

Library Annual Report for 2020/21

It's hard to know where to start in describing the library's work in the 2020-21. Does it begin with our multiple pivots to align our resources and services with the new instructional environment at Hollins, a product of the world-wide pandemic? Does it begin with our answer to Pres. Mary Hinton's clarion call to incorporate equity, diversity, and justice education and action into the fabric of our professional work? Does it begin with a remembrance of Beth Harris, our long-time Archivist and Special Collections Librarian who died in August after a brief illness, and whose passing left a tremendous void in the institutional memory of the library and Hollins? Does it begin with recognition of the incredible work of our library staff over the past year, who despite being down 20% of our staff (and experiencing greater than 50% turnover in our student assistants), showed remarkable flexibility and resourcefulness to maintain a high level of service to the community and remain open to new ideas and collaborations?

The 20-21 story of the library includes all of these critical elements, all essential to where we are today, and all reliant on a foundation of library staff members committed to the work of the library and Hollins.

- We established early that we would take a “whole library” approach to keep the building open in 2020-21. We would not rely solely on our circulation and ILL coordinators, and their student assistants. All of our staff worked at least one day a week in the building, and at least one day a week at home, to share the responsibilities of both remote work and in-person work.
- Our anti-racist work has been a team effort from the start, beginning with our participation in the Intercultural Development Inventory in 2018. All of us, learning from each other and from our students and colleagues, have pushed the library as a whole to do more, to say more, to be intentional about moving from knowledge to action. For more about our anti-racist work, see our [DEI Progress Report](#).
- Despite the staffing shortage and the multitude of adjustments and sacrifices needed to maintain our core hours and services, the library staff showed its resourcefulness in developing both new approaches to traditional work (e.g., virtual and hybrid teaching) and new methods of connection with our community (such as an extensive series of J-term events, including a weekly gaming offering, a scavenger hunt and trivia bowl, and a zine making workshop).
- Beth Harris' death in August 2020 has been difficult for the library and campus community. Both her presence and knowledge have been and will continue to be missed. From a library perspective, the absence of an archivist and special collections librarian caused us to essentially close the archive for the year, and decline multiple research requests.
- We responded to presidential priorities through the submission of two proposals for the university's Imagination Campaign, one of which (a proposal for a certificate program in GLAM Studies) was conditionally accepted.

I. We taught students to critically engage in the discovery and use of information.

Our librarians taught 106 instruction sessions, across 84 Hollins courses, in 2020-21, the sixth consecutive year we've taught at least 100 sessions. Add the 11 orientation sessions and 7 stand-alone workshops led by librarians, and we taught 124 sessions for 1,329 members of our Hollins community (note that many students had multiple, scaffolded sessions led by a librarian).

The way we taught those sessions changed drastically, partly because of the pandemic that forced much of our work online, and partly because of the initiative shown by our librarians to meet the moment with revamped and environment-specific teaching approaches.

Even during a time when we had fewer opportunities for informal interactions with our teaching faculty colleagues, we continued to build new and stronger collaborations. Our librarians brought new approaches and appropriate technologies into the classroom, as exemplified by James working with three teaching faculty to incorporate Hypothes.is into their classes. Rebecca's assignment based in the Oxford English Dictionary with Julie Pfeiffer has been extended and adapted in collaboration with Michelle DeGroot.

Maryke Barber taught her newly developed semester-long course, Research in the Arts, to eight students, who worked on projects for 7 arts organizations from Roanoke and beyond. The two-credit course combines community-based learning and undergraduate research, two of AAC&U's high-impact practices.

Our librarians also made changes in how they teach, to meet the moment. James flipped more of his classes to have students do more work outside the classroom, enabling more time for discussion and feedback in the classroom. Maryke experimented with how best to provide information summaries to students after instruction, as a way of providing the instruction in multiple formats, a best practice for universal design in learning.

Our assessment of the applied research skill, delayed a year because of the pandemic, showed that more than 70% of first-year students searched for, identified, and used information effectively in research projects in their first-year seminars. Given the Covid-related instruction challenges in the fall 2020 semester, we found these results to be extremely positive. (For more details, see the [report on the assessment of our student learning outcome](#).)

We were also pleased to see the number of reference questions increase in 2020-21, providing more opportunities for us to provide one-on-one research assistance to our students. We answered 350 reference questions in 2020-21, with more than half of those (157) requiring in-depth assistance of 20+ minutes. Students continue to take advantage of the convenience of the Calendly scheduling platform to schedule consultations with librarians, making 133 such appointments.

II. We connected faculty and students with resources that advance scholarship and creative work.

Connecting our community with needed resources required more ingenuity and effort in 2020-21. Because of Covid safety protocols, some traditional services (notably, print reserves) could not be offered, and a significant minority of the Hollins student population was off-campus and away from our physical resources.

Anchoring our most critical solution to these challenges was the fair use assertion we developed, specific to the pandemic-altered learning environment. Our carefully tailored fair use assertion enabled us to provide faculty with digital versions of library-owned physical materials, so they could make required materials available to students -- ensuring equitable access for all students, whether on campus, in quarantine, or off campus.

Just as important as the fair use assertion was the dedication of Karen Ryan and our library staff (plus the assistance of media services coordinator Gabe Simpkins for films) to create a workflow to receive 125 faculty requests and transform them into digital materials. Included in those 125 requests were 86 entire books and 12 entire films. We conservatively estimate we digitized more than 25,000 pages for use in the 2020-21 academic year.

We also made 139 films available for classes through digital lease arrangements, primarily through streaming services Kanopy and Swank, as we re-allocated collection development funds toward these immediate course needs.

“It’s tough teaching a film course online, but I’ve proven this semester, with the help of the library, that it can be done.”

Richard Dillard, Professor of English & CW

To meet the research needs of off-campus students, we provided a digitization service for requested book chapters in our physical collection, and a mailing service for books. Karen coordinated a service that delivered 21 digitized items to students, and Shawna mailed 61 books to our students.

“Thank you so much! I’m so impressed with Hollins staff and service.”

Margaret O’Donnell, grad student, upon receipt of a digitized chapter

Of course, our existing online resources remained just as critical as they had been when the pandemic began. Our e-book views jumped to 30,864, a 30% increase from 2019-20 (which represented a 125% increase over 2018-19). Our streaming film plays also increased, up 6% to 3,870. Going against the trend of increased online resource usage was a tremendous drop in e-journal usage, from 60,315 downloads in 2019-20 to 39,764 in 2020-21. (The 2020-21 usage number was more in line with our usage prior to the 2019-20 spike, but was a slight drop below the previous annual numbers). We don’t have an explanation for this drop, and will monitor moving forward.

We continued to also focus our efforts on making it easier for our community to find the full-text resources we provide.

We added a new linking system called LibKey that both provides more direct full-text links within OneSearch, and, with the installation of the LibKey Nomad app by any Hollins community member, greater full-text linking across the web to our subscription resources. James diligently worked out a solution to a Films on Demand linking issue within OneSearch that had bedeviled both us and consortial partner Roanoke College.

Elsewhere within our web presence, James redesigned and tested a new library home page, which when combined with our new “mega menus” for the headings on our library pages, provides a cleaner interface while still enabling one-click access to our most important pages. James and Shawna collaborated on the development of a new Interlibrary Loan interface.

The metadata team completed a significant goal of its own, adding an “undergraduate theses” heading to all theses in our Hollins Digital Commons repository, so that all undergraduate theses can be retrieved using that search term in OneSearch.

Behind the scenes, Rebecca and Coleman worked together to make a critical change to our processing workflows. Implementing automated invoicing for e-books was essential to accelerating our e-book acquisition process, a requirement as we increased our single-title e-book orders from 89 to 375, a jump of more than 300%. Coleman also had one of the most challenging tasks in 2020-21, in cataloging and processing physical materials while working part time from home, as all library staff were asked to do as part of the campus de-densification efforts.

Coleman also made a significant contribution to the zine goal in our DEI collection development work. Coleman helped identify zines by BIPOC authors for us to purchase, one of multiple initiatives to make our collection more inclusive. We also prioritized the purchase of unlimited access e-books on anti-racism topics (we bought 42); bought more than \$800 worth of books for our juvenile collection from a black-owned bookstore in Martinsville; and expanded our anti-racist bookshelf library guide. For more on our EDI work in this area, see our [DEI Progress Report](#).

III. We strengthened the intellectual community.

Our library responded to the institutional call for J-term events, to engage our students over the covid-induced long winter break, with an impressive array of virtual offerings.

- Tabletop game (weekly): organized and refereed by Karen; assisted by Coleman. 6 students (the maximum number) participated.
- Zines and zine-making workshop: led by Coleman and Rebecca
- Scavenger Hunt (weekly):
 - organized by Luke and Rebecca, with 30 participants and 20 students completing all four weeks.
 - o Hollins Trivia Bowl: organized by Luke and Rebecca, with questions based largely on the scavenger hunt, with 7 participants.
- Film discussion (*Ex Libris*) led by Maryke
- J-Term Spotlight Series: a series of four talks given by Hollins faculty featured in the Authors & Achievers Exhibit, with audiences ranging from 6 to 20. (Talks are archived in the Hollins Digital Commons).

I just wanted to thank all the library staff for organizing such a fun activity. Being in a different time zone, this was the only activity I was able to participate in and had fun doing all the scavenger hunts.

Aabhashree Lamichhane, '22

The outpouring of J-Term activities was just one expression of the library’s creativity in engaging our community and maintaining the intellectual ties among community members. At the request of Hollins administration, our staff made herculean efforts to keep the building open all of its regular semester hours. This required the effort of the entire staff (our “whole library approach”), particularly Karen Ryan

(who did incredible work creating new workflows for the Checkout Desk and then training an almost entirely new student assistant staff and student peer coordinators) and the liaison librarians (who worked until 10 pm or even midnight early in the semester). However, it quickly became apparent that students preferred to stay in their residences as much as possible. Our gate count fell to 22,485 library entrances in 2020-21, one-third of a normal academic year (gate counts traditionally number between 60-70,000).

With our building sparsely used, and large in-person gatherings taboo, the library took advantage of its digital presence and know-how to build virtual community spaces for library happenings and institutional events.

“The Authors & Achievers Digital Exhibit is really neat! Thank you for finding a creative way to continue this tradition.”

Mary Jane Carmichael, Assistant Professor of Biology

Unable to hold its normal biannual

Faculty Authors & Achievers luncheon and reception, the library shifted to a digital Authors & Achievers exhibit, capped by the J-Term Spotlight series.

“Just picked up the relaxation bag from my office. Thank you all so very much! The faculty spa sessions were also really helpful!”

Ashleigh Breske, Assistant Professor of Political Science

The annual faculty course spa also became virtual, but the library still ensured that participants felt pampered, by providing gift bags featuring hot/cold neck wraps (thanks to an excellent suggestion from co-sponsor LeeRay Costa, director of faculty development).

The library also built intellectual community through the creation of Digital Commons sites for the Science Seminar and SPARC (the re-launched student conference), which are discussed further in the Legacy section of this report.

Throughout the year, the library played a key role in campus partnerships, both pandemic-related (the development of division-specific resources for hybrid teaching in collaboration with LeeRay, as one example) and larger campus-wide initiatives. Liaison librarians joined conversations hosted by the General Education redesign committee, and regularly attended division and faculty meetings, in the first year they were eligible (as newly designated consulting faculty) The library spearheaded the submission of two proposals to Pres. Hinton’s Imagination Campaign, with both representing cross-campus collaborations. One proposal, co-developed with the museum and teaching faculty partners for a certificate in GLAM Studies, was conditionally accepted.

It’s also important to note the critical role that Maryke Barber continues to fill in helping Hollins better understand and reckon with its history of slavery. Maryke was a founding member of the Hollins Heritage Committee in 2016, remained part of the committee as it evolved into the Working Group on Slavery and its Contemporary Legacies, and became co-chair in 2020-21, a role she continues in 2021-22. This is an immense responsibility and workload, as demonstrated by the 12 listening sessions Maryke co-hosted, the website development work she led, and the report she wrote on the topic of renaming campus buildings.

All library staff members participated in the first Leading EDJ Day. The library proposed and sponsored the Leading EDJ virtual session, “Hollins: An Institutional Slaveholder,” presented by invited speaker, historian Jennifer Oast.

We also didn’t let the virtual environment deter us from a key initiative within our DEI goals, to talk with Hollins student groups, particularly those from traditionally under-represented populations on campus, to ask them about their library experiences and perceptions. Maryke arranged, and multiple staff participated in, meetings with six student groups, leading to changes in our services and resources. For more, see our [DEI progress report](#).

IV. We preserved and shared Hollins’ legacy.

In the absence of an archivist and a digital initiatives/scholarship librarian for the entirety of 2020-21, fulfilling this aspect of our mission was and remains difficult. Our ability to engage Hollins community members, much less the larger world, with Hollins’ people, scholarship, creative work, and history was diminished. As one example, former archivist Beth Harris would usually host around 10 class visits each year to special collections; none occurred in 20-21. In lieu of a digital scholarship librarian, we relied on a fantastic intern, Michelle VanVliet, to work with Prof. Lori Joseph and her students to create an exhibit funded by a grant from the Council of Independent Colleges, “[Proceeding: Ann Hopkins’ Victorious Battle Against Workplace Discrimination](#).” Simply completing this project (originally envisioned and planned as a physical exhibit in the Taubman Museum of Art in Roanoke) was a victory, and a testament to Michelle’s dedication and the students’ perseverance. Digitizing materials from HU alum Ann Hopkins’ papers collection in the archive also laid the groundwork for adding these materials to our institutional repository.

In addition to Michelle’s work with the Hopkins project, she also created a workflow and organizational plan for a digital version of HU alum Mildred Persinger’s collection, and began to upload content to the [Persinger digital collection](#) within the Digital Commons.

We also focused anew on encouraging online submissions for both graduate and undergraduate theses. In appreciation of the accessibility of virtual theses on the Hollins Digital Commons, and acknowledging library space limitations and a backlog of unprocessed physical theses, three graduate departments (Dance, Screenwriting, and Playwriting) collaborated with the library to develop required online thesis submission procedures for their students. In addition, a focus on outreach to undergraduate honors thesis writers and their advisors resulted in a record 12 submissions to the HDC, double the largest number we had previously received in a single year.

Finally, the library was thrilled to have the opportunity to partner with the venerable [Science Seminar](#), the re-launched [Student Performance and Research Conference](#), and the summer [Francelia Butler Conference](#) in children’s

“Thanks for all that you’ve done to get Science Seminar up on the Digital Commons, it is SO cool!”

Liz Gleim, Assistant Professor of Biology

literature to enable all of these events to proceed in the virtual realm. We collaborated with the sponsors of each of these events (James working with SPARC; Luke working with the Science Seminar; Luke and Rebecca working with the FBC) to give them a robust home on the Hollins Digital Commons.

We hope and intend for these virtual platforms to continue, if the organizers wish them to, even after in-person events can resume.

“We had this image of a website that would be dynamic and host all of these research abstracts, and our meetings... not only a place now, but a place later that people could come back and visit, and it was a vision, and Luke made it come to full fruition.”

Renee Godard, Director of Environmental Studies, introducing the Science Seminar

Library Staff: Selected Campus Service and Participation

Maryke Barber

- Chess Club Advisor
- Honor Court Advisor
- Working Group on Slavery and its Contemporary Legacies, Co-Chair
- Leading EDJ Day Planning Committee
- Eleanor D. Wilson Museum Advisory Board, Member

James Miller

- SPARC (Student Performance and Research Conference) committee, Member
- Honor Court Advisor

Karen Ryan

- HSEP (Hollins Student Employee Program) Committee, Member

Rebecca Seipp

- Search Committee for the Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Luke Vilelle

- Honor Court Advisor
- Search Committee for the Provost

Campus Participation of Note

The library's commitment to inclusivity and diversity was reflected in 100% staff participation in Leading EDJ Day.

Library Staff: Professional Service and Publications/Presentations

Maryke Barber

- ARLIS (Art Libraries Society), Travel Awards Committee
- Virginia Library Association (VLA) Awards & Recognition Committee
- VLA Scholarship committee
- LEO (regional library instruction network), coordinator for Hollins

James Miller

- Presentation at the DC Ex Libris Users Group Conference, “Changing Lanes: Adapting F2F to Virtual”

Rebecca Seipp

- The Innovative Library Classroom (TILC conference), Co-Chair
- Presentation at the Conference on Academic Library Management, “Building a Community of Practice for Managers and Managers-to-Be,” with Candice Benjes-Small, Alyssa Archer, Katelyn Burton, and Jennifer Resor-Whicker.

Luke Vilelle

- VIVA (Virginia’s academic library consortium) Outreach Committee, chair
 - Ex-officio member of VIVA Steering Committee and SCHEV Library Advisory Council
- ACRL (Association of College & Research Libraries) liaison to the Council of Independent Colleges
- ACRL Excellence in Academic Libraries Award Committee, member
- Presentation at the VIVA Collections Forum, “If Not You, Then Who?: Supporting open access from your library’s budget”