

Conant Library Annual Report 2019-2020

**Submitted
by Jim Douglas, Director**

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This Annual Report presents the major Library activities for the past academic year.

By The Numbers

	2019-2020	2018-19	2017-18	2016-17	2015-16
Items in the collection (hard copy books, videos)	24,613	25,836	27,627	28,677	30,392
Circulation transactions (includes books, media and e-books but not Reserves)	1,005**	1,059	1,148	1,008	1,246
Ebooks in the collection	184,958	163,501	150,177	144,048	125,035
Times ebooks accessed	720	483	501	258	130
Times Hard Copy Reserve items circulated, not including Textbooks	306**	386	308	359	667
Times Textbooks on Reserve circulated	1,966**	2,931	3,445	4,983	5,959
Classes receiving instruction	25*	43	35	38	47
Articles, books, videos borrowed from other libraries	226	277	240	360	223
Articles, books, videos loaned to other libraries	80	66	90	111	95
Times laptops / tablets / were loaned	380**	529	617	483	270/158/7

* large decrease due primarily to elimination of First-Year PDS classes

** Circulation statistics were presumably impacted by the campus closing after Spring Break due to Covid-19

STAFF

Library Director-----Jim Douglas, MLS
Systems and Instruction-----Matthew Haggard, MLIS
Patron Services-----Rosalba Onofrio, MLS
Weekend Supervisor-----Andrea Lee
Student Workers

Jim Douglas served on the Library and Information Resources Committee. He continued to serve on the Executive Board of the Worcester-area Academic and Research Collaborative (ARC). During the year he taught sessions for Strategic Management capstone classes, and Entrepreneurship classes. He also team taught a class on the history of Nichols with Assistant Professor Paul Lambert, making extensive use of the Nichols Archives. Jim was recruited for the second year in a row to relate some campus ghost stories for parents during Family Weekend.

Matthew Haggard served on the Library and Information Resources Committee. He led redesign and development of new updated Library Website and online forms for various requests. Along with one-on-one research consultations, Matthew taught 20 class sessions in various disciplines, including Sport Management, English, CRIT/WRR, and 21 brief PDS classes. During the course of the year Matthew attended various ACRL and ARC workshops, courses and meetings, including: ACRL Instruction Section, Management and Leadership Committee, Leadership Discussion Series webinars; MLS/ALA Library Management Series Webinars; NELIG Spring Conference (virtual); #LIBREV(olution) Conference (virtual); OCLC Webinars/Roundtables for WMS Best Practices and Product Insights; and ARC Research and Instruction and Technology SIG meetings.

Rosalba Onofrio attended meetings of the Worcester Area Academic and Research Collaborative (ARC) Access Services Interest Group, participated in ACRL-ASIG Virtual Forums: *Dealing with Mental Health Issues as Front Line Staff*, attended FDC event: *Teaching Metacognition to Students*, attended ZOOM training session, and instructed Italian 1 (Fall 2019 and Spring 2020)

Andrea Lee served as the weekend Patron Access Services Assistant.

This academic year we employed 21 student workers (11 at the Circulation Desk and 10 at the STAR Desk), and one weekend access services assistant.

COVID-19 RESPONSE

The library staff is committed to helping faculty and students access the services and resources they need for their teaching and learning as seamlessly as possible during the COVID-19 pandemic. Although the physical library closed in March, we were able to continue providing many of our services and resources online. Remote access to our databases continued as usual. Utilizing chat, email, and phone our research support and interlibrary loan services remained in operation. Remote library instruction continued to be available for interested faculty.

Like most of the College's staff, Librarians transitioned to remote operations from home, with a few periodic visits to campus to collect mail, process returned books and Interlibrary Loans, return borrowed textbooks, scan and send needed items for faculty and students, etc. Staff regularly kept in touch via Teams and Zoom, phone and email. Communication with student workers continued during March and April via TEAMS. Student workers were able to use their accumulated MA sick time to cover some of their work hours.

As opportunities to access digital resources were being made public, such as the availability of free online textbooks from major publishers through *RedShelf.com* and *VitalSource.com*, this information was forwarded to the Dean of Academic Affairs for distribution to faculty and students as well as pushing out announcements on the Library's social media, homepage, and with emails. These online resources eliminated the need to scan material for students who often relied on our Textbooks on Reserve collection.

Delivery of hard copy magazines and newspapers was suspended as of May 1 and renewals were halted until a clearer picture of where we would be in the fall could be ascertained.

The curator of the College Archives immediately began documenting and preserving the historic impact of COVID-19 on Nichols. Internal communications and public announcements from the administration as well as 'I Was There' writing assignments from HIST 217 (The History of Nichols College) and HIST 270 (Public History) have been collected and archived.

Staff are currently planning for how the library can be physically open and continue to provide its resources and services safely for all in the fall.

INFORMATION RESOURCES

- The Library currently provides access to thirty-seven databases, including several new databases that were added this Spring, courtesy of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
- Our subscription to the online *Wall Street Journal* was dropped due to low usage.
- There are currently 184,000+ full-text ebooks available via Proquest's eBook Central.
- Faculty can request course-related feature films for on and off-campus streaming via Swank Digital Campus.

PATRON SERVICES

The 2019-2020 highlights from the Patron Services Department include:

- Covering 102 hours weekly at the circulation desk by the Circulation team.
- Transitioning from Staffhub to TEAMS for scheduling and messaging with all library student workers.
- Updating and reorganizing the Patron Services Department/Circulation Desk information in the new website, <https://hub.nichols.edu/departments/conant-library>, along with updating training documents and brochures.
- Hiring and training of new circulation desk student assistants – 5 new workers in the Fall and 2 new workers in the Spring.
- Collaborating with the Student Government Association to provide access to a select number of video games (XBOX1 and PS4).

STAR DESK

The Support for Technology and Academic Research (STAR) Desk provides assistance in the library to students with issues with personal devices and library hardware and to evening GPS faculty in Fels classrooms.

Trained jointly by I.T. and Library staff, STAR Desk student workers were responsible for answering directional reference questions and helping students, staff, and faculty with basic technology-related questions/problems across campus.

- 155 tickets were opened with 147 resolved in-house (this does not include troubleshooting printer issues, teaching students how to use the library scanners, various issues with Word, PowerPoint, and Excel, and assisting faculty with classroom technology).

USER EDUCATION

Outreach

Information about the Library's services and resources is distributed to first year students (undergraduate and graduate) through an insert in their orientation packet. Two newsletters are distributed via e-mail to the campus community and news is also electronically disseminated on an ad hoc basis as

appropriate via e-mail or on our website. We also began working more closely with MarComm to push out messages on social media, and mounted a campaign to increase awareness of the library's services and resources and new home on the Hub.

Instruction

The Library's instruction program is dedicated to improving students' ability to use information resources effectively. Instruction is offered in support of coursework in academic subjects in the form of formal group instruction, in online guides, point-of-use aids in the library, and informal point-of-need contacts with individual students. Instructional Services provides resource guides online and in hardcopy in the library.

- 25 class sessions received formal instruction this year. Disciplines included Management, Sport Management, Business Communication, History, English, Human Resources, and Entrepreneurship. Topics included: introduction to research and library resources, the research process, looking beyond Google for information, advanced database searching, and direct assignment-specific Q&A sessions. Instruction often combines lecture/demonstration with active learning applications.
- Twenty student-requested one-on-one research-related meetings also occurred.

A major change to the Library instruction program occurred in the fall with the shortening of the Library's contact with first-year students in their PDS classes. Instead of its usual one-shot 75-minute session contact was limited to brief 10-15 minute tours of the physical space. Sessions in previous years were never intended to make students competent researchers (that would have been an unrealistic goal given the time allotted and lack of continued follow-up) but rather to simply introduce them to the Library facility and the website, and increase awareness about some of our basic services and a couple of article databases. The curtailing of this session may have contributed to first-year student's apparent unawareness of the Library's home on the Web and perhaps to the noticeable decrease in database usage this fall as well.

LIBRARY WEBSITE

Our patrons' interaction with the Library and its resources is often (and for some, only) through the Web. Last summer I.T. rolled out a new College website for departments, including the Library, which they called The Hub. Library staff spent considerable time and effort creating new pages and transferring content from the old site to the new. Shortly into the fall semester a substantial drop in Library site visits compared to previous years was identified. Even though the Library had issued a number of announcements heralding the Library's new web address a survey of students and faculty revealed a basic unawareness of The Hub and the Library's new online location. Staff quickly mounted a campaign to increase campus awareness of the Library's services, resources, and new home on the Hub using social media, emails to students and faculty, and campus-wide posters and monitor slides. Site visits remained subpar for much of the fall semester but then began to rise at the beginning of second semester.

Use of the Library's online resources is highly contingent on faculty assignments as well as students' ability to find, and satisfaction with, the information resources we provide. That being said, the Library recognizes the need to continually provide value and to communicate and promote that to our various constituents.

THE FACILITY

The library continues to be an active center of campus life for academic work, social gathering, group meetings, relaxing, reading, web browsing, and printing. During the year, library space was utilized not only for individual study and pc usage but also course instruction, group study and club meetings, as well as art exhibits.

- Library space, including entire floors or group study rooms, were reserved 71 times in *25Live*.
- Starting in the fall, two tutors from the Academic Resource Center (ARC) were housed in one of the Library's offices from 7 to 9 PM on Tuesdays and Wednesdays in an effort to increase availability and use of their services.
- Photos by Christopher O'Connor and paintings by Marion A. Kolbe graced our Main and Upper Floor art spaces fall semester and spring semester respectively.

The Library's last complete renovation was in 1998. This February, a large grant proposal was submitted to a major foundation (special thanks to Susan Veshi, Bob LaVigne and Justin Dolan) that, if fully funded, will enable us to do a total renovation of the Library, including new carpeting, furniture, painting and air control. This renovation, which would take place over 2 – 3 years, would give staff the opportunity to plan for a library that will serve our current and future students and faculty in terms of preferred learning and studying environments. We were originally scheduled to receive an official response before May, but the COVID-19 situation pushed that back to mid-to-late fall.

GIFTS/GRANTS

As noted above, this past February, a large grant proposal was submitted to a major foundation (special thanks to Susan Veshi, Bob LaVigne and Justin Dolan) that, if fully funded, will enable us to do a total renovation of the Library, including new carpeting, furniture, painting and (possibly) air control. We were originally scheduled to receive an official response before May, but the COVID-19 situation pushed that back to mid-to-late fall.

NICHOLS ARCHIVES

The Nichols Archives maintains College-related material of historical importance. Included among the many record series are: material concerning the College's founding (including its predecessors, Nichols Academy, Nichols Junior College, and Nichols College of Business Administration); descriptions of the College and its buildings; photographs; faculty, staff, student, and alumni publications including Senior Theses; campus newspapers and literary publications; student yearbooks; scrapbooks; records of athletic competition, student organizations and activities; administrative reports and general records; papers and correspondence of Presidents, faculty and alumni; and minutes and reports of the Board of Trustees. The Archives also house some 300 books, c. 1809-1920, from Nichols Academy's early library collection, financial records from the H. Conant Real Estate Company, and the Goodell Collection (sermons and published works of Methodist clergyman and author, Charles L. Goodell [1854-1937]).

The Archive's resources were utilized a number of times this year by administrators, students, and outside researchers. Material from the Archives was used to support and inform the campus community of

the college's history by providing images and information for the exhibit cases in Davis Hall, the Library, and NAB and for a regular column in the *Nichols Magazine*. Students from two courses, The History of Nichols and Public History, were introduced to the Archive this year, learning about its contents, significance, and procedures. Students from The History of Nichols class did extensive research on various topics using primary sources from the Archive.

As noted above, the curator of the College Archives immediately began documenting and preserving the historic impact of COVID-19 on the College. Public announcements made by the College administration as well as 'I Was There' writing assignments from HIST 217 (The History of Nichols College) and HIST 270 (Public History) have been collected and archived.

RESOURCE SHARING/CONSORTIAL AGREEMENTS

Conant Library and its users benefit a great deal from our membership in various library organizations and associations. For example, expensive resources can often be purchased at a much greater discount than would otherwise be possible and staff can attend professional development seminars and workshops for free or at a reduced rate. Also, resource sharing continues to provide access to a variety of resources that are not owned by and available at Conant Library. For example, students and faculty can access useful databases from the Boston Public Library with a quick and easy-to-obtain e-card.

Currently, the Library is a member of:

- Online Computer Library Center (OCLC), a non-profit library service and research organization that provides a database of bibliographic and library holdings information for more than 25,000 libraries worldwide for interlibrary loan facilitation.
- Massachusetts Library System (MLS), which provides access to state-funded databases, a weekly shuttle service for Interlibrary Loan, and professional development opportunities.
- Academic and Research Collaborative (ARC), which provides cross-borrowing privileges with the Worcester Public Library and many of the Worcester-area college libraries, knowledge sharing, and continuing education opportunities.
- Westchester Academic Library Directors Organization (WALDO) through which we subscribe to several online databases at a reduced rate.