



Western  Libraries
Annual Report | 2022/23



A Message from Catherine

The 2022/23 academic year was the first year of Western Libraries' new strategic plan, [Forward Together](#). This plan is ambitious, and I am pleased to share with you this snapshot of what has been accomplished so far

by the librarians, archivists and expert staff of Western Libraries.

The LibQUAL+ survey provides Western Libraries with informative feedback from students, faculty and staff regarding how well library collections, services and spaces are meeting expectations. The results will directly impact how we work together and evolve services to advance research and student success.

Another new program, the Library Student Ambassadors, enhances the student experience in many ways. The ambassadors highlight for other students how the library supports academic success and engages with students to partner in the creation of programming and services that reflect students' diverse needs.

The new library curriculum has been put into practice by librarians in partnership with faculty. It fosters the development of library research skills and new knowledge that is informed by values that advance equity, diversity, and inclusion. The open educational resources grant and support program provides instructors with the resources they need to create or modify OERs for their courses and improve the accessibility of higher education for students.

Plans for the next phase of the Weldon Library revitalization project showcase how

library facilities are evolving to enhance the student experience and support Western's strategic growth.

The efforts of the Archives to repatriate records to the Six Nations of the Grand River exemplifies Western Libraries' commitment to create an inclusive library that values Indigenous peoples, perspectives, and ways of knowing.

A team of researchers at Western Libraries are advancing the library's commitment to environmental stewardship and sustainability by encouraging eco-friendly practices. The mapping project in El Salvador and an expedition across the Sierra Nevada mountains illustrate how library expertise and information technologies such as GIS expand traditional notions of the contribution to research Western Libraries can make.

This impressive start to *Forward Together* all comes down to the dedicated librarians, archivists, staff and student employees of Western Libraries, some of whom are introduced throughout this report.

On a personal note, I would like to acknowledge this is my last annual report. My second five-year term as Vice-Provost & Chief Librarian ends on June 30, 2024. It has been an honour and privilege to lead this organization and work with so many talented and passionate colleagues. I am proud of all the important work we have achieved together and wish great success to the next Vice-Provost & Chief Librarian.

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Catherine Steeves".

Catherine Steeves
Vice-Provost & Chief Librarian

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We Asked, You Shared: Survey Results

How does Western Libraries know what a community of nearly 35,000 students, faculty and staff need from their library? We ask!

For almost 20 years, we have joined libraries from around the world in using a survey called [LibQUAL+](#) to understand user priorities for the library and their experiences with library services. The survey is one way Western Libraries uses data to continuously improve services. Past survey results have informed everything from strategic planning to the ongoing renovation of The D.B. Weldon Library.

In March, we heard from more than 2,700 Western community members in response to the most recent survey.

What we heard

The [2023 LibQUAL+ results](#) were consistent with what we have heard in previous surveys. Users indicated a high level of overall satisfaction with

the collections, spaces, and services Western Libraries provides. Quantitative data shows users feel that library collections, spaces, and services help them complete their research more efficiently and advance in their respective fields.

Collections

Commenters were clear they value the collections available to them, both online and in print. The survey stated users are satisfied with their ability to access library materials, and especially, borrow

Strategic Plan Spotlight

This story illustrates how we catalyze research, scholarship, and creative activity, and build and steward our diverse collections to enable discoveries that address the grand challenges of our time.

It also shows how we create services and learning environments that enable student success.

from many different university library collections in Ontario. However, some commenters reported issues when using the new Omni search tool and other online library services. The usability of our online platforms will continue to be a focus for us in coming years.

“Being a distant learner, the availability of resources online greatly supported my learning while completing a Master's program,” said a graduate student from the Faculty of Education.

Spaces

Nearly 70 percent of open comments on the 2023 survey had to do with physical library spaces, confirming that space for work and study continues to be essential to our users. Satisfaction with library spaces was significantly higher in 2023 than in 2019, with commenters stating that our study spaces were comfortable, welcoming and inspired focus.

“We’re thrilled to see that bump in space satisfaction. It’s great confirmation that the changes we’ve been making in response to the 2019 survey feedback, including the Weldon Revitalization Project, are a step in the right direction,” said Kristin Kerbavaz, assessment librarian and LibQUAL+ project lead.

Ratings and open comments show noise levels are a significant concern for library users and confirm study space is at a premium, particularly during exams. Creating and maintaining quiet study space will be a focus for us in the coming years.



“The library in Weldon provides a very spacious place for students to find information they need, and study space to get work done,” said an undergraduate student from the Faculty of Information and Media Studies. “The only problem that I have is that it is often full and difficult to find a spot because of how full the library can be.”

Services

Satisfaction with staff and the service they provide has consistently been our highest scoring section of the survey. Commenters told us they find staff to be both friendly and helpful. They also shared how important research support, workshops, and class sessions are to their academic success. Comments suggest library users, particularly students, value the online research help services that expanded during COVID-19 library closures. Finding ways to sustainably balance online and in-person services will be a focus for us in the coming years.





“The staff are excellent! They are courteous, efficient, and helpful,” said a faculty member from the Faculty of Science.

What’s next

We have shared the results with library staff and are working with service teams to identify ways we can take action.

The results will also be brought to a new library Student Advisory Council that will help us set priorities and provide a student perspective on our findings.

Finally, we are pursuing further research to dig into the survey findings more deeply. If you are interested in sharing your feedback to help shape future library spaces and services, consider signing up for the [User Participation Lab](#). As a member of the lab, you will be contacted with opportunities to participate in the user research projects we do throughout the year.

Every day we strive to build the collections, spaces, services, and support your need to thrive at Western. It is the valuable feedback received from the community that helps us grow alongside our students, faculty and researchers.



Meet Claire Hong, library assistant at Weldon Library since 2021. As a member of the User Services team, Claire plays a vital role connecting students, faculty and researchers to information, research and services. She provides research support via our chat service, email and individual consultation. She also supports library outreach and events and manages various library spaces such as grad study rooms.

Claire works with our Interlibrary Loan team to facilitate access to books, articles and other materials from all over the world.

“Library work is all about the team and not the individual. I am so thankful to have such hardworking and helpful colleagues among the library assistants in the User Services team,” said Claire.



Inspiring Knowledge Justice in Nursing

All we need is one person, or one moment, to change our view of the world. For Ashley McKeown, lecturer with the Arthur Labatt Family School of Nursing, one such spark was attending a presentation by curriculum librarian Heather Campbell at the 2022 Fall Perspectives on Teaching conference.

Strategic Plan Spotlight

This story demonstrates how we foster the development of library research skills, knowledge and values.

It's also an example of how we collaborate to advance equity, diversity, inclusion, and foster belonging and community.

"Hearing about the [library curriculum](#) blew my mind. Despite focusing on international and social justice work in my nursing practice, the literature I was using to inform my work all came from westernized, privileged perspectives. The concept of knowledge justice was language that I didn't know I was missing. I went straight home from the conference to re-write my course assignments," McKeown said.

Western Libraries has a long history of partnering with faculty to teach students about research. Our new learning outcomes also ask students to reflect on how much they see, read or hear comes from one perspective or worldview.



“I had to undo my thinking about research after starting to use the library curriculum,” McKeown said, “and reconsider what we mean in nursing when we say, ‘best evidence.’”

Over the past year, McKeown explored these ideas alongside Campbell and Master of Library and Information Science co-op student Lea Sansom. The group revised McKeown’s introductory nursing course to incorporate positionality work and a new knowledge justice assignment.

“We need to acknowledge knowledge injustices right up front, in first year,” McKeown said. “Students know that racism exists, that decolonization is necessary – this is a reality they live every day. Avoiding these only does them a disservice.”

McKeown brought her newfound commitment to knowledge justice to the Canadian Association for the School of Nursing’s (CASN) national education

conference, where she presented with Campbell and doctoral student V. Logan Kennedy on the library curriculum in May.

“Equity is foundational to the nursing profession,” McKeown said, “and what we define as best evidence is informed by our college. As we reconsider what that concept means we need to bring these discussions to accrediting bodies like CASN.”

McKeown and Campbell also partnered with students while supervising two master of nursing students this summer, part of the program’s knowledge synthesis course. “Vanessa and Keely created teaching cases that apply the library curriculum to their lived experiences as nurses,” Campbell said.

Student Keely Trudgeon describes her learning experience as memorable, but complex.

“This placement asked me to be open, and to embrace vulnerability and uncertainty. I view knowledge differently now. As a public health nurse, I need to bring a critical lens to the knowledge sources that shape nursing policies, protocols, and guidelines. I will leverage my placement to challenge the status quo and advocate for change,” said Trudgeon.

McKeown and Campbell plan to continue their decolonization work next year with professional development for the entire nursing school community focused on the library curriculum.

“Partnering with Ashley is a gift,” Campbell said, “I’m so grateful for her willingness to experiment.

I’m not sure she realizes how much impact her commitments to justice and decolonization have on others.”

McKeown herself remains focused on tomorrow’s nurses. “I am deeply hopeful at how much things have changed in a short time,” McKeown said, “but we still have so much to learn. We need to make sure the future is better for our students, for their kids and for their kids’ kids.”



Meet Heather Campbell, curriculum librarian since 2020. A member of both the Western Libraries Teaching and Learning team and the Centre for Teaching and Learning, Heather supports the University’s strategic curricular initiatives. She often describes her position as a “unicorn job,” or the perfect blend of her teaching, library, and educational development backgrounds. Heather’s love of curriculum work stems from its ability to bring colleagues together. “Teaching often happens in isolation. Curriculum conversations encourage teams to build programs with intentionality and in community,” said Heather.

Heather’s current priority is supporting programs with decolonizing curricula, speaking on the topic as keynote for the *Spring Perspectives on Teaching Conference* this year. She is also busy developing lessons in support of Western Libraries’ new knowledge justice curriculum. “The library has a role to play in demonstrating the vulnerability and unlearning required of decolonization work. I hope my work can contribute even in a small way,” said Heather.



Weldon Revitalization: Phase 2

Spectacular! State-of-the-art! Beautiful! These are just some of the words students, faculty and staff have used in survey responses to describe the new two-storey student Learning Commons in The D.B. Weldon Library (Weldon). Since we wrapped up the first phase of the Weldon revitalization, we have welcomed thousands of students, faculty and researchers to the refreshed spaces. The renovation has been such an overwhelming success, everyone is anxious to see what's next.

In April 2022, Western University allocated an additional \$15 million to fund the next phase of the Weldon revitalization. Armed with lots of valuable stakeholder feedback and a vision outlined in the 2017 [Western Libraries Space Master Plan](#), the project oversight team (POT) was ready to pick up right where they left off at Phase 1.

After revisiting the Space Master Plan, a Phase 2 program validation of Weldon was completed with

a focus on avoiding reduction of onsite collections. Then a new need emerged.

To bring the library team together on main campus and make way for other University programs to expand in Elborn College, the Content Management, Discovery and Access staff will join their colleagues on the 5th floor.

Given the specialized needs of this group, the relocation kickstarted a complicated game of musical chairs that has kept architects

Strategic Plan Spotlight

This story highlights how we support Western's strategic growth by advancing the Space Master Plan to create facilities, information technology, and infrastructure that inspire discovery, learning, research and scholarship.



^ Rendering of the new silent study space.

Perkins+Will and the rest of the POT team busy. After a lot of discussion, consultation and design, the team has come up with a revised plan that accounts for the staff move from Elborn and allows for the most anticipated Weldon upgrades.

Silent study

The recent library survey shows us students like the refreshed spaces. Students also made it loud and clear that noise levels in the spaces are too, well, loud.

"Weldon is way too noisy especially in the quiet areas, there is never silence," said an undergraduate student from the Faculty of Social Science.

Based on this feedback, a new silent study space in the Learning Commons, located at the base of the grand stairwell in what is now the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL), will be created. The space will be an enclosed area

like the Community Room to eliminate noise from the outside. Acoustic panels will also be in place to help absorb sound. Large windows will allow natural light to filter through, and we will offer a variety of seating options including study carrels for solo studying.

The CTL will move to a new office on the 2nd floor, complete with two refreshed classrooms for their





⌘ Rendering of the Digital Scholarship Centre and Graduate Commons.

programming, as well as library and other campus partner events.

Digital scholarship and graduate commons

Dating back to the drafting of the Space Master Plan in 2017, and again in our 2023 library survey, we heard from students, faculty and researchers that Weldon would benefit from two key spaces: a digital scholarship centre and graduate commons. We are excited to finally make these spaces a reality in Phase 2.

Co-located on the ground floor will be the home of a new hub for digital scholarship and graduate commons that includes:

- A creation suite
- A media suite
- Presentation and digital display facilities
- A podcast room
- A primary source classroom
- Bookable meeting rooms
- Study spaces
- Exclusive spaces for graduate study and project work

What's next?

This fall, we'll focus on additional stakeholder consultation and finalize decisions around design, furnishes and finishings.

We hope to start construction on the 5th floor as early as November 2023 and turn our attention to the ground, main and 2nd floor in January 2024.

We look forward to sharing this next chapter in Weldon's transformation with you.



Indigenous Records Return Home

Strategic Plan Spotlight

This story shows our commitment to partnering to create an inclusive library that values Indigenous peoples, perspectives and ways of knowing. It's also one example of how we seek to build reciprocal relationships with Indigenous communities.

A letter book kept by Mohawk leader [John Brant](#) during his term as resident superintendent of the Six Nations of the Grand River has been returned to its rightful owners.

The book, along with four letters dating back to Brant's death in 1832, were previously held by Western Libraries Archives and Special Collections (ASC) before being repatriated to the [Six Nations Lands and Resources](#) Office.

The letter book came to Western Libraries in October 1979 as a \$100 purchase from what was then the London Public Libraries and Museum board. The process to return it to Six Nations was spearheaded by Western Libraries archivist Leslie Thomas.

"For the longest time, it was listed in our catalogue as the John Brant fonds, as the letters were believed to be his personal records," she said.

However, through the assistance of an intern five years ago, Thomas discovered that was not the case. Instead, the book contained governance records of outgoing correspondence and proceedings of Six Nations general councils from 1828 to 1834, as well as those from 1837, 1843 and 1873. Topics include the survey of drowned lands, the navigation of the Grand River and the settlement of land claims in Brantford, Ont.

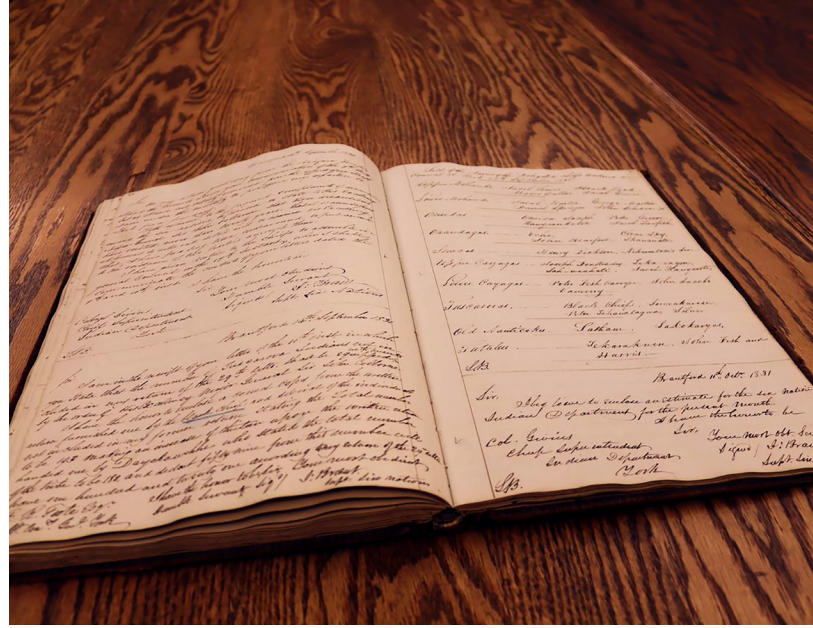
« Western Archivist Leslie Thomas (left) and Constance Bomberry of the Six Nations Lands and Resources Office with the repatriated letter book kept by John Brant.



“It contains land ownership and treaty information, documenting any decisions made in that time period,” Thomas said. “That’s quite significant. I saw it as property we had no rights to.” Thomas created an internal document, arguing for deaccession, which was reviewed and subsequently approved by all the archivists and librarians within the ASC.

She then contacted Marcie Sandy, land research unit supervisor at the Six Nations Lands and Resources Office, who was surprised and happy to hear the news.

“There are some letter books here in the office,” Sandy said. “But we don’t know what ones are missing. We really appreciate Leslie reaching out and returning the book to us, because that doesn’t always happen.”



For Thomas, returning the items was “just doing the right thing.” And after the pandemic slowed the repatriation process, she was pleased to finally see Constance Bomberry of the Six Nations Lands and Resources Office retrieve the documents in August.

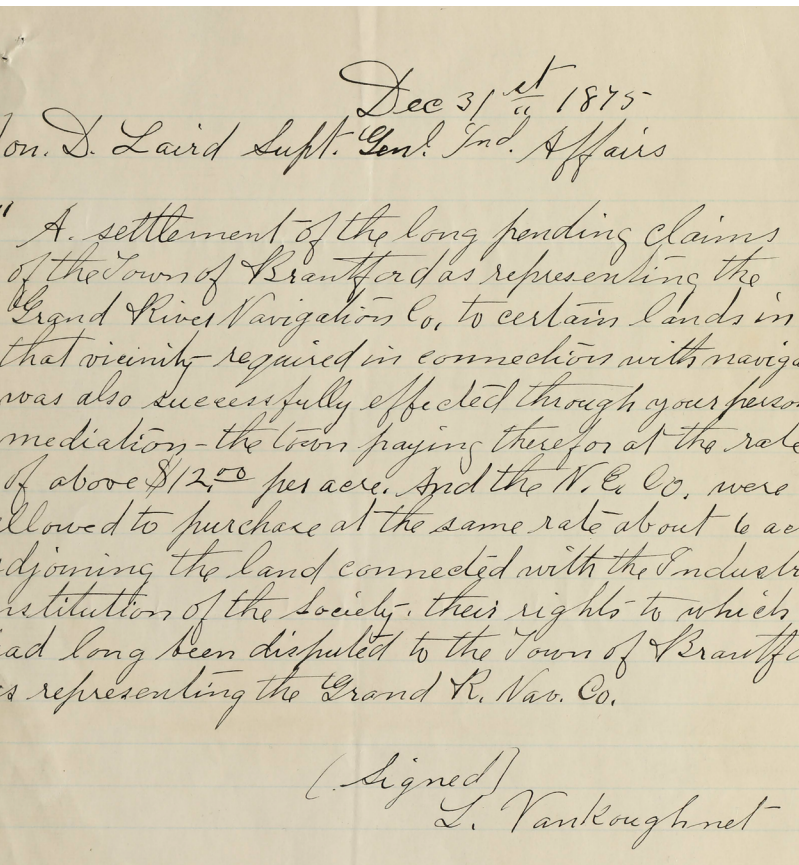
Digital access

Before the documents were repatriated, the land office agreed to allow the ASC to create high-quality, digitized files of the materials, now renamed as the [Six Nations of the Grand River fonds](#).

“I’m really grateful they let us digitize them,” Thomas said. “They are allowing us to continue to provide access to our researchers and to put it online so anyone can look at it. That was very generous of them.”

Supporting decolonization

Although there isn’t a significant amount of Indigenous material in the ASC, the unit has been working to support decolonization for close to a decade.



⌘ A letter found in the book regarding the settlement claims of Brantford.

A current legacy description review project aims to address the use of inappropriate language in past descriptions of archival material in the archives catalogue and finding aids.

“This is something a lot of archives have worked on over the last couple of years,” she said. “Creating a finding aid historically is hierarchical and the file titles often come from donors. Materials that come from 1901 or even more recently can contain commonly used terms that are no longer considered appropriate. The challenge is finding it all.”

Where the original language is retained, Thomas said warnings will be added, noting offensive words or images.

Thomas is also working on a project to identify 21 undated photographs from the [Muncey Photograph Collection](#) featuring both non-Indigenous and unidentified Indigenous children and adults from Muncey, Ont. They may include members of the Munsee-Delaware Nation, Chippewas of the Thames First Nation and Oneida Nation of the Thames. By posting the images online using social media, she’s hoping the people in the photos will be recognized.

“I think it is really important that people be named,” Thomas said. “We have a poor history in Canada of not naming Indigenous people. I think not being represented, not seeing yourself in the past, actually does harm, because it’s taking you out of the picture, saying, ‘you’re not part of the story.’”

Active role in reconciliation

Through decolonization and repatriation, Thomas said libraries, museums and universities across Canada have an important role to play in reconciliation.



⌘ Letter book kept by John Brant.

“Our profession is talking a lot about these issues,” she said. “We have so much responsibility in terms of collecting materials and making things available.”

She also believes libraries have a role in addressing equity, diversity and inclusion.

“People in the past collected from people who were like them, and archivists tend to be part of an overwhelmingly white profession. We need to redress these things and to recreate relationships.”

— *This story was adapted from a Western News story.*



⌘ Gunancora Massacre site memorial in El Salvador.

Maps of a War and Its Aftermath

Experts from Western Libraries are lending their skills to a powerful project to document stories, memories and crucial locations from the Salvadoran Civil War.

It's all part of [Surviving Memory in Postwar El Salvador](#), run by Information and Media Studies professor Amanda Grzyb. It's a collaborative project with international contributors, from survivors, scholars, artists and community organizers, among many others.

Geographic information systems (GIS) specialist Liz Sutherland and map librarian Zack MacDonald trekked to remote areas through the jungles of the

Central American country this spring to pinpoint important historical sites of the war.

They climbed. They battled overgrowth. And as they hiked alongside survivors, they gathered personal reflections on the horrors of the war.

“Working with community members and seeing the devastation on the ground – standing in this ruined flour mill where four children were killed from a rocket attack, hearing the story from one of the victims’ mothers – there are no words,” MacDonald said.

“You’re caught between the rigorous academic process but also dealing with something so emotional.”

MacDonald’s pouring over field maps from the United Nations, U.S. Central Intelligence Agency and organizations like the Red Cross that tracked El Salvador during the brutal war, spanning 1980 to 1992. He also uses air photos to better pinpoint sites now rebuilt or overgrown. Even in just 40

Strategic Plan Spotlight

This story demonstrates how we are expanding our services and outreach to local and global communities, and how we promote open scholarship and open science for the benefit of the global research community.

years, some locations have been reclaimed by the jungle, MacDonald said.

The goal is to uncover and remember.

“The library isn’t just books,” Sutherland said. “This project illustrates the new ways libraries help gather, share and preserve information.”

MacDonald and Sutherland are putting a high-tech spin on the work, using specialty photography, GPS data and satellite imagery to piece together 3D landscapes, stitch together air photos, and preserve the locations of these historical sites for the future.

It makes a difference.

Sutherland mapped the site of a violent massacre already located three years prior. Thanks to the data from her commercial-grade GPS, the Arrow Gold unit, mounted on a long pole, it became clear the area was actually kilometres away from the point on the map.

“That’s the difference of a three-hour hike down a steep terrain into a valley,” she said. “This kind of information could be used by the family members of survivors who want to hike the route in a

commemoration event. If they had the (originally mapped) point, they would have hiked to the completely wrong location.”

She captured 98 sites during the spring trip.

It will take multiple journeys to complete the work and build up a digital map featuring locations, data and details shared by survivors.

“It’s not just one conversation, one hike, it’s hikes all over the entire country with many different people who all have different memories and remember things differently as they’re walking through the space,” Sutherland said.

“It’s almost jogging your memory as you’re seeing the landmarks. It is so interesting. As soon as you’re in the place, you remember more than you would compared to recounting it by memory.”

A key tenet of the project is creating a community-driven archive, providing survivors and other Salvadorans skills and equipment to maintain and update the map after Western researchers leave. Eventually, the unit Sutherland is using will remain

✧ The GIS team recording a death march trail in, Cerro Vivo, Chalatenango, El Salvador.



in the community so they can continue capturing locations.

Sutherland said merging emotional conversations with ultra-accurate data – her equipment is precise down to the millimetre – “puts the human into the data.”

“A lot of these massacre stories and sites of violence weren’t captured in UN reports,” MacDonald said.

“These stories that have been buried and we’re bringing them to the fore, it’s really important to



Project collaborator and survivor Genaro Guardado describes a massacre site in La Laguna, Chalatenango, El Salvador.

change people’s understanding of what happened in El Salvador or allow people to hear it for the first time.”

— This story was adapted from a Western News story.

Meet Zack MacDonald, map librarian. As a member of the Archives and Special Collections team, Zack is responsible for Western’s Cartographic collections which range from late medieval *mappa mundi* and navigational charts, to aerial photos and satellite imagery, and atlases and globes. In addition to acquiring new materials and donations, he regularly teaches workshops about the map collection, historic geographic information systems and spatial humanities. Zack is an active member of the cartographic community and is the vice president, professional development for the Association of Canadian Map Libraries and Archives.

Zack has an active research portfolio where he works at the intersections of HGIS, BIM, immersive technologies and discovery layers. As a co-investigator on two SSHRC Partnership Grants: [Environments of Change](#) and [Surviving Memory in Postwar El Salvador](#), he explores the use of 3D reconstructions and immersive historical environments for education and data discovery.



THIS IS US

We are your information experts, when and where you need us. [Western Libraries teams](#) take your work to the next level.



Archives and Special Collections

We acquire, preserve and provide access to special collections and archives, including rare and unique materials in all formats, to support the teaching and research missions of the University. We also engage with and welcome use of the archives and special collections by members of the broader community.



Collections Management, Discovery and Access

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



Research and Scholarly Communication

We collaborate with researchers across campus to advance the creation, management, dissemination, and preservation of research and scholarship. We assist with open access publishing, GIS and statistical data, data management, researcher identifiers, research impact and copyright.



Teaching and Learning

We collaborate with faculty on curriculum design and create and deliver a variety of information literacy learning experiences. Our instruction on research strategies, misinformation and disinformation, and knowledge justice, among other topics, empowers students to become successful, information literate graduates able to achieve their full potential as global citizens and leaders.



User Experience

We support 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.



User Services

We design and deliver a suite of virtual and in-person front-line library services that support the teaching, learning and research goals of the Western community including Information and Public Service, Document Delivery, Collections Maintenance and Outreach and Events Services.

All Western Libraries units are supported by Administration and Operations and Library Information Technology Services. These teams provide critical support for staffing, human resources, facilities management, records services, communications and IT services. Information technology support includes staff computing, public website development, library service platform support, public printing, application development and domain management.

BY THE NUMBERS

COLLECTIONS AND USE

- **5,782,231** total items – digital and physical books, journals and other materials.
- **281,135** active serial subscriptions – digital and physical journal, newspaper and magazine subscriptions, representing over **300 million** articles.
- **792,780** other materials – scores, audio, video, maps, special collections, theses and dissertations.
- **4,453,684** e-journal views.
- **1,161,624** database searches.
- **403,827** e-book views.
- **43,504** multimedia streams.
- **1,337,078** catalogue searches.
- **49,889** physical items checked out.



INTERLIBRARY LOANS

- **11,757** requests fulfilled by partner libraries for Western researchers.
- **13,308** requests fulfilled for partner libraries.

RESEARCH SUPPORT AND INSTRUCTION

- **372** instruction sessions and workshops for **14,291** students, faculty and staff.
- **9,311** questions answered by chat and email.
- **2,538** in-depth consultations.



WEBSITE

- **1,107,623** unique visits to the library website.



COURSE READINGS

- **22,928** items available through Course Readings.
- **397,199** uses of digital Course Readings materials.

A Rubric for Sustainable Collecting



It's not difficult to raise alarm about the climate emergency; Canadians only needed to look outside this summer to see the catastrophic effects of wildfires raging since spring. What's more challenging is changing how we live and work to slow the devastating effects of climate change. Western University has committed to "discover, develop and advocate for approaches to make our world more sustainable." Researchers from Western Libraries are answering the call with the [Green Audit Project](#) – a first-of-its-kind investigation into the broad economic, environmental and social impacts of library collection management.

Academic libraries everywhere strive to grow collections and expand access to information, but all that growth comes at a cost. Acquiring print materials often involves wasteful packaging and inefficiencies in shipping and delivery. And, of course, between deforestation, water consumption, and petroleum-based inks and glues the carbon footprint of print production is less than ideal. Taking all these factors into account, it's hard to justify a revolving door of textbook

editions with minor changes published yearly while the previous editions are kicked to the curb.

Electronic collections come with their own environmental price. Facilities housing servers that store electronic information require an astounding amount of energy to build and maintain. Accessing e-resources also means a reliance on finite materials to produce everything from the batteries powering servers to the laptops and tablets we use to access collections.

The good news is there are greener alternatives to producing and distributing academic materials, and with the help of the Green Audit Project, libraries and other institutions can evaluate the

Strategic Plan Spotlight

This story is an example of how we foster environmental stewardship and support a culture of sustainability by encouraging eco-friendly practices.



green practices of publishers to help inform collection practices, increase transparency and better align with the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs).

The research team has developed a rubric for assessing everything from materials to transportation to infrastructure. They've also added fields for evaluating how transparent publishers are about their sustainability efforts, as well as what commitments and compliance they've pledged. With the rubric, libraries or other institutions can reflect on their own unique collection practices and relationships.

For Paige Roman, graduate research assistant at Western Libraries and Green Audit Project member, sustainable collecting can't be one size fits all.

The Green Audit Project Team

David McCord, librarian and principal investigator, Collections and Content Strategies

Samuel Cassady, librarian and head, Collections and Content Strategies

Jax Cato, librarian, Collections and Content Strategies

Liz Mantz, librarian, Collections and Content Strategies

Paige Roman, graduate research assistant, librarian, Collections and Content Strategies

"It depends on each institution's priorities. For some, shipping practices might not be as important because they're located really close to a warehouse, or maybe they have a system in place for recycling and aren't as worried about extra plastic packaging. It's about looking at steps in the lifecycle of a product so that they can consider their own publishing partners practices

and what changes could have the biggest impact," Roman said.

At Western, the team is currently focused on connecting with publishing partners to request progress updates on their commitments to be carbon free by a future date. So far, they've audited 18 of Western Libraries' publishing partners. The team knows that for change to happen, publishers need to get on board.

"We need them, and they need us. It's not about tearing down publishers and pointing out their flaws because we're still purchasing their materials. This project opens up a conversation," Roman said.

One of the world's leading academic publishers, Taylor & Francis Group Ltd, is eager to find ways to reduce their environmental impact.

"Taylor & Francis has welcomed participation and collaboration with Western University on their proposed Green Audit Project," said Catherine Hodgson, sustainability manager, Taylor & Francis Group Ltd. "Part of driving sustainable change across the publishing ecosystem and wider supply chain is increasing the availability and transparency of information. As publishers we expect our vendors to

be forthcoming with information about the sustainability of their operations, so it is a natural progression for our customers and consumers to expect the same of us."

Recognizing that major publishers have more resources to dedicate towards sustainability, the Green Audit Project team is hoping to partner



with a smaller publisher to share their research and offer guidance on developing a sustainability program that's achievable at a smaller scale.

In the meantime, the team is focused on sharing their research more widely with other library professionals. They presented their research at the Ontario Library Association Super Conference 2023 with strong interest from publishers and librarians alike. They are also working on an Open Access publication for spring 2024.

Roman has her sights set on a much bigger impact.

"I would like to see this project or something similar brought up to OCUL [Ontario Council of University Libraries] or one of the other bigger library consortias, so there can be more collective pressure to see the changes that institutions – and a lot of students – value."

Meet David McCord, collections and content strategies librarian supporting the Faculty of Arts & Humanities since 2020. David assists with purchase requests, evidence-based acquisitions and collection displays. His research focuses on collection assessment, demand-driven book programs, collaborative collecting and resource sharing. David is passionate about building community-led dbwstks focused on equity, diversity, inclusion and decolonization.

David is dedicated to sustainability and is a member of the Green Audit Project research team. "It's time that libraries take a closer look at the impact book purchasing has on the environment, and the ways in which our choices can help to encourage sustainable practices across the globe," said David. The team was awarded a SSHRC Explore Grant for this project in 2023.



Library Ambassadors Build Community

Strategic Plan Spotlight

This story highlights one way we enhance the student experience and partner with students to build programming and services that reflect their diverse needs.

Imagine you are Western Libraries, determined to help students make the most of their time on campus and take full advantage of the collections, services and expertise we have to offer. You want them to feel confident navigating academic resources and library spaces and you're striving to give them something so much more essential and elusive – a sense of belonging.

Now imagine you are a new student at Western, living away from home for the first time, in a new city filled with strangers. Your inbox is overflowing, your calendar is chock full and you just received five course outlines each with a laundry list of expectations and assignments. Are you feeling overwhelmed yet?

Enter library ambassadors. They are students too, navigating the same challenges and experiences as their peers. They understand what students need to thrive and how Western Libraries can help. They are familiar faces, ready to welcome students to our community with open arms.

Western Libraries' student ambassadors made their debut this past year and the role and its impact has well exceeded our expectations. Recently, we sat down with student ambassadors Jake and Milena, to reflect on the experience.

What role does Western Libraries play in the student experience at Western?

Jake: The library is a vital part of a student's everyday routine, really – whether you stop by between classes or utilize the amazing research support, Western's libraries are always a great place to spend time and get help.

Milena: The library is one of the most important parts of a healthy university experience. The services the library offers, whether it's research support, course readings or access to a printer, relieve so much stress from the overworked student.

Not only are the services at the library so helpful, but the library also serves as a common space to collaborate with peers and find academic and social motivation at Western.



Jake »

Can you talk about the role students can play in raising awareness about our services, resources, and expertise?

Jake: Students' voices are essential to the library's ability to support and connect with students on campus.

Milena: Students will always trust their peers more than any figure of authority. I think that's why the ambassador position is so interesting because it brings the student voice right to the students, makes them aware of services and resources and encourages them to participate in the word-of-mouth process.

What are you most proud of when you think back on your tenure as a library ambassador?

Milena: I'm proud to have flexed my creative muscles and created something completely new for the Western community and to bring student engagement to the library in a way that we had never seen before.

Jake: It's so rewarding to look back and see the amazing progress we made! I would say a big highlight is whenever we got recognized on campus – students would swarm us saying

they know us from Instagram, which was a very surreal moment!

What are you up to now? How does your experience as an ambassador help you in your current role?

Jake: I'm currently working as a marketing coordinator for a teen travel company. I love applying my knowledge from my time at Western Libraries to new social media projects. Being the library ambassador gave me tons of confidence in myself when it comes to marketing and working with a team, and that experience is a huge reason I love what I do.

Milena: I'm a marketing and development assistant at Next Generation Arts, which is a not-for-profit organization that provides youth who have experienced violence or trauma access to free arts and wellness programs in Scarborough and York Region.

My experience as an ambassador helps inform my decision-making when it comes to creating and posting innovative social media content for younger audiences. I learned how to effectively communicate both professionally as well as more casually with youth. It also built my confidence, which has helped me immeasurably in my new role.

Thank you to the team at Western Libraries for coming along with us on the first ever adventures of the library ambassadors! Good luck to the 2023/24 ambassadors!

Jake: Good luck to the 2023/24 ambassadors! We can't wait to see what they share!

« Milena





Accessible Education With Open Resource Grants

Five Western faculty members are embracing open education resource course materials thanks to a pilot initiative spearheaded by Western Libraries.

The [open education resources \(OER\) grant](#) and support program offers instructor funding and in-kind support to integrate OER into teaching. The program is a partnership between Western Libraries, the Instructional Technology Resource Centre, the Centre for Teaching and Learning and Western Research's knowledge exchange and impact team.

OER course materials are openly licensed and freely available for anyone to use, which saves

students money on course materials, making learning more equitable.

"We are responding directly to students through this program," said research and scholarly communication librarian Emily Carlisle-Johnston, noting a 2016 University Student Council policy recommending Western facilitate an open educational resources pilot.

"Cost is definitely one of the driving factors and is largely tied to equity and ensuring everyone has access to the material that will help them succeed in a course," she said.

Open access to information is a strategic priority for Western Libraries. The program also aligns with a key pillar in Western's strategic plan, Towards Western at 150, aspiring to make the future of learning more equitable and inclusive.

There are many benefits for instructors who embrace OER, including Creative Commons licensing, which allows the option to adopt and customize OER to the unique structure

Strategic Plan Spotlight

This story illustrates how we catalyze research, scholarship and creative activity by championing and enabling a campus culture of open access for publishing, educational resources and data.

and context of their courses. “They don’t have to reinvent the wheel, but can build upon the work of their peers, swapping in more local and meaningful examples, and updating content when there are significant developments,” Carlisle-Johnston said.

Engaging course materials

OER grant recipient Alexis Smith, clinical practice faculty lead and lecturer in the Arthur Labatt School of Nursing in the Faculty of Health Sciences, appreciates the ability to keep her content current.

“My course is mainly focused on mental health, which is such an evolving subject area,” she said. “Although the textbook was published in 2019, much of the content is already dated because knowledge moves so quickly now.”

Smith, BScN’16, MScN’18, is also mindful of the costs incurred to students, and worried that only a few of the chapters in the \$155 textbook were relevant to her course material.

“I felt obligated to include readings every week because they had purchased this textbook,” she said. “I think we all have a responsibility to think about students’ financial obligations.”

Through the OER program, Smith can replace the textbook with diverse course materials, including videos and virtual simulations. “That was a primary motivator for me,” she said. “In nursing or other practice-based concepts, students often learn best with visuals where the content comes to life.”

She also appreciates the support and expertise of the program partners.

“I’m a novice educator,” she said. “Choosing course materials and being able to modify course



goals and meet learning outcomes is challenging when you’re new to teaching. This program gives you the support of library staff who have the specialized skills to help you find materials and the support of the CTL (Centre for Teaching and Learning) to help you embed those changes in the course in a way that’s purposeful. It allows you to transform your entire course. You’re helping the students save money, but hopefully also offering them a better learning experience through the whole process.”

Community of learners

An unexpected but welcome benefit for Smith has been the opportunity to connect with other grant recipients on formal cohort calls and follow-up discussions.

“I’ve now met people from other faculties who are really passionate, more experienced and further along in their OER journey,” she said. “I’m able to draw upon that and learn so much from them. I never would have made those contacts without this program. With new concepts like OER, you need that community of learners, and then hopefully you can be part of bringing someone else in your circle into that community and create that spread of knowledge.”

2022-23 OER Grant Recipients and Projects

Candace Brunette-Debassige, assistant professor, Faculty of Education

Indigenous teaching and learning series module: Working with Indigenous students

Donna Kotsopoulos, dean, Faculty of Education

Project open and accessible: Instructor tool for evaluating OERs for course inclusion

Vera Sarina, lecturer, Faculty of Education

The living tree of mathematics: Word problems through world history and cultures

Alexis Smith, clinical practice faculty lead and lecturer, Arthur Labatt School of Nursing

Adopting OER in nursing to further student learning in mental health

Courtney Casserly, assistant professor, clinical neurological sciences, Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry

A STROKE of genius: Teamwork makes dreamwork

— This story was adapted from a Western News story.



Meet Emily Carlisle-Johnston, research and scholarly communications librarian since 2020. Emily works with researchers, instructors and editors to facilitate open publishing. She educates authors who are exploring options to publish their work Open Access (OA), provides technical training and advice on editorial guidelines to editors who manage OA journals, and advises instructors who are seeking to find or create open education resources (OER) for their teaching.

Emily recently launched the second round of the open educational resources grant and support program — a program she established, in partnership with the Centre for Teaching and Learning and the Instructional Technology Resource Centre, to support integration of OER into teaching.

“My vision for the future of academic publishing is scholar-led and community-driven, rather than controlled by commercial publishers that profit off of academics’ labour. I hope that my current and future work will play a role in fulfillment of this vision.”

Reflections on Experiential Learning



Paige Roman – Collections and Content Strategies co-op student

I had the opportunity to work on numerous projects and collaborate with amazing colleagues across the Content Management, Discovery and Access team. My major project was a retrospective monograph assessment project where I analyzed usage and subject trends to inform future purchasing. I also developed a research project on sustainability in collections, assisted in the development of an approval plan, interpreted licenses, and engaged in outreach such as hosting a monthly library-wide journal club. These projects allowed me to hone my data analysis skills and understand the intricacies of managing and developing collections.

My supervisors always encouraged me to seek out new opportunities and make the most of my co-op experience. My placement was by far the highlight of my degree and I couldn't have asked for better people to work with. I'm excited to channel everything I learned during my time at Western Libraries into a career in collections!



Amber Carroll – Communication and Marketing intern

As a Communication and Marketing intern, I had the privilege of contributing to the social media strategy of Western Libraries. This role provided me with invaluable exposure to copywriting, collaboration across the organization and the work it takes to make various initiatives and events successful. One of my favourite aspects of the role was the value of creativity. I got to see my ideas integrated into compelling content.

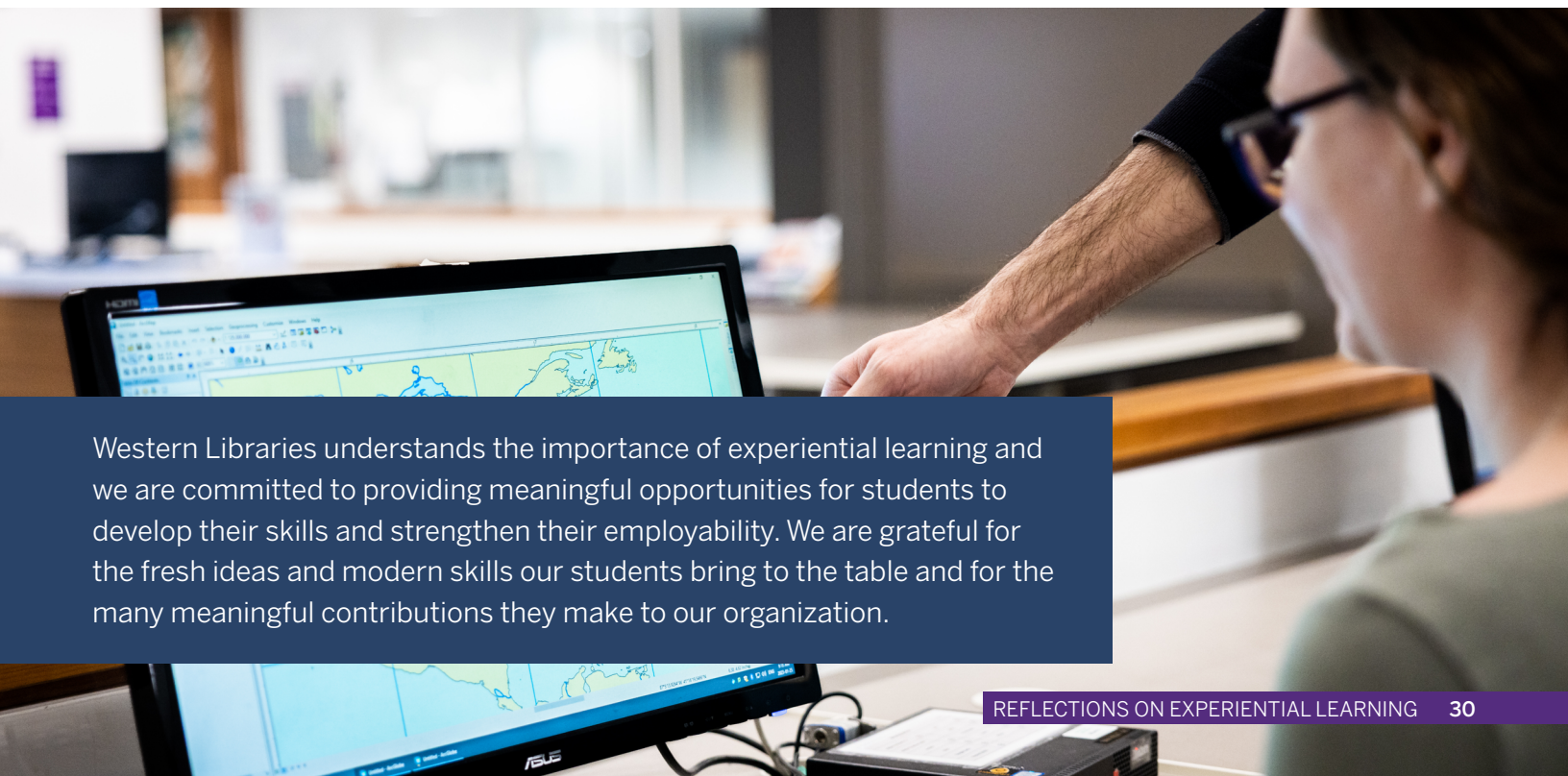
The skills I cultivated during my internship have helped me succeed in other work experiences, such as writing for *The Health Insider* and completing a co-op term with Technology at RBC. The lessons I have learned at Western Libraries have also undoubtedly assisted me in receiving a proactive offer to return to RBC full-time. The groundwork laid during my internship was not only an opportunity to truly make an impact but also secured my pathway to a thriving future.



“ “ Noah Churchill-Baird – Research and Scholarly Communication co-op student

Throughout my co-op with the Research and Scholarly Communication team, I developed hands-on experience and practical skills as a librarian in training. From the first day onwards, my coworkers encouraged me to pursue opportunities across Western Libraries and to dive into projects that interested me.

My major project included the development of a digital presence for the Hume Cronyn Memorial Observatory on campus through the digitization of the autobiographical scrapbook of the Cronyn’s earliest curator, W.G. Colgrove. Over the course of my co-op, I worked closely with Dr. Mark Tovey to bring this valuable manuscript to a wider audience through an e-book shared openly on Scholarship@Western, along with a digital flipbook version of the manuscript, and an accompanying ArcGIS StoryMap of Colgrove’s life and connection to Western University. I am grateful for this project and the support of my colleagues in honing my skills in supporting library users and developing collaborative projects with campus partners, skills that I will be bringing to the Library of Parliament in Fall 2023 as a recently graduated librarian.



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.



Archival Collections Guide Californian Adventure Trek

Long before becoming a prominent Canadian psychiatrist, author and co-founder of Western's medical school, Dr. Richard Maurice Bucke achieved another feat – as sole survivor of a harrowing gold-seeking expedition through the Sierra Nevada mountains in 1857.

Bucke set out on the trek with [Hosea and Allen Grosh](#), who believed they had found the [Comstock Lode](#). However, both brothers died before they could claim it at the assayer's office in San Francisco. Hosea, the youngest, struck his foot with a pickaxe early on and died of blood poisoning. Allen, distraught with grief, vowed to continue, with Bucke by his side – and many of his papers and maps left behind in his cabin, entrusted to the care of Henry Comstock.

More than 150 years later, a [team of five endurance athletes](#) retraced [Bucke and Allen Grosh's 100-mile route](#) across the Sierras. Driven by an appreciation of the character and motivation

of these hopeful pioneers, they also wish to share important new historical information and maps, gleaned with help from Western's Archives and Special Collections (ASC) team.

Team spokesperson Bob Crowley said material obtained through the ASC aided their mission significantly.

"We rely on primary sources to discover our trails and solve mysteries of history about our protagonists," he said. "For the Grosh brothers' expedition, we hit our very own mother lode of

Strategic Plan Spotlight

This story demonstrates how we are expanding our services and outreach to local and global communities, and enhancing services and support for faculty, students, and researchers working across Ontario, Canada and abroad.

resources at Western. The archives provided us with diaries, detailed maps, newspaper accounts and leads to a plethora of other sources, which accelerated our research.”

The team departed from Gold Canyon, Nevada on Monday, Feb. 27 and in a fitting twist of fate were forced to stop a day into their journey due to extreme weather. They ultimately completed their five-day trek to Last Chance, California in April, tracing their steps with a GPS tracking system.

Western’s health, medicine and science archivist Anne Quirk watched their journey with interest, having worked with Crowley’s teammate Hal Hall since last August, providing prudent information accessed through the [Dr. Richard Maurice Bucke and Family fonds](#) and those of Bucke’s son-in-law, [Dr. Edwin Seaborn](#). With the help of archives assistant Theresa Regnier, Quirk saw more than 600 documents scanned and sent to the expedition team within a fairly tight timeline.

“Requests for scans of archival records are not uncommon, but this request was unusual, because of the intended use of the information,” Quirk said. “Most people who contact us are conducting academic research or writing a book. In this case, the team from California were using the information to recreate this expedition as closely as possible to the original one from 1857, and they came to us because Bucke was the only survivor.”

Crowley credits Quirk and the archives team “for assisting us in providing convincing evidence that we used in writing an article that changes the historical narrative 175 years later,” he said

On supporting the team’s mission, Quirk says, “We’re very happy to be involved and to help them as much as we could,” noting Bucke’s key role in

this important piece of history. “He was the only survivor, a fighter, and he lived to tell the tale.”

Local collections, global impact

Having the world come knocking on the archive’s door is nothing new for the ASC team. Time and again they see how local collections like the Bucke family fonds have global significance. Just this summer, the team welcomed a researcher from Vienna, Austria to work with Western’s Gustav Mahler-Alfred Rosé Collection. In May, ASC helped an academic from King’s College London (United Kingdom) with research on marginalia in first editions of *Moby Dick* by providing access to our copy.

Advances in technology continue to expand horizons. The more archival descriptions the ASC team share online, the more researchers around the world can discover Western’s collections. Scanning and digitization services mean Western Libraries can connect researchers to materials remotely.

“Our archives and special collections are more accessible than ever and we’re constantly striving to make them more so,” Quirk said. “As the world is shifting to more remote work, we’re adapting to meet the needs of our researchers the world over.”

— *This story was adapted from a Western News story.*

≈ The Grosh Brothers Expedition team. From left, Elke Reimer, Hal Hall, Tim Twietmeyer, Bob Crowley and Jennifer Hemmen.



Creating Connections, Building Community

There were over 320 events across Western's five libraries in 2022/23.

The Community Room in The D.B. Weldon Library (Weldon) was well used by our campus and community partners including the Office of Equity, Diversity & Inclusion, Morrissette Entrepreneurship, Student Experience, the Centre for Teaching and Learning, the Office of Indigenous Initiatives, USC clubs, London Public Library and many more.



Indigenous Collections Pop-Up

In September, we teamed up with London Public Library (LPL) to share recent publications on Indigenous topics in book and digital format, from leisure reads to Indigenous law and learning modules. LPL gave out Every Child Matters buttons and Indigenous Culture Cards with information about local communities. Visitors also had the chance to sign up for or renew their public library cards.



Black Print Culture and Western University's Special Collections

In September, our Archives and Special Collections team participated in the Black Press in Canada Community conference hosted by Professor Nina Reid-Maroney and Huron College. We invited researchers into our Reading Room to explore black print culture through items in Western's special collections. Professors Scott Schofield from Huron University College and Alyssa MacLean and Mary Helen McMurrin from the English and Writing Studies department at Western shared presentations about key items in the collections.



Weldon Grand Reopening

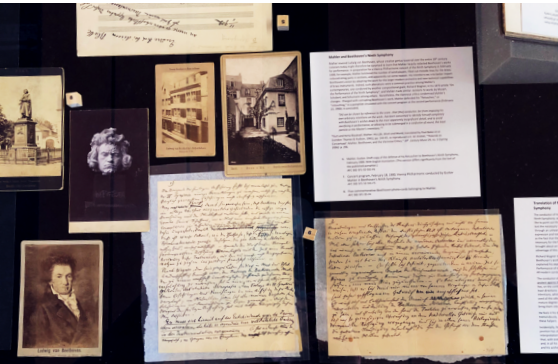
In January, we celebrated the grand reopening of Weldon with a reception featuring remarks from the Provost and Vice-President (Academic), Florentine Strzelczyk, and readings from Western's Writers-in-Residence, January Rogers and Matthew Dawkins, and former library staff and published poet, John Tyndall.

After the reception, guests enjoyed guided tours of the new two-storey student Learning Commons and perused an archival exhibit exploring Weldon's history, The D.B. Weldon Library: A Look Back.



Writer-in-Residence Program: Celebrating 50 Years

In September, in collaboration with the Department of English and Writing Studies, Archives and Special Collections (ASC) celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Writer-In-Residence program with an exhibition in Weldon. It featured archival records presenting the history of the program. The material was selected from various collections from ASC's unique archival holdings and records maintained by the Office of the Dean of Arts and Humanities.



Celebrating Mahler: The Gustav Mahler-Alfred Rosé Collection

In March, the Music Library curated an exhibition of artifacts from the Gustav Mahler-Alfred Rosé Collection, North America's largest collection of Mahler memorabilia, for a Western University Symphony Orchestra concert celebrating Mahler. Through photographs, letters, postcards, manuscripts, concert programs, newspaper articles, and Mahler's own baton, the display highlighted the deep reverence Mahler felt for Beethoven and the surprising connections of Mahler's Symphony No. 4 to London and Western University.



Unissued Diplomas Exhibit

In April, we hosted the Ukrainian Canadian Students' Union's Unissued Diplomas Exhibit in the front entrance of Weldon. The exhibit honoured students who lost their lives in Ukraine due to the on-going conflict, and featured diplomas for 36 students who died during the war and will never get the chance to graduate. It originally began in Ukraine and has now been featured at over 45 universities across the world.





Contributions

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