External Review Report for
Wyndham Robertson Library, Hollins University
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Executive Summary

The Wyndham Robertson Library at Hollins University appears from this review to be a thriving academic library that is centering students and their experiences in its decision-making. It was heartwarming to see how committed the entire Hollins community is to their library and how dedicated the library is to their students and their student's experience of their college years. The Library is perceived as intentional, thoughtful, and welcoming by the students, faculty, and staff that we spoke with, and is highly valued by those same stakeholders. The groups we met with repeatedly emphasized that Library staff are communicative, proactive in anticipating and providing for community needs, and very responsive to concerns and requests. The librarians are viewed as colleagues by the members of the teaching faculty that we met with. Many on campus value the information literacy instruction provided by the librarians, and the Library's skill and commitment to providing that instruction is evident from their work in first year seminars, all levels of undergraduate courses, and GLAM courses.

The Library's self-study asked us to focus on four primary areas: Relationships and Partnerships Across Campus; Changing Needs, Changing Library; Rethinking Space; and Instruction for Today and Tomorrow; and within those categories asked some specific questions. In the report that follows we have attempted to summarize our findings in each area, address the specific questions that were posed, and make specific, actionable recommendations that we view as possible approaches to the identified challenges.

Although the Library seems to be thriving, we were made aware of some challenges and areas where the library could grow or reenvision. In some cases we did not feel we gathered enough information on our short visit to make definite recommendations, and in those situations our recommendations are to evaluate certain populations or perceptions to gather more information before embarking on a course of action.

Recommendations:

These recommendations are offered in abbreviated form for the executive summary and are available in more detail, including rationales, in the narrative report below.

<u>Relationships and Partnerships Across Campus</u>
- Collect data in the spring to gather student perceptions and use of the Green and the Library, as well as belonging and comfort in those spaces.
- Host a facilitated retreat or two for library building partners within the next year.
- Consider offering a second writer's retreat,.
- Poll student assistants about their comfort with library knowledge, their workload, training, and expectations, to inform training, management, and more.

- Monitor student turnover in the Metadata department.
- Explore whether it is appropriate and feasible for interns to support The Green.
- Create or reserve additional staff parking spaces near the library.

Changing Needs, Changing Library
- Involve student assistants, LSAB members, or interns in promotion and outreach of the Library and its resources and services, particularly on social media.
- Monitor the GLAM program for continued growth and plan for sustainability.
- Assess community awareness and use of existing services and resources and adjust promotion and outreach in response, and then if there is no improvement consider reducing or removing unused services and resources and reallocating associated funds.
- Work with Library staff and the community to identify what is truly unique about WRL and Hollins.
- Create a plan for examining access points for Special and Archival Collections. How can branding be unified across platforms and access be streamlined for both on and off-campus users?
- Invest time in supporting and enhancing the Digital Pedagogy and Scholarship Librarian role so that it can fully support students, faculty, and the library as a whole.
- Continue to acknowledge and support the work being done by library staff, including through professional development for all members of the library staff.
- Pursue full faculty status for librarians, including a path for promotion, tenure, and sabbaticals.
- Continue to monitor library print and ebook usage, especially as the new core curriculum continues to evolve.
- Working within the constraints of University budgeting processes, consider whether collection development (book) funds could be temporarily diverted to other areas of the library (e.g., Special Collections/Archives, digital initiatives) to strengthen and create momentum in those areas.

Rethinking Space
- As a Library and with input from students, administrators, and faculty, consider what an institutional tradition in the humanities looks like in the 21st century, and how the Library can best support that tradition.
- Reconsider the purpose of the Library. Students perceive it as a student center, as well as a hub of academic activity, but its functional spaces are primarily designed for academic purposes.

- Use student survey data (above) to guide a discussion with LSAB about potential changes needed to the library spaces to better suit student usage patterns and respond to any feelings of discomfort or lack of welcome.

<u>Instruction for Today and Tomorrow</u>
- Continue to offer instruction sessions associated with class assignments, incorporating topics of interest to students, such as AI or misinformation, where relevant.
- Offer additional workshops on artificial intelligence (AI), possibly in partnership with faculty colleagues to support student interest in this area.
- Assess students' perceptions and experiences of information literacy instruction to inform instruction scaffolding.
- Enhance existing tutorial content to create a "library foundations" path to help students in upper-division classes come to a library instruction session with the shared knowledge and skills.
- Incorporate more advanced research content into upper-division courses to increase the challenge for students in those classes and to better prepare them for graduate-level research.
- Assess the research needs of students to determine whether current structures meet student research needs. We were asked this while on-campus but were not able to adequately assess students' needs in this area during our short visit.

<u>Other</u>
- While not directly related to what we have been asked to do on behalf of the Library, there was a need articulated among staff in The Green to review what in their new space is working well and not working at optimal levels. Concerns raised to us include lines of sight (it's difficult to tell when a student is waiting to see someone, and the person first in the row of offices experiences a disproportionate amount of disruption if the information desk isn't staffed), the fact that it's difficult to tell if those staff members are in their offices, and lack of adequate insulation between offices, meaning that private conversations, such as those related to Title IX or challenging student situations, aren't necessarily private.

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Relationships and Partnerships across Campus

Based on our short visit to campus, it is our perception that members of the Hollins community view the Library as friendly, welcoming, and communicative. Overall, Library staff are excellent at reaching out to members of the community and asking for feedback and suggestions, and Library staff are clearly focused on serving the community.

Faculty deeply appreciate interlibrary loan services and librarian instruction and support, some referring to "their librarian" with affection and some possessiveness. Faculty referenced the Library's responsiveness during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as Library staff's proactive anticipation of their needs. One commented that "everything [the library] does is thoughtful." Faculty view librarians as colleagues who are engaged at every level of the University's work, and are "everywhere" – at campus events, activities, meetings, and more. One individual said that the library is very good at doing things for them [the faculty], but that they are not sure what the library needs from them, concerned that they as faculty do things that make things harder for the library. This is gratifying collegiality that may be an opportunity to deepen some relationships. Faculty also expressed gratitude for Library support that might be viewed as "extra." We don't think it overstates the sentiment in the room to say faculty raved about the writer's retreat and would love to see a second one offered over the summer.

Building partners appreciate how well the Library communicates with them about issues with the building that may affect them and other matters that may be relevant. A few recognized that they could do more to communicate and share information about what is going on in their areas with Library staff. There is an opportunity for all members to reflect on what has changed, what is working, and what could improve, and there are potential opportunities for greater collaboration. Library employees brought up no specific concerns about The Green renovation, other than concerns about communication between the departments and the best way of navigating issues related to the shared physical space. There was some discussion about the amount of pressure that was put on parking near the Library due to the increased number of staff seeking to park nearby. This has caused some disgruntlement, as those arriving slightly late due to appointments or other issues must park behind students and walk quite a distance, a situation that is more burdensome on some than on others. If nothing can be done about the parking lot immediately adjacent to the library building, we recommend reserving some of the closest spots in the nearest large, shared lot for staff use only, to make accessing the library

building easier. These reviewers see that as a fairly simple change that could generate significant goodwill.

While some that we talked with acknowledged that there is fairly high turnover among staff at Hollins for a variety of reasons not uncommon among small institutions in higher education, the Library should be commended that it is viewed as one of the more stable departments on campus.

Specific questions asked in the self-study:
How might we better assess the levels of belonging and comfort our diverse student body feels in WRL?

We don't feel we had sufficient time with a diverse enough population of students to respond to this question with student recommendations. However, given the relative newness of the renovation and the emotions that were generated, there seems to be an opportunity to survey all students about their perceptions of the space, asking specifically about The Green, but also about belonging, welcome, and comfort. While survey fatigue is a very real challenge, an emailed survey could be paired with tables set up at the dining hall, the library, and other key locations to solicit responses in person with small incentives (e.g., candy, coffeeshop coupons). These can be staffed by student assistants and interns, as sometimes peers can be more successful soliciting feedback than staff.

What are reasonable expectations for our student assistants and interns? Could we improve their work experiences and address management and training challenges?

We do not feel we gathered information from enough student assistants to make concrete recommendations about whether the WRL's expectations are reasonable or whether student work experiences and management could be improved. Some that we met with spoke very highly of how the circulation area is run, that they are divided into groups according to nations in The Avatar (Fire, Earth, Air, Water) and can earn points for attending trainings, completing specific tasks, etc., with prizes or a party awarded to the winning team.

Students mentioned high turnover among student employees in the Metadata department because of the high workload and no time to do homework. We don't have a lot of details, but would encourage awareness around this issue. Work study students are, of course, paid to work and not study, but given how vital student employees are to the library's ability to run a one-person Technical Services department, this is something to monitor. Based on our

experience as library directors, student staff may be uncomfortable sharing their true feelings with their supervisor, but may do so anonymously or in an environment in which they feel less anxious or uncomfortable.

A possibility raised in our meetings was for interns to also support The Green. While we do not feel we have enough knowledge of the GLAM program or the detailed workings of The Green to make a specific recommendation on this topic beyond exploration, it seems like it may be feasible and relevant to the program, given how vital cross-area collaboration is in GLAM-related fields.

Ultimately, if Library staff are asking the question, it is worth exploring. In my (Nancy's) library, we poll our student employees periodically (about once an academic year) about how confident they feel about knowledge and skills they are expected to have, as well as what they feel needs to change at the information desk, makerspace, or other departments. This has led to changes in training, scheduling, student supervisor responsibilities, and more.

Recommendations
- Collect data in the spring to gather student perceptions and use of the Green and the Library, as well as belonging and comfort in those spaces.
- Host a facilitated retreat or two for library building partners. One focus for this retreat should be what is working well for all staff in the building in relation to physical spaces, communication, building maintenance, parking, administrative support, and more. A second focus should be on student perceptions and needs, ideally timed to follow completion of data collection around student perceptions, belonging, comfort, etc. This retreat should be facilitated by someone independent and neutral to those spaces and departments.
- Monitor student turnover in the Metadata department and consider polling those students (perhaps in the context of gathering feedback from all student employees) to determine if workload is too high or complex.
- Consider offering a second writer's retreat, possibly over the summer, as suggested by faculty during our visit.
- Poll all student assistants about their comfort with knowledge, their workload, training, expectations, etc., to inform training, management, responsibilities, and more.
- Explore whether it is appropriate and feasible for interns to support The Green.
- Create or reserve additional staff parking spaces near the library.

Changing Needs, Changing Library

During our time at Hollins, we were told time and time again how proactive and responsive the Library is to community needs. Many of these comments have already been shared in the Relationships section above, but we feel it is worth highlighting to readers of this report that the WRL is doing a remarkable job adapting the Library's collections, services, staffing model, and events to align with the needs and pressures in the current higher education environment. The textbook pilot about to be launched was mentioned in one of our meetings with faculty and is just one example of this responsiveness. More importantly, University Librarian Luke Vilelle and Assistant University Librarian Rebecca Seipp have cultivated a culture that encourages creative problem solving and flexibility, positioning the Library exactly as they should to support the University and its stakeholders as we look toward an uncertain future in higher education. That said, library staff appear to be stretched very thin. They are engaged in major, multi-year campus initiatives that require a lot of energy and creativity, and because the library staff is so small, it is almost impossible for those staff to stop doing something to accommodate this increase in workload. Course releases don't work for 12-month, full-time library employees, and while compensation can show the work is valued, it doesn't create more hours in the workweek to accomplish all that needs to be done. WRL staff, particularly the librarians, may be at serious risk for burnout.

Students informed us with excitement about several new initiatives and services that the library is providing, including LibKey, Kanopy, Libby, a noise canceling room, finals week events, and more. One noted that "with a Hollins account you can get free access to all the things." This is further evidence that the Library is moving into the right areas. It is wonderful that students know this, but the students we met with also told us that many of their peers are not aware of these services. Because we primarily spoke with LSAB members and library student assistants, we were speaking with "insiders" who might be expected to know these things. Several students suggested that the Library should invest more time in its social media presence to make it more active and engaging, and thought that either student assistants or LSAB students could do this work. Given the incredible amount of important, campus-wide initiatives library staff are involved in, it makes sense for this work to be carried forward by students, or perhaps interns interested in social media and marketing.

Specific questions asked in the self-study:
The advent of the GLAM Studies program has brought library staff into new relationships with students and faculty, and into new roles as internship supervisors, curriculum developers, etc. How might we responsibly manage this initiative and effectively integrate it into our work?

The GLAM studies program seems to be an exciting opportunity for library staff to connect with students and faculty and share their expertise and passion for their field. The popularity of the program is a testament to its thoughtful design and how well it aligns with the interests of the student body, but it is also a cause for concern given how stretched library faculty and staff already are with other commitments. Teaching something you love can be fulfilling and rewarding, teaching something because you _must_ can lead to burnout, especially when it is competing with other significant responsibilities.

Because the program is so new, with courses only entering the academic catalog in the 2023-24 academic year, it is difficult to know whether this high interest is due to the excitement of a new program or whether it will be sustained over future academic years. Nevertheless, the library should consider what a sustainable model would look like going forward. While it is tempting to offer whatever sections are needed to meet demand, they may want to consider reverting to the earlier planned schedule of course offerings while library staff adjust to the workload. Additional options may be to compensate librarians for teaching in the GLAM program and treating that work as an overload according to the existing structure Hollins already has in place, and a third could be to intentionally use GLAM interns to alleviate workload pressure on those teaching in a given semester, though that may simply result in more work, as supervising interns is its own challenge (and reward).

What should we consider in re-assessing library departments and practices in today's context and at a small institution with limited resources, whether for public services, metadata, collection development, or any other library function?

When reassessing library departments and practices, it can be helpful to first reevaluate existing services, processes, and materials to ensure they are accessible and understood by those they are intended to support. A second focus can be the things that make Hollins University and the Wyndham Robertson Library unique. The first is primarily a question of both access - can the right people find, or find out about, the right things - and stewardship. For a small library with limited resources, if a service or resource isn't known or being used, it is difficult to justify continuing to support the expense. The comments we heard about services and spaces that students may not be aware of is one example of how existing practices can be reexamined. It can be easy to sometimes make assumptions about new services or events, grateful to have them launched or completed, but not later taking the time to evaluate them and their effectiveness. It seems that the WRL has incorporated assessment into many areas of practice already, but it may be time to expand that assessment. Are your students aware of interlibrary loan, or is usage dropping off because there is a new generation of students that

has never heard of it, and neither library staff nor faculty realize it? Are students able to navigate the library website adequately to find the information they need? Or are they now more likely to ask for help than try to help themselves by searching the website first? What would that mean for student support? At our institutions, college student behaviors have changed significantly in the years since the pandemic, and at Hollins, student demographics have also changed significantly, suggesting some student user experience studies may be worthwhile. Not just to explore belonging, as has already been done, but to explore how students are experiencing the physical and digital library in its entirety.

Another example of beginning with a focus on existing services and resources comes from the meeting we had with the Metadata department, in which we talked briefly about the desire to have Omeka and ArchivesSpace have a similar look and feel to other web platforms, including integration into the catalog, and to also identify where files should live - should they be stored in Digital Commons? In OneDrive? With Amazon Web Services? In addition, there appears to be no way for members of the community or members of the public to search for special collections and archives titles, collections, or finding aids, and there does not appear to be any connection or link between Special Collections & Archives and the content available in the Digital Projects Hollins Digital Commons collections.

For example, a search through the Special Collections & Archives page lists Margaret Wise Brown as a person whose manuscripts the library holds (https://library.hollins.edu/manuscripts/). The link associated with Brown directs to a catalog link displaying the message "Record cannot be displayed. This record may be restricted to signed-in or on-campus users only. Please sign in or access from campus network." Meanwhile there is a finding aid in digital commons (https://digitalcommons.hollins.edu/finding_aids/2/) that does not appear to be linked to the special collections page at all.

This is both a question of access and of highlighting elements of the collection that are truly unique to Hollins and the Library. Special Collections and Archives are areas for small liberal arts institutions to truly shine. They are an opportunity for connecting to alumni and donors, but also a way to bring a student body with a strong humanities tradition into the library and the archives to engage with primary sources, university history, and more.

It appears that the role of the Digital Pedagogy and Scholarship Librarian is still evolving. Managing Moodle alone is likely a full-time job, but continuing to define this position and articulate how it complements and integrates with the rest of the library will help that position fully function as a partner, and possibly alleviate some pressure on other staff engaging more deeply with digital pedagogy and scholarship than they are comfortable doing.

How can we ensure our pace of change is matched by the necessary support and recognition for those tasked with carrying out these changes

From the documents we have reviewed, it appears that University Librarian Luke Vilelle and other members of the Library staff do a good job of storytelling around campus about the Library and work everyone there is doing to support the Hollins community and to improve the student experience. The library's commitment to support and improve conditions in the Library and on campus is commendable, but constant change can be wearing over time. One key to sustaining a small staff in the midst of constant significant change is recognition of the work that is being done, especially when extra creativity and time have been invested. This can be recognition from supervisors, but also from administrators. When we spoke with them, both Provost McLary and Associate Provost Schumm acknowledged their appreciation for the significant work done by Library staff on the new general education curriculum, the foundations courses, the inquiry courses, and assessment of the curriculum. If this appreciation hasn't been shared directly with the library staff, it should be. Such comments cost very little time or money, but can make a significant difference to those who continue to invest in the university despite the on-going budget challenges faced by many small liberal arts institutions.

Support for on-going professional development for both faculty and staff in the library is also important, especially if the library is to continue to be proactive in the face of significant changes to local student demographics, the higher education landscape, and an information environment being radically influenced by AI and misinformation. The library appears to have a healthy professional development and travel allocation in its budget, and care should be taken to ensure that all library staff (not just faculty) are aware that those funds are available and how to request them.

In addition, the institution should continue to explore making library faculty tenure- and promotion-eligible, with opportunities for sabbatical leaves. Faculty status for academic librarians varies widely at colleges and universities. Between Hollins, Hampden-Sydney, and Randolph-Macon, there are three different approaches. While this "build-your-own-adventure" approach allows institutions freedom to do what is best for their unique circumstances, the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), the American Association of Colleges & Universities (AAC&U), and the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) all agree that academic librarians should be considered equal members of the faculty, entitled to the same rights and responsibilities as for other members of the faculty, including rank, promotion, tenure, compensation, leaves, and research funds (AAUP, 2012, para. 7; https://www.aaup.org/report/joint-statement-faculty-status-college-and-university-librarians).

As library faculty at Hollins continue to become more embedded in the academic work of the university, regularly teaching for-credit courses in a certificate program that they proposed jointly with the museum and shaping the new core curriculum through work on First Year Foundations courses and Inquiry & Communication classes, their parity with regular Hollins faculty increases. As one faculty member noted while we were on-campus, "they [the library faculty] are engaged in intellectual products the way we are." In addition, as attacks on higher education continue and will likely increase, librarians often find themselves at the forefront engaging with intellectual freedom, freedom of inquiry and expression, DEIA initiatives, and other areas that can be perceived as controversial. Hollins University can support its library by granting its faculty full faculty status with tenure. We provide details from our institutional models, below. Randolph-Macon may be closest to the model Hollins is trying to achieve, in that the librarians are full-time, 12-month, tenured faculty with rank, promotion, and sabbaticals, but also have vacation and personal time allocations. They follow both the faculty and staff handbooks, depending on the issue at hand, but this has not proven challenging for most routine work.

- Hampden-Sydney College
  - Faculty status for librarians at H-SC "…includes a vote in faculty meetings, opportunity for leaves with pay, eligibility for membership on faculty committees, and consideration for continuing appointment in accordance with a procedure similar to that employed for granting tenure." Faculty status for librarians does not include rank.
  - Librarians are reviewed by the faculty Promotion and Tenure Committee in the third and sixth years, and upon a successful sixth year review are granted continuing appointment (the librarian equivalent of tenure).
  - Librarians, Faculty Handbook, Hampden-Sydney College: https://www.hsc.edu/documents/academics/DeanFaculty/facHandbook/24-25FacultyHandbook/Librarians24-25.pdf
- Randolph-Macon College
  - Library faculty are considered Regular Faculty, and are no longer called out as unique from what we call "teaching faculty," though they were in the past. Appointment, reappointment, review, tenure, promotion, committee eligibility, voting privileges, and ranks are the same as for all other faculty on campus.
  - In the Teaching Obligations Workload section, where the teaching load for Regular Faculty is defined, library faculty are differentiated, as our responsibilities are different: "Regular and Visiting Faculty have a teaching load of either 20 to 22 semester hours (for non-laboratory science disciplines) or 24 hours (for laboratory science disciplines, where laboratory course contact hours

are counted equally with lecture contact hours) per academic year; this excludes Regular Faculty in the Library, whose workload is determined by the Library Director in consultation with the Provost." Librarians at RMC can teach credit-bearing courses, and some do, but other workload responsibilities can make that challenging to do regularly.

- Because RMC's library faculty details are scattered across the faculty and staff handbooks, please contact Nancy if you would like additional details.

How might our expenditures better reflect the needs and priorities of the Hollins community?

As highlighted in the Library's self-study, usage of physical materials is declining and has been for several years. The 2023-24 Annual Report likewise identified a drop in ebook usage. One year of low usage isn't significant, as it can be tied to faculty sabbaticals, a change in course offerings, etc., but this data should continue to be monitored to see if it becomes a trend of declining book usage across formats over time. This pattern of usage is not uncommon in academic libraries right now, in part due to assignments and instructional design changing to adapt to current student needs. Many students are arriving at college less prepared academically, particularly for the in-depth research that requires multiple college-level monographs. We see this as an issue that is campus-wide, not solely a library problem, and many of the strategies being established with the new Hollins core curriculum appear designed to address these challenges by supporting students through their transition into a four-year program. It is also important for all faculty, not just those teaching in the core curriculum, to understand how student needs have changed. Students seem to need more guidance, and if faculty are not able or willing to provide that guidance and support, then services like subject and writing tutoring will be needed to fill the gap.

We don't recommend significant changes to the book purchasing budget immediately because the core curriculum is still relatively new and may result in changes to how students engage with the library over the next few years. That said, while there is certainly value to the library continuing to honor Hollins' humanities tradition, if the materials aren't being used, it may be useful to consider how that humanities tradition currently manifests at Hollins if not through book use and research papers. Could some of these funds be diverted to support digital humanities, work in the archives, or other initiatives?

Recommendations

- Involve student assistants, LSAB members, or interns in promotion and outreach of the Library and its resources and services, particularly on social media.
- Monitor the GLAM program for continued growth. If the program continues on its current trajectory, consider offering fewer sections of required courses, compensating library staff teaching in the program using existing overload structures in place at the University, and/or employing GLAM interns to relieve workload pressure on library staff teaching each semester.
- Assess community awareness and use of existing services and resources and adjust promotion and outreach in response, and then if there is no improvement consider reducing or removing unused services and resources and reallocating associated funds.
- Work with Library staff and the community to identify what is truly unique about WRL and Hollins. Special Collections & Archives is a typical starting place for many libraries, but what else is there that the library could lean into? How is the humanities tradition lived out among the current student population?
- Create a plan for examining access points for Special and Archival Collections. How can branding be unified across platforms and access be streamlined for both on- and off-campus users?
- Invest time in supporting and enhancing the Digital Pedagogy and Scholarship Librarian role so that it can fully support students, faculty, and the library as a whole.
- Continue to acknowledge and support the work being done by library staff, including through professional development for all members of the library staff.
- Pursue full faculty status for librarians, including a path for promotion, tenure, and sabbaticals.
- Continue to monitor library print and ebook usage, especially as the new core curriculum continues to evolve. Consider whether such heavy investment in book purchasing is the best use of library funding given low usage and other needs (e.g., textbooks, if the pilot goes well; digital humanities initiatives; special collection & archives initiatives).
- Working within the constraints of University budgeting processes, consider whether collection development (book) funds could be temporarily diverted to other areas of the library (e.g., Special Collections/Archives, digital initiatives) to strengthen and create momentum in those areas.

Rethinking the Purpose of Spaces

During our visit, students made clear that they view the library as more than an academic space. As one student said, "People go to hangout. The Library is central [to campus life]." The Library is a place to gather with friends, hang out, and spend time. While the library functions well as an academic space and has numerous spaces appropriate for group work, studying, and more, it seems to be not adequately meeting the needs of the students who want to use it as a student center. These seemingly contradictory purposes can coexist, and having both in a single location can actually be advantageous to both populations - those who want to study, and those who want to socialize. If done well, this kind of environment can create serendipitous encounters that can enhance campus culture and student success.

Students and faculty care immensely about the Library, as was made clear during conversations about the renovation to create The Green. In addition, one faculty member shared that "the library is the space we care the most about on campus." Having both students and faculty so invested represents an incredible opportunity for the library to become even more of a hub on campus than it already has.

Specific questions asked in the self-study:

How do we balance traditional library needs with new opportunities for our spaces, keeping in mind both national trends and local context?

Both national trends and local context seem to be shifting the WRL toward an identity as more than a traditional library, but the library seems hesitant to embrace that identity. Physical collections are giving way to spaces for people in libraries across the country, but that doesn't mean books are no longer important, particularly at liberal arts colleges, and it does not mean that Hollins should in any way back away from its strong humanities identity. Does a strong tradition in the humanities necessarily equal a large physical book collection? Creativity and innovation occur when unexpected connections are made, and the Library at Hollins is well-positioned to be a place in which faculty, staff, students, archives, resources, and tradition can intersect in ways that can be truly transformative for individuals and for the institution. The Library has laid a strong foundation, through its workshops, instruction program, faculty writing retreat, and more, but should consider how it can get out of the way to allow connections to happen within the library even if the library isn't directly hosting or involved in the engagement. This can be done through seeking out partnerships across campus that allow the Library to be a space where events are held, such as a yearbook or literary magazine launch, poetry slam, music performance, advising workshops, faculty development activities, career & life design workshops, social events, etc. There are ways to do this that also maintain the quiet

study atmosphere of the Library, such as maintaining the third floor as quiet study, or only allowing events at certain times of the semester.

How might we build deeper relationships and partnerships with our WRL neighbors, including Student Success, the Green, and SSWBB staff, to create new opportunities for students?

There are definite opportunities to build deeper relationships and partnerships with Student Success, the Green, and SSWBB staff. Our recommendations earlier in this report address this question, including recommendations of 1-2 retreats with all staff sharing space in the library building. The second recommended focus is particularly relevant to this question. How can the barriers among the different offices be reduced in service to supporting student needs? What do students need broadly and then how can those needs best be met? Focusing on students first and the appropriate office second can help generate more creative and collaborative solutions that aren't artificially limited by "whose job it is." Be alert for role creep when engaging in this process, but don't let that fear interfere with ideation.

Recommendations
- As a Library and with input from students, administrators, and faculty, consider what an institutional tradition in the humanities looks like in the 21st century, and how the Library can best support that tradition.
- Reconsider the purpose of the Library. Students perceive it as a student center, as well as a hub of academic activity, but its functional spaces are primarily designed for academic purposes. Should some sections of the library be maintained as academic and others promoted as social? Or should the social AND academic feel be propagated throughout the building?
- Use student survey data (above) to guide a discussion with LSAB about potential changes needed to the library spaces to better suit student usage patterns and respond to any feelings of discomfort or lack of welcome.
  - Consider colors, artwork, floor lamps, cushions - what would make the library feel more comfortable/cozy?
  - We understand this is already being done, but revisit the coffee shop area with those of social use as well as academic use. Small changes such as the addition of a microwave, mini fridge, hot water kettle, etc., can make the space even more versatile and welcoming.

Instruction for Today and Tomorrow

It is clear from our conversations with librarians, teaching faculty, and students that Hollins librarians are already doing an incredible amount of instruction and doing it very well. As at similar institutions, it is challenging to ensure all students have the necessary foundation in library skills, and fear of leaving some students behind means that much-needed higher-level concepts are sometimes not addressed, even in upper-division courses. Students noted the repetition of content in our meetings with them, but we were not able to explore this in-depth. In addition, the fact that the students we met with had strong (and primarily positive) experiences with the library made them less objective on this topic. They did comment that they have had certain topics a lot - how to research, how to make a bibliography - and that they know how to do those things. They did find the workshops or training on AI to be very interesting, and think that more should be offered on this topic, in particular because of job expectations post-graduation.

The Library's involvement with the new core curriculum is commendable, including the transition from first-year seminar courses to first-year foundation courses and the new Inquiry & Communication classes. Faculty that we spoke with refer to their liaison as "our librarian" and were extremely positive about the instruction interactions they have had, mentioning course guides, first-year foundation program content, source evaluation, OER, primary and secondary sources, the scavenger hunt for first year students, Moodle, training, workshops, and more. It is clear that library integration with new faculty is already excellent, with engagement during the on-campus visit process for candidates as well as during new faculty orientation. More could potentially be done to encourage an increase in instruction sessions, but given how thin library faculty are already stretched that may not be sustainable.

Specific questions asked in the self-study:

How might we engage students with instruction to meet both their immediate needs, and help them be better citizens and lifelong learners?

The students we spoke to had a very high regard for the library and all the library staff. They were familiar with the staff, the instruction, and recognized the willingness of the librarians to help, as well as the humility and kindness of the staff. This positive reputation on campus is an incredible foundation for any ongoing and future library initiatives. Students appreciated workshops on AI offered earlier in the year and wanted more of them, feeling urgency to learn more about AI before entering the workforce. They also expressed some boredom with the instruction sessions, which they claimed covered content with which they were already

familiar. That said, we spoke with students who are not necessarily representative of the student body, so we hope these comments prompt the library to gather additional information from a wider sampling of students at Hollins.

As you know, students engage best when content is relevant, slightly challenging, and interesting. It appears that library instruction is almost exclusively tied to existing assignments and so is always relevant to the assignment at hand, and that the level of challenge is low among students, particularly in upper-division classes. Adding content on topics such as AI and misinformation (where relevant) may increase interest. It has been our experience that students who are invested in their academics and want to complete assignments to the best of their ability seem readily able to take what they can from library instruction, even if the content itself is somewhat repetitive. For those students who don't want to be there and won't engage, there is a limit to what the instructor can do. I have heard it said that you as the instructor choose who you will teach to, and sometimes that means you need to ignore the student who is falling asleep in the back of the classroom.

From the Library's self-study, the various displays and exhibits in the building and online, the passion students and faculty demonstrated for the library as a physical and intellectual space, and the proactive care the staff take toward their work, we recognize the many ways the library is contributing to the foundation that Hollins is giving students to enable them to become lifelong learners.

How might we account for students' increasing number of dual enrollment credits, and their effect on core course participation, when scaffolding our information literacy instruction?

Hollins is not alone in wrestling with this question, it is a challenge at any institution where there is not a strict sequencing of classes or where dual credits are accepted (e.g., most institutions like ours!). The risk of leaving students behind is so great that librarians naturally repeat the basics, but our conversations with students suggest that there is interest among students in going deeper into more advanced topics in upper-level classes. One possible solution is to develop some core content that is available outside of a classroom environment. This could be designed as point-of-need tutorials, expanding the content already available on the Help page of the library website, or as a Moodle course. This point-of-need content can be beneficial to students who don't know how to reserve a study room or place a book on hold and who could access that information independently, but the content could also be assigned as a unit to bring students up-to-speed if they are encountering library instruction the first time in an upper-level class. When the instruction librarian initially connects with the faculty member to schedule instruction, one of the questions asked could be for the faculty member to

survey students in the class to determine whether they have had instruction previously. Alternatively, all students could be asked to review the basics before the librarian comes to class.

Creating content like this is time consuming, as it needs to be thoughtfully developed, created/recorded/produced, and then maintained as interfaces and products change over time. RMC has used student assistants to help with recording and editing tutorials, but still relies on librarians to script the content. But this is one way to encourage all students to be at the same starting place before they come into a session with a librarian. There are a few existing products that could help reduce the workload on production and some maintenance, such as the CREDO Information Literacy - Core (https://infobase.com/products/information-literacy-core/), which is aligned to the ACRL IL Framework, but those would still require personalization to make them relevant to the Hollins library and experience. Intentionally designing for longevity can reduce the amount of updating needed over time, but the content would still need to be reviewed and updated periodically.

Recommendations
- Continue to offer instruction sessions associated with class assignments, incorporating topics of interest to students, such as AI or misinformation, where relevant.
- Offer additional workshops on artificial intelligence (AI), possibly in partnership with faculty colleagues to support student interest in this area.
- Assess students' perceptions and experiences of information literacy instruction to inform instruction scaffolding.
- Enhance existing tutorial content to create a "library foundations" path to help students in upper-division classes come to a library instruction session with the shared knowledge and skills.
- Incorporate more advanced research content into upper-division courses to increase the challenge for students in those classes and to better prepare them for graduate-level research.
- Assess the research needs of students to determine whether current structures meet student research needs. We were asked this while on-campus but were not able to adequately assess students' needs in this area during our short visit.

Postscript: What's next for our DEIA work?
In the midst of this challenging moment for DEIA work, our recommendations seem rather inconsequential. Follow the lead of the Hollins administration and try not to let the current noise and chaos distract from the vital work that the WR Library team is contributing on

campus. Continue to engage with professionals and advocacy groups in the field, maintain current awareness of best practices in these areas, rename initiatives and remove web pages and other content if required, as we see has already been done, but don't stop doing this important work. Dr. Kawanna Bright's DEI self-assessment audit is an excellent tool that several liberal arts college libraries have used or are exploring, which can give valuable guidance on what the Library is already doing well, and where it can continue to evolve in ways that ultimately benefit students and the larger community.