

Library Annual Report: 2023-24

2023-24 was a year of firsts for the library:

- The first year in our renovated Wyndham Robertson Library, with new partners and new spaces. The renovated library debuted to positive feedback from the community, with a 25% increase in traffic from the previous year.
- The first year of teaching in the reimagined Core Curriculum. The library developed information literacy lesson plans for integration into the new First-Year Foundations course, and offered research sessions for all INQ courses.
- The first year offering GLAM Studies courses, and the first student (a library student employee) graduating with a GLAM Studies certificate.

The renovation brought new spaces, furnishings and support for students (via departments such as Student Success, the Career & Life Design Center, and Global Learning) into the building.

Discovery Librarian James Miller and GLAM Studies senior Hannah Slusser (working on her capstone project) partnered to study user experiences in the renovated WRL in the spring. Employing semi-structured interviews, surveys, and “letters to the library”, we found that students are equally comfortable visiting staff in WRL and using the building for a study space. They appreciated the new furnishings and study options, and liked having many academic and student support staff co-located in one building.

As one student wrote in their letter: “My hot take is that the renovation breathed new life into the library. I’ve never seen so many people here before!”

The library strengthened already-existing collaborations with new building partners such as Global Learning (ongoing planning of a 70th anniversary celebration for Hollins study abroad programs), the Career & Life Design Center (creation of an exhibit tied to the C3 Conference), and through the cross-departmental Open House event that welcomes all new students to explore WRL during orientation week.

The redesigned Core Curriculum brought multiple changes to our information literacy instruction, beginning with a newly developed scavenger hunt (created by Maryke Barber, James Miller, and Sara Sprague) that provided a unique and well-received introduction to the library for first-year students. First-year students were required, in their first-year foundations course, to complete the ghost-themed scavenger hunt. Students both loved it and learned from it.

In addition to the scavenger hunt, the library also contributed to the new First-Year Foundations course via information literacy lesson plans that could be integrated into the class. Maryke led this work as our instruction team coordinator, with contributions from all librarians. About half of the FYF faculty responded to our end-of-semester survey, with all but one incorporating at least one of the lesson plans into the course. The responses were very positive, such as: “[The plan] was very helpful and I look forward to having more time to plan the work for next year's class!”

This teach-the-teacher approach enables the library to support faculty in teaching components of information literacy, while giving librarians additional time to work more in-depth with INQ courses, the second course for new students in the core curriculum. These courses, designed for students in their

second semester at Hollins, require additional research skills and instructional engagement with a librarian.

The debut of the GLAM Studies certificate program in the academic catalog was our third “first” in 23-24. We taught our first three GLAM-labeled classes, including Shaping Memory, the core class for the curriculum. Also making its debut at Hollins was Cultural Heritage in a Digital World, and being offered for the first time as a GLAM course was Behind the Scenes at the Museum.

The GLAM courses continue to see substantial enrollments: 16 in Shaping Memory, 9 in Cultural Heritage in a Digital World, and 15 in Behind the Scenes at the Museum. The Behind the Scenes at the Archive class filled up for the Fall 2024 semester, with 17 students registered.

All librarians contributed to the GLAM curriculum, whether by teaching a course or leading an internship. We supervised a library-record seven internships during J-term 2024; seven internships in a term may not always be possible, but we are committed to providing opportunities for students (particularly our GLAM students) to obtain work experiences and skills they can take with them after Hollins.

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

We led 112 presentations in 23-24, including 95 course-embedded instruction sessions for 1,067 students. The 95 sessions touched 80 different Hollins courses (15 sessions were second or subsequent sessions for a course). These numbers are very similar to our instruction data from the past five years.

In 2023-24, we taught research sessions across 19 of Hollins’ 29 majors; looking back over the past three years, we have taught sessions for at least one course in 27 of those majors.

Plus, we reached even more students than reflected in the above data, via the new FYF model in which we provide teaching materials (slideshow and worksheets) for FYF instructors to incorporate into their courses. This teach-the-teacher model has the benefit of extending information literacy instruction beyond the times that a librarian steps foot into a classroom, and also helps better inform faculty about information literacy. Most FYF instructors, but not all, adopted this content into their course in fall 2023; to better ensure that students receive this instruction toward their information literacy student learning outcome, the timing of this instruction has been changed for 2024. All faculty will be asked to use the slides and worksheets during a particular class period in September. We also simplified the materials; instead of giving instructors lots of options, we now have one set of materials for everybody to use.

We are also finding our way with the newly designated INQ courses in the curriculum. In Spring 2024, the first semester with INQ courses on the schedule, a librarian provided a research session in each of those courses. We believe there will be a benefit to having a Core Curriculum director (Rachel Nunez), through the provision of ongoing and specific guidance for faculty teaching courses within the Core -- with expectations of library partnership made clear.

We engaged with assessment of the information literacy student learning outcomes, and other associated outcomes, in both FYF and INQ courses. We appreciated the invitation from Rachel to participate in this assessment. Having the discussion about assessment has already helped inform new

approaches for these courses this year, such as the standardization of the FYF information literacy introduction. We look forward to using assessment results to further refine our offerings.

Internally, we conducted our own assessment of the ghost-themed scavenger hunt, required for all students in FYF as part of their “Getting Connected” assignment. In the spring semester, students in INQ courses completed a brief survey testing their recall of specific items included in the hunt, such as the ability to use a call number to locate a book and the location of reserves in the library. A majority of students showed they had retained that knowledge from their first to second semesters (see the full [student learning outcome assessment report](#) for more details).

More informally, we reviewed student comments submitted after the scavenger hunt and found that students not only made new connections with the library, but also formed new connections with their peers through the activity.

Here is a sampling of the comments students submitted after completing the hunt.

- I found this to be a very fun way to not only learn about the library at Hollins and get taste of using the library’s website, but also a very fun way to collaborate with my peers to reach a common goal.
- I absolutely love the scavenger hunt and the person who made it deserves a big high five because that was indeed creative! I would definitely do it again and they should do more fun things like that for other places around Hollins!
- At first I didn’t understand why we needed to do the scavenger hunt, but I understood after. I found so many fun studying spots and was able to learn how to use the library system. Multiple times after the scavenger hunt, I took my friends to some new study spots to hang out and get work done. It was also a fun bonding moment with my peers.
- Thanks to this scavenger hunt I also have found my favorite study stop in the library, it is in a back corner, somewhere I would have not looked without being pushed to!
- I had a blast during the library scavenger hunt with my teammates! It was so much fun exploring the library together and sharing laughs. One highlight was when we had to take pictures in a specific area—we ended up goofing off in the photos, which was really fun.

The library also became a campus leader in engaging with the advances in artificial intelligence. Digital Pedagogy & Scholarship Librarian Sara Sprague led a series of workshops for faculty, and organized an AI-focused session at the Faculty Development Retreat.

Liaison librarians incorporated AI tools, such as CoPilot and SciSpace, into their course research sessions to introduce students to principles of responsible engagement with AI in the development of coursework.

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

We made several strides in accessibility in 2023-24 to remove barriers and automate processes.

- We opened up our retrieval request system for all students, rather than just those who self-identified with a need because of a disability. No longer does a student have to go to the stacks to retrieve a book; we will pull the item for them when requested in OneSearch.
- We transitioned our Interlibrary Loan system, ILLiad, to auto-registration. Instead of requiring each first-time ILLiad user to enter their information (e-mail address; phone; etc.), we now import this data from Banner, to remove that potential barrier to requesting. Also in 23-24, ILL coordinator Shawna Battle conducted a survey of Interlibrary Loan users, confirming that our ILL service standards remain high.
- We automated our patron loads into our Integrated Library System (Alma), to ensure the timely addition of new community members to our system. This approach should help us avoid new community members being blocked when checking out books or accessing online resources.
- To ensure that records of our online holdings are as up-to-date as possible, we began auto-uploading new e-books from our large e-book vendors into OneSearch, rather than requiring James to manually do this work on a regular basis.
- We also made print materials more accessible -- the shifting work in the library last summer, done in conjunction with the WRL renovation, meant that every book in our collection now has a space in the publicly accessible stacks. For the first time in several years, we don't have books being kept behind the circulation desk because there is no room for them on the shelves. We intend to keep it that way!

Continuing with the theme of behind-the-scenes work, we upgraded our discovery system (OneSearch) to the newest version of Primo. Similar in appearance, the new Primo has brought such upgrades as a New Books feature.

Coleman Holth, in his final year as our acquisitions and copy cataloging coordinator (he was promoted to Metadata Librarian as of July 1), implemented his Master's degree capstone project, an education and training module for our cataloging student employees. Students completed the training successfully, enabling them to handle greater responsibility in copy cataloging. Shifting more of this work to student employees, in turn, gives Coleman the time to do more original cataloging (113 items this year, as compared to 63 last year and 72 the year prior) and collaborate on more complex metadata and systems projects. More and better metadata enables greater access to the library's resources.

We continue to see mostly stable usage of our online resources. We recorded 38,885 journal article full-text accesses, as compared to a three-year average of 40,933. E-book full-text access numbers were more concerning, dropping 25% from 24,112 to 18,187 (down about 30% from the 3-year average of 26,106). We will see if this is a one-year anomaly or a larger trend.

I do expect that as more high-quality open access resources become available to our students, we will generally see declines in the usage of library-subscribed and –purchased resources. It's possible, even, that e-resource usage trends may begin to echo the long-standing decline in usage of print resources.

Each year, we set a new low in the number of checkouts from our physical materials, including books and DVDs. We recorded 3,734 checkouts in 2023-24, down from 4,271 in 2022-23 and 4,866 in 21-22. However, students continue to appreciate and value the varied reserve items we make available, from laptops to chargers to graphic calculators to headphones to umbrellas. Those items recorded 1,796 checkouts in 23-24.

We hope to gather data in 2024-25 for a deeper investigation into usage of our print materials, to help us inform future collection development decisions.

Throughout the year, we also work 1-on-1 with individual faculty and students to connect them with the resources they need for their work. Notable examples in 23-24 included:

- Isabel Folck inventoried the oral histories in the archives to assist with Meighan Sharp's development of a new course in English and Creative Writing.
- Working with the history department, and supported by departmental funding, we established a new subscription to more than 100 historical primary source databases. Rebecca made those databases more accessible and findable through an American history research guide, available to students in any course on American history at Hollins. James added the primary source databases individually to OneSearch. This resource addition demonstrated that successfully adding a new resource to the community requires significant investment in collaboration, technical work, and outreach.

We strengthened the intellectual community.

Our renovated spaces and new building partners provided new opportunities to build community and strengthen the Hollins intellectual community. Our fall open house and grand opening, to introduce the Hollins community to the new WRL, was created and hosted by a cross-departmental WRL team. Responding to requests by students for a less sterile environment and to create a stronger sense of belonging in the building, we formed a cross-departmental artwork planning team to conduct research and develop a plan for bringing art into WRL.

The Fab 4 building council (Rebecca, Jeffrey White from the Career & Life Design Center; Dina Hackley-Hunt from DEI; and Michael Gettings from Student Success) formed to discuss building priorities, such as data collection. More informally, the library hosted a series of J-term gatherings to provide opportunities for colleagues to play together – at trivia and at board games, for example.

We utilized these strengthened relationships on behalf of our community: Becky Harman reviewed our library's accessibility policies; the Career & Life Design Center partnered with Maryke to create an exhibit; Isabel and Ramona Kirsch in Global Learning planned a celebration for a Study Abroad Anniversary and collected input from alumnae at Reunion. We will continue to explore new ways to partner with our building colleagues.

Of course, the most visible change from the renovation was the increased number of students in the building. We recorded a 25.4% increase in building visits, with 70,191 WRL entrances logged in 2023-24. Even better, a [user experience study in spring 2024](#) (co-conducted by James Miller and GLAM certificate student Hannah Slusser) found that students come to WRL for the entire range of services and resources provided. Students weren't just coming for particular study spaces, or to print, or to visit Career & Life Design – all of WRL's different services and resources drew student engagement.

Traditional community-building events hosted by the library, such as finals week stressbusters and snacks, write-ins co-hosted with the Writing Center, the faculty course spa, and the faculty writers' retreat carried on successfully in 2023-24.

The Hollins Digital Commons continues to serve as an online home for several Hollins events, such as the KidLit Symposium, the Student Performance and Research Conference (SPARC), Science Seminar posters, the Undergraduate Research Award, and theses. The HDC recorded 97,853 downloads from its widely varied collections, from archival materials to the newest undergraduate research.

Our effort to develop outlets for our community to share its outstanding scholarship and creative work with the wider world has grown beyond the Digital Commons, with the addition of new institutional read-and-publish agreements that enable our faculty to publish open access articles free of charge with those publishers. Agreements are now in place with Springer Nature, Cambridge University Press, and the American Chemical Society, and we began sharing about these opportunities more intentionally with faculty. We look to continue to grow these open access publishing opportunities, and to educate faculty about them (e.g., with this [new web page](#)).

The University Librarian will have more opportunities to talk about publishing with faculty, thanks to a new educational approach to CV development for junior faculty. Developed in coordination with director of faculty development LeeRay Costa and associate provost Darla Schumm, this replaces the previous CV fact-checking regime, in which the University Librarian annually fact-checked tenure candidate CVs.

Students benefit from the library's open access work as well, particularly through the library's advocacy and support for the adoption of open educational resources (zero-cost course materials) across the curriculum. The library, with the financial support of the Office of Academic Affairs, transitioned an adoption grant program from a pilot project into full-fledged production in 2023-24. Seven faculty participated, with each setting a goal of converting at least two courses to zero-cost materials for students.

With the goal of further institutionalizing usage of zero-cost materials in the curriculum (as seen in the strategic plan commitment to eliminate hidden costs and barriers to participation in the full range of learning experiences at Hollins), Hollins applied for and was accepted into the AAC&U's Initiative on Open Educational Resources. Our team is led by James Miller, who has coordinated and initiated much of our OER work over the past years, including administration of the current grant program. This work has tremendous potential to make a significant, tangible impact on student academic success, through student cost reduction and improved access.

Through the newly debuted GLAM Studies certificate, the library is enhancing opportunities for our students interested in careers in libraries, museums, and archive. The University Librarian, Archivist, and Museum Director serve as co-directors of the program. We graduated our first certificate-holder (Hannah Slusser) in the first year of the program, and we have several more students who have completed their certificate intent form. Course enrollments have been strong, with 40 students registered for the 3 GLAM courses last year. Librarians taught or co-taught two of those 23-24 courses, Shaping Memory and Cultural Heritage in a Digital World (both new courses), and will teach or co-teach three GLAM courses in 24-25. Library staff stepped forward to make more internship opportunities available for our students, supervising seven internships in January 2025, the most we've ever offered in a semester. This has taken the entire team's commitment, with all of our librarians contributing to these internships.

Our librarians are also active in service across camp to help strengthen our community.

- Sara Sprague and Rebecca Seipp served as search advocates for faculty search committees in 23-24.
- Sara participated on the Leading EDJ planning team. Among other activities, Sara led workshops to help students write proposals and created collateral that could be used for faculty to share information with their classes.
- Maryke Barber and Isabel Folck are members of the Working Group on Slavery and its Contemporary Legacies.
- Luke was appointed to the Provost's Academic Renewal Research and Design team.

We preserved and shared Hollins' legacy.

Following the covid pandemic, and the building renovation, we finally had the opportunity to celebrate the life of long-time archivist Beth Harris, who died in 2020. Beth was instrumental in helping incorporate special collections and archival materials into the academic curriculum at Hollins, and in organizing the archival holdings that are essential to our institutional history. Our recognition and celebration of her life brought together her family and members of the campus community, and we installed a plaque in a new archival space (the high-density storage room on the ground floor) in honor of Beth's contributions to Hollins.

Beth's advocacy for archival and special collections space helped bring about the new storage space and archival processing room in the renovated WRL. For the first time, our archivist and interns have dedicated space to process collections. For the first time, overflow special collections and archival materials are not spread across storage closets around the building, but are located in a single location on the ground floor.

These are essential improvements for our archival collection, as is Isabel Folck's 2023-24 implementation of ArchivesSpace, an archives content management system, which replaces our old Microsoft Access database. ArchivesSpace is also searchable by the public, making our collections more visible to the Hollins community and outside world.

We added relevant and exciting materials to our Special Collections in 2023-24, including namesake Wyndham Robertson's collection of papers (in 43 boxes) from her distinguished career. These will become available to the public upon her passing. Isabel also accepted items such as a collection of letters from a deceased alumna, the Hollins Critic archive, two paintings of WRL from a previous library director, and a small set of children's books that included 4-volume set of Japanese fairytales, printed on rice paper (which Isabel immediately used for workshops with children's literature grad students).

Isabel has also revitalized our Special Collections exhibit offerings, creating multiple displays in 2023-24 to introduce our community to the wide range of materials we hold. Included in the exhibits were a revised Margaret Wise Brown exhibit, as it shifted from the third floor to a new space in the Reading Room on the first floor, and new exhibits on library history, love at Hollins, and ghosts at Hollins.

Professional Development (selected items)

All library staff participated in Leading Equity, Diversity, and Justice Day (February 2024). Chanlee Lu co-presented a session, "Every Poem is Political: Form & Social Justice," at Leading EDJ.

Maryke Barber

- Attended the Virginia Library Association Annual Conference.
- Attended The Innovative Library Classroom Conference.
- Virtually attended the VLACRL Spring Program webinar.

Isabel Folck

- Attended the Society of American Archivists conference
- Attended the Annual MARAC (Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference) meeting
- Attended the MARAC Virginia Caucus meeting

Coleman Holth

- Earned Master's Degree in Library and Information Science from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro
- Poster session proposal accepted for presentation at the 2024 Virginia Library Association conference.

Jessi Hood

- Virtually attended the Access Services in Libraries Conference

James Miller

- Completed the Library Juice course, Content Strategy.
- Attended the Virginia Library Association Annual Conference.
- Virtually attended Alma's DC Regional User's Group meeting.

Rebecca Seipp

- Attended the annual CORE Forum conference, focused on leadership, infrastructures, and futures for libraries.
- Co-wrote (with Sara Sprague) successful panel proposal for the Virginia Library Association 2024 Annual Conference

Sara Sprague

- Attended the Virginia Library Association Annual Conference.
- Attended The Innovative Library Classroom Conference.
- Attended the Conference on Higher Education Pedagogy.
- Organized and co-presented a panel for the VLACRL Summer meeting.
- Co-wrote (with Rebecca Seipp) successful panel proposal for the Virginia Library Association 2024 Annual Conference

Luke Vilelle

- Member of the Council of Independent College's Senior Leadership Academy 2023-24 cohort.
- Attended the CIC's Chief Academic Officer Institute.

Service to the Library Profession

Maryke Barber

- Co-coordinator of LEO, our regional library instruction network / Hollins hosted a LEO workshop in May 2024.
- Peer reviewer for VLACRL Annual Conference
- Treasurer, and member of the Executive Committee, of the Virginia Library Association

Isabel Folck

- Member of the MARAC (Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference) Program Committee
- Member of the MARAC Finding Aid Awards Committee

Rebecca Seipp

- Member of the Resource Sharing Committee of VIVA (the state academic library consortium)

Sara Sprague

- Peer reviewer for The Innovative Library Classroom conference.

Luke Vilelle

- Vice-Chair of Lever Press Oversight Committee
 - Chair of the Communications and Outreach Advisory Group to the Oversight Committee
- Liaison from the Association of College & Research Libraries to the Council of Independent Colleges