From the Library Director’s Desk

By Lizah Ismail

Providing collaborative, flexible, and technology-rich learning spaces for students has been the hallmark of the modern academic library in the 21st century. Now, almost twenty years into this millennium, such spaces are still valued highly. As our library staff prepares for the construction of the new library building, I am excited at the prospect that the new library's building design will also incorporate the new student center, realizing both in spirit and in physical space, a true collaboration between two important student support services.

I look forward to fashioning an environment in the new library that will meet students' needs in a variety of contexts. When undertaking such a task, it is essential that we listen to our students. And we have done this not only through surveys, but also by conversing with them whenever we have the opportunity, and asking them what they would like to see in their library. It is not surprising that a constant thread in all of their feedback is the need for study rooms, quiet spaces, and more computers.

As we move toward realizing all of what is on our students' wish lists, we will continue to listen to our students and provide the support they require and need now and in the future.

So Far This Year...

By Lauren Roberts

Over 52,000 visitors have walked through the Library

Over 9,500 visited us during the month of October alone

We have answered more than 2,100 questions

Laptops have been checked-out over 6,200 times

There has been a 152% increase of student participation since the first Student Symposium in spring 2015.
**Library Technology Updates**

*By Janet Ward*

A.J. Eastwood librarians employ best practices for implementing appropriate tools and resources to reach students at their point of need. Library electronic services like the KATE online catalog, scholarly journals, databases, electronic books, citation software, subject guides, live chat, and text messaging services are available 24/7 for all Limestone College students, faculty, and staff, and are accessible from any device.

Social media networks, such as Facebook ([https://www.facebook.com/EastwoodLibrary](https://www.facebook.com/EastwoodLibrary)), Instagram ([https://www.instagram.com/aj_eastwood](https://www.instagram.com/aj_eastwood)), and Twitter ([https://twitter.com/aj_eastwood](https://twitter.com/aj_eastwood)), foster engagement with library services across the campus and in the local community. We purposefully initiate dynamic social environments as a means to distribute, promote, and enhance our public services.

It goes without saying that student access is a priority for us. A responsive designed website allows students on all Limestone College campuses to access the Library’s full site, course guides, and databases on any mobile device. In addition, we promote the use of technology to support distance learners by providing services that conform to our students’ information needs and expectations.

Our welcoming spaces and available technology are essential features when encouraging students to spend time in the library. Students often populate the library spaces and enjoy quiet time or just hanging out with friends. Students tell us they appreciate the comfortable furniture and modern, up-to-date equipment the library provides for them. Equipment, like our iPad Minis and laptops, can access the Library’s WIFI on every floor, and faculty use them regularly when they bring their classes to the library. The Library iPads are an important component of our commitment to the community as well. We host a monthly iPad Workshop on campus for elementary students during spring and fall semesters. We continue to look for new ways to engage with patrons and help develop Limestone and the community at large.

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**Engaging with Students**

*By Nathaniel Parks*

Every semester, our Library hosts the Student Research and Presentations Symposium where students present their research and creative works. The Symposium takes place on the first two days of the final week of classes and is open to all students on and off campus. This past fall semester, we had a total of 58 student presenters, giving 29 presentations across seven different subject areas. The event covered topics from firefighter wellness training to “slice of life” documentaries about Limestone College students. Before submitting their materials to present, students have the option to share their works on Shared Shelf, an open access digital platform. For more information on Shared Shelf, please visit: [http://www.sscommons.org/openlibrary/](http://www.sscommons.org/openlibrary/).

Fall of 2017 saw an increase of 57% in Symposium participation from the previous semester and an increase of 152% from our inaugural Symposium in spring 2015. This has shown a strong positive trend for student engagement with the library that we hope to continue going forward. Not only has participation increased, but the diversity of the subject material presented has as well. Our first Symposium included only five different subject areas, namely Art, Business, Education, Criminal Justice, and Psychology. We have since seen eight additional subjects added, including Ecology, Physical Education, Social Work, Biology, English, Athletic Training, Professional Communication, and History. For more information on our Student Symposium, please visit: [http://libguides.limestone.edu/studentsymposium](http://libguides.limestone.edu/studentsymposium).
The printed codex, the format of the typical book that we all know and love, has been the standard in academic libraries for several hundred years. However, despite its cultural preeminence and numerical dominance, the printed book, along with literacy itself, seems recently to have fallen on hard times. In fact, in academic libraries, circulation numbers for print materials have declined by nearly 50% since the early 1990s, according to Rick Anderson, a librarian-researcher at the University of Utah. Most academic libraries, including ours, in the face of inevitable space limitations, have shifted their collection development emphasis toward the purchase of electronic books. Due to ease of use, portability, economical price packaging, and their being virtually unlimited by storage considerations, electronic books have surged in availability. Particularly, for an institution such as Limestone, with its student population spread across the state and, indeed, around the world, ebooks have fit the bill very nicely. In fact, ebooks make up nearly 78% of our current book collection.

The great challenge for our library, as we face the eventual move to a new space, is “rightsizing” our print collection. Our circulation figures fluctuate considerably from year to year, and although circulation numbers are generally down, the library retains its considerable value as the intellectual center of our campus. As Rick Anderson reminds us, “It’s important not to assume that declining circulation rates mean declining use of library resources overall.” Students and faculty still seem to gravitate toward print books; they like something they can check out and take with them. As anyone can attest who has spent much time trying to read an ebook from a computer screen, print remains an attractive and essential medium for transmitting written knowledge.

As our library staff proceeds with a plan to weed some of our print items from the collection, we need to remember that we are not necessarily forfeiting information and knowledge. By permanently removing some materials, replacing worn and obsolete volumes through use of qualitative and quantitative evaluation, as well as allowing a large portion of the reference collection to circulate – all of these strategies come into play in the modern Limestone College library. And, we here are certainly not working in isolation. The availability of many collaborative partners, such as the PASCAL consortium among academic libraries in South Carolina as well as other interlibrary loan approaches, ensures that we are continuing to create invaluable new ways to expand and better use our precious library resources for the benefit of our learning community.
Although the College’s archives location is one of the more hidden areas of the library, 2018 is shaping out to be an active year for preservation. The archives is now staffed by an archivist and a student assistant, who are giving their attention to the newly arrived Walt Griffin Collection and the Limestone College Archives Digitization Project.

A presidential transition usually focuses an institution’s attention on its current needs and new future possibilities. Nevertheless, particularly when the departing leader had a long tenure, as was the case with President Emeritus Griffin, the transition also brings about the end of an era. The role of the archivist is to preserve the past, not so much for the present generation, but for the next one to come. To that end, Dr. Griffin handed over many documents from the Office of the President related to his tenure, which are currently being processed. Eventually, the Griffin Papers will be available for researchers (at Limestone and beyond) who want to understand this eventful period in Limestone’s history.

With the help of our new student assistant Kiana Machado, we have begun the long process of digitizing the College’s historic records. Libraries are at their best when they transmit knowledge.

The goal of the digitization project is to make the College’s historic documents, complete with interpretive finding aids, easily available online for the benefit of researchers. The initial digitization efforts are focusing on the materials from the first 100 years of Limestone’s history (1845-1945). By the end of the semester, the collection of Limestone’s Annual Catalogues should be accessible through the Library’s Shared Shelf platform (http://www.sscommons.org/openlibrary/).

Library instruction in the twenty-first century requires a holistic approach. The title of “information literacy librarian” represents the shifting role of the academic librarian, who was once usually referred to as an instruction or reference librarian. As in the past, the librarians educate their patrons, both in the use of the library’s materials and in the craft of college-level research. Additionally, librarians in the academy and in other settings are required to help their patrons understand and find information, both within the library and outside of it, particularly on the expanse of the open web. At Limestone, we are building a program that seeks to engage students in learning research skills at the different levels of college, from their first year until their last.

By building partnerships with faculty members from several disciplines, we are able to provide library instruction services and information literacy instruction to students with the goal of bettering their performance both in their overall progress in college and on their projects for specific classes. We first see students in their first semester for an orientation. Later, they return for their introduction to research in their general English courses. As juniors and seniors, they come to the library for their higher-level assignments and capstone projects.

For the students in the Online and Evening Programs, our Information Literacy Librarian makes periodic visits to the various sites across the state. Since he is not able to visit each campus every term, he also provides instruction services to the students via webinars for both the beginning and more advanced levels. By giving instruction in whatever format necessary, we hope not only to educate students to be good consumers of information, but also to familiarize them with the library as a component of the College’s academic support system. By the time they graduate, students should have a good understanding of academic research and how it impacts the information they consume on a daily basis. As they move into the workforce, our students will hopefully take the research skills they learned at Limestone with them as one of a number of transferrable skills.