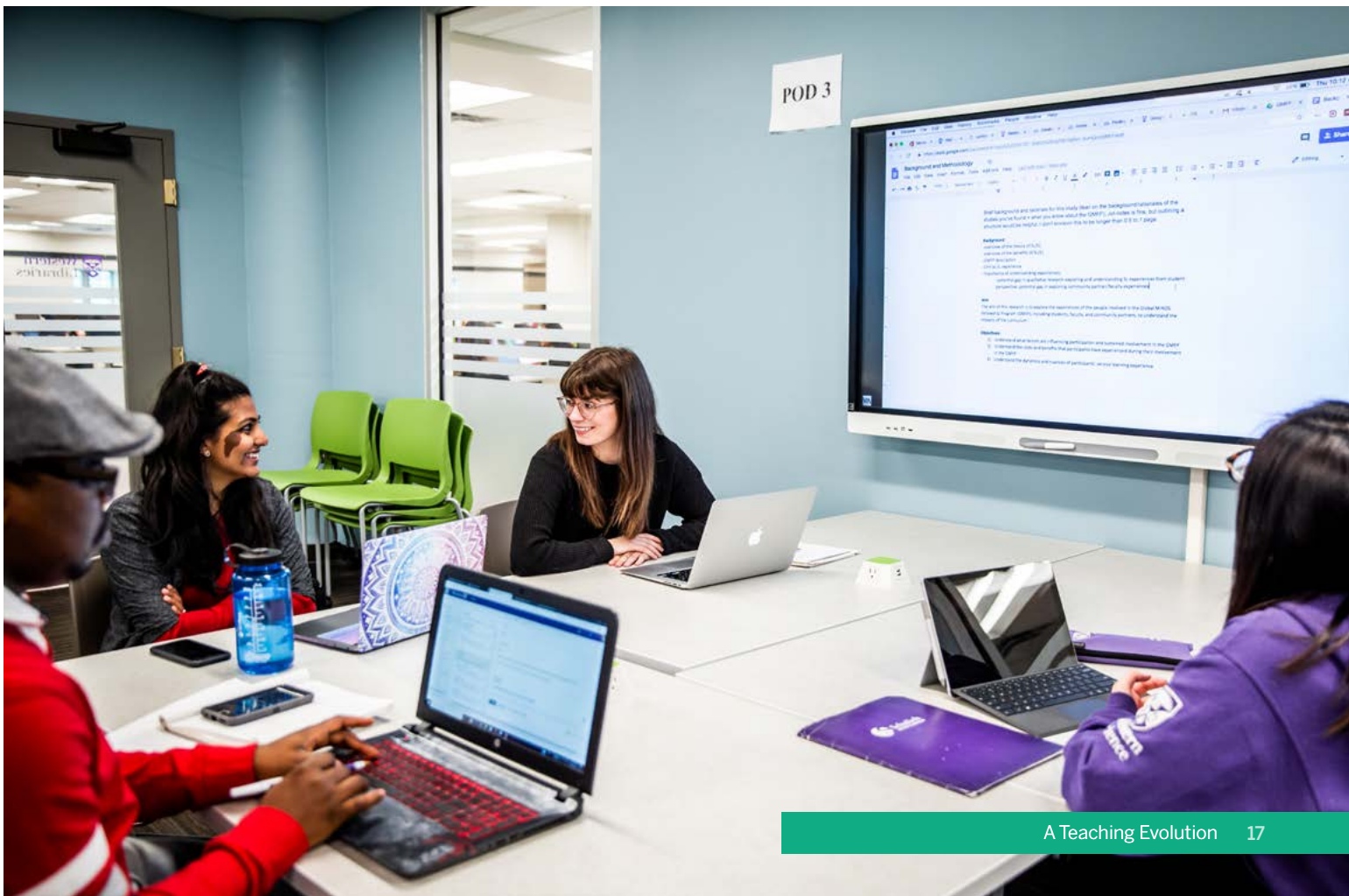


# A Teaching Evolution

This year saw a complete redesign of the Taylor Instruction Room, Western Libraries' primary lab for information literacy instruction. The renewed space is no longer rows upon rows of computers but is instead a dynamic and collaborative learning environment equipped with six large screens that can be turned into virtual whiteboards or for students to connect their devices to, to show their work. Surrounding the screens are movable tables and chairs to allow for more flexibility and collaboration. What once was a dull, boring area that offered little in terms of a unique learning experience is now a new, technologically driven space focused on active learning for students and staff.

In total, 221 classes with more than 7,800 participants were led by Western Libraries over the past year. A perfect example of how the Taylor Instruction Room was used to its full potential as part of this programming is with Writing 1030G, a course for nursing students that teaches them how to research and write scholarly papers throughout their nursing career, both in school and in the workforce. Students are required to write and research an academic paper, and the research component is where the library comes in.

Each winter, Western Libraries provides a session dedicated to teaching nursing students how to develop a research topic and then, using the library website and the databases Western







Libraries subscribes to, find literature to help them write their papers. In the updated Taylor space, we first split the class up into six groups, each with their own screen; the screens then turned into a virtual whiteboard where the groups developed answerable research questions and began to brainstorm concepts and keywords for their literature searches. The results were lively, active learning sessions that had students engaging not only with their assigned group, but also the instructor and other groups to help clarify their research topic and grow their list of search terms. Individual groups could also share their whiteboard with the class and discuss how they developed their topic and their list of terms.

After this process, students were given a quick demonstration on how to search one of the databases and shown how to connect one group member's laptop to their screen. Each group then worked in the database to search for their topic. By doing the searches live and together as a group, the students can confidently search for their topic with assistance from the instructor when needed.

Feedback from instructors and students is often positive, but this year the instructors were especially impressed with the new space and the way we had restructured the class. The final result of this important session is a group of students who are now able to develop and research an academic paper with confidence. The skills these students have learned will help them not only throughout their schooling, but also be useful as they graduate and enter the health care workforce and begin their own research. 🔄

The Teaching and Learning team creates learning experiences that empower students to become successful graduates who are information literate and able to achieve their full potential as global citizens and leaders.

# Connections and Community



## #1Lib1Ref

In February, we partnered with FIMS Graduate Library to host a citation-a-thon in The D.B. Weldon Library. #1Lib1Ref is a campaign that invites users to improve the quality of Wikipedia articles by adding missing citations. Many of the attendees had never edited on Wikipedia before. As a result of the campaign, we added 17 new editors and 350 new citations to Wikipedia, earning us the top spot among academic libraries in Ontario, and fourth across Canada.

## Indigenous Literary Reading

In January, we had the privilege of welcoming Janet Marie Rodgers to The D.B. Weldon Library Atrium for a reading of her work, as well as an interview with Indigenous graduate student Jennifer Komorowski.

Janet is a Mohawk/Tuscarora writer from Six Nations Ontario and has held residencies in Edmonton, Vancouver, and Santa Fe. We collaborated with the Indigenous Student Centre to host this event, and it was a great success. Janet read from her key works, and Jennifer led a fascinating discussion. We're proud to partner with the Indigenous Student Centre and continue to highlight the diverse voices on campus.



## Rosé Exhibit and Events

In January, we held a public concert and academic panel to compliment the *Alma and Arnold Rosé: Only the Violins Remain* exhibit, which celebrated the life and work of two musicians who fell victim to the Nazi regime in World War II.


The events were a great success and the exhibit was the result of an international collaboration with the Haus der Geschichte Österreich (a branch of the Austrian National Library) and the Royal Academy of Music in London, England, to explore the legacy of the Second World War through music. With over 35 documents from our Gustav Mahler-Alfred Rosé Collection on display, we demonstrated the rich research potential of our Special Collections. ☺

# Pivoting in a Pandemic

While it only affected two months of the 2019/20 academic year, the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic had a profound impact on the campus community, including Western Libraries. In the middle of our winter term, we were forced to close our doors, and with them, access to our on-site services, including print collections. There is perhaps no other event in our organization's history that challenged us more professionally and personally. We worked at lightning speed, with ever-changing information, to expand digital access and services to enable students to finish their term. In many ways, we were already well positioned to deliver services online. For decades we have been building robust online services and digital collections to meet the demands of modern life. Even still, we knew we'd have to adapt to continue to support the teaching, learning, and research needs of our community.

answered by staff in March and April, a significant increase over the typical number of inquiries, as we made sure our users could get help no matter where they were working. Information literacy classes also went virtual using new tools like Zoom to reach students, and librarians moved specialized research consultations online.

Without a doubt our biggest achievement during this time were the enhancements made to our digital collections. We quickly converted a number of print-only required course readings into digital options, and our Collections and Content Strategies team rose to the occasion by exploring a number of strategies to enhance the general digital collection for students, staff, and faculty unable to access campus. Where possible, we removed restrictions on simultaneous users, which allows more users to access content in e-books and e-journals at the same time. We added over 300,000 new e-books to our collection – with 250,000 free from rights restrictions allowing for a flexible user experience. We added over 6,000 new videos for streaming to help enhance online teaching and learning. In addition, we purchased many resources on request and continue to do so.

We've come a long way since the beginning of the pandemic and we continue to adjust our services as the situation evolves. We look forward to reflecting back on the lessons we've learned along the way in the 2020/21 edition of our annual report. One thing we know for certain? We'd never get through it without our exceptional staff that have stepped up to provide the best possible service in the age of COVID, and our community's patience and willingness to embrace new ways of experiencing library services and collections. 



⌘ Staff creating a social media post to promote our library@uwo.ca email address.

Adapting our service started with equipping our staff to work effectively from home, a new experience for many. Once set up with the proper technology, our team took quickly to exclusively using our Chat service to help students complete their course work and research papers online. Through our Chat, nearly 1,000 questions were



# Weldon Library Revitalization: From Consultation to Design

In 2019/20, our most significant and long-term project – the revitalization of The D.B. Weldon Library (Weldon) – continued to progress with essential planning for phase one renovations.

After consultation with campus stakeholders in spring 2019, the project team spent the following months using the insights gathered to confirm and revise projects, initiate design development, and to conduct a technical and engineering review of the building to help inform initial cost estimates. In the fall, the projects approved by the Board of Governors for inclusion in this phase of construction were a learning commons, the fifth floor renovation for staff and student space, compact shelving installation, and essential infrastructure upgrades.

In October, we invited students, staff, and faculty to a pop-up reveal of initial designs for the new two-level Learning Commons, a priority project to transform the current Reference Hall and mezzanine. The reinvigorated Learning Commons will enhance and expand student learning spaces and provide a place for integrated academic support programming delivered by our team and Student Experience partners.

At the pop-up, guests reiterated their wish list for the space: more study spaces, comfortable and flexible furniture for solo and group study, easy access to power outlets, and lots of natural light. We also heard about the importance of library collections and the need to maintain appropriate, physical materials in Weldon to support browsing, coursework, and research. A solution to the practical concern of continued onsite collection growth is through the installation of compact shelving, scheduled for the coming year. To round off the design review process, we held a focus group with students for an initial exploration of Learning Commons furniture options.

In the winter of 2020, Perkins+Will, the architecture firm leading the Weldon revitalization, presented modified designs to the project team. The onset of the pandemic temporarily halted construction work, but headway has been made. With construction specifications for the project now complete, the process to identify a builder is set to begin with a goal of tackling staff space construction in early 2021 and starting the Learning Commons construction that spring.

Like any good building project, it's best to measure twice and cut once. This is a once-in-a-generation renovation and we need to get it right. For Western Libraries that means continued and improved engagement with stakeholders, taking time to consider their perspectives, and building consensus on how our new spaces should look and function. With the help of our partners, we are ready and excited to begin the next phase of the Weldon renovation with confidence. 🌱





## Western Libraries

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