Dean’s Message

Building the Library Master Plan

This semester includes several key events for the library and the campus that are bringing about more than the usual feeling of “fresh start” that comes with a new year. In March, the campus will undergo an evaluation for reaffirmation of accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). During the three-day visit, the team will follow up on any questions remaining from the self-study and talk about the many ways we fulfill our mission.

The recently released Academic Master Plan provides the framework for the library’s strategic directions. The Walker Library’s strategy and objectives of the past three years have focused on refreshing technology, updating or creating processes that support collection building, introducing several new services as part of our Digital Scholarship initiative, and redefining positions to align with the needs of a 21st-century library.

On January 14, following months of development of a plan with the library leadership, I revealed the draft of the library’s strategic directions for the next five years to the library faculty and staff. I presented the alignment of the library plan with the Academic Master Plan’s focus of engagement, community, and innovation. During the next eighteen months, the library will focus on recruiting key faculty positions, building a program of assessment and data sharing, and evaluating the quality of the user experience in all interactions with the library. During the Spring 2016 term, we will refine our objectives through detailed discussion within the library, gather input from the campus, and further refine our plan for publication on the library website.

The library priorities for 2016–2017 are:

- Expanding our understanding and improving the user experience in all interactions with the library.
- Establishing a data “warehouse” for library transactional data, usability studies, and growth metrics that are consistent and accessible of decision-making at every level.
- Completing key recruitments.

What is new in the library

Sprucing up: The library is an important campus recruitment tool for students and faculty, plus serves as a point of pride. To maintain the appearance (as well as our collections and services), we reupholstered much-loved lounge chairs, added more tables to our laptop bar, and persistently work with facilities to maintain a clean and well-kept environment.

Attention to student needs: Our statistics show that the single, most frequent complaint is about noise, although the data shows those complaints represent less than one half of one percent of users in the library. We nevertheless responded in a variety of ways to encourage compliance with our Quiet Zones.

Space use changes: We are experimenting with a different space as a collaborative meeting space for students and faculty to schedule. Meeting Space 4 has moved to an enclosed space that seats up to 56—when not scheduled, this is an open study space. During finals exam week, this space will be dedicated to study space.

Learning opportunities through Digital Scholarship seminars: We have established a digital scholarship lab on the second floor of the library, which is the workspace and meeting space for the development and publication of campus scholarly materials. We are now also offering seminars on topics such as digital preservation issues and application of geospatial software to better visualize research findings.

What is in the works: Makerspace

We are designing a new interactive learning space, typically called a Makerspace, aimed at providing the hardware and expertise for students to learn a bit about programming, working with and building robotic parts, and expanding our 3-D technologies. The contact for makerspace initiative is Neal McClain (neal.mcclain@mtsu.edu).
Digital Media Studio
by Amy Burks

The Digital Media Studio (DMS) located on the second floor is one of the most popular features of the Walker Library. The service offers knowledgeable staff who provide direction, consultation, and technology for the creation of multimedia projects. From preparing PowerPoint pages to editing video and music, students use technology in the DMS for their media presentations. What is unique about this studio is that students from any major, at any level in their educational career, and with any ability can use the DMS. Highly trained students can help their peers.

With the recent retirement of DMS manager Lynda Duke, we saw the opportunity to look closely at the services the DMS offers our students. Because this area has ever-changing technology, including equipment and software, we are evaluating how it will change with technology and how to respond to new initiatives such as MT Engage and its ePortfolio. Amy Burks will be interim manager of the DMS while services and resources are evolving.

At this point we are focusing on the tech training of all the student consultants in the DMS to keep them sharp in the use of the media editing software and equipment. An exciting new possibility that we are researching now is the addition of Makerspace services as an interactive learning space in the Library.

New people, new services, and new opportunities for students.

Access the DMS online resources at library.mtsu.edu/dms.

Have questions? Contact the DMS manager at 615-904-8525 or libdms@mtsu.edu.

Creating a Learning Environment
by Kristen Keene, External Relations Specialist

As most faculty members know, libraries have massive collections of materials. The Walker Library is no exception. We have more than one million volumes physically here in the building in print—and equally as many available electronically online. Departments and their library liaisons carefully select these materials that assist faculty and students in the classroom and in research. The library works diligently selecting resources that you need. We are constantly evaluating what we have, how much it is used, if there is something better, and whether cost savings are available.

What you may not realize is how equally diligent the Walker Library works to create an excellent learning environment for students. That ranges from the research, technology, and writing and tutoring assistance students get throughout the building via our help desks to the sound buffers we installed in all student study rooms to keep noise down.

Just this past semester, the Walker Library offered additional group study rooms and extended final exam hours in response to student requests. All 150 lounge chairs have been recovered. Four new laptop bars with charging ports have been added to the two very popular ones on the third-floor balcony (the best view on campus BTW!). The Quiet Zones have extra enforcement because students tell us they need a place to escape their loud roommate so they can get their work done!

Another way of enriching the library as a learning environment is to keep students informed of campus and library events. We have hired a recent graphic design student to coordinate our social media and to incorporate social media into our increasing number of digital signs in the library.

Creating an ideal learning space for students is a mission for the Walker Library and contributes directly to students’ success.

LAST SEMESTER IN THE LIBRARY

• More than 60,000 people used the Walker Library’s website each week!
• Over 38,000 books, media, laptops, and other equipment were checked out from the Library.
• More than 22,000 people were assisted with research, media projects, and technology at the library help desks.
• 90,000 searches were performed using the library catalog!
• Over 450,000 people visited the library during Fall 2015 semester. That’s more than 28,000 people per week!!
• The top viewed item in the library’s JEWLScholar institutional repository was viewed over 650 times from all over the world!
The creation of the university’s first-ever Digital Humanities (DH) Seminar Series was one of the library’s Fall 2015 highlights.

The goal was to bring DH awareness to campus, especially giving graduate students a chance to learn and explore digital humanities topics and gain experience with digital humanities scholarship. The MTSU Association of Graduate Students in History and the Walker Library worked together to develop the series.

The DH Seminar Series officially kicked off last September, and the plan is to continue to run the seminars as a three-part series each Fall and Spring semester. Each seminar, which has a designated speaker and topic, begins with a discussion of the suggested readings, follows with a presentation from the keynote speaker, and ends with an open discussion forum—which has included project design questions, digital resources, best practices, and other areas of guidance.

Fall 2015 seminar topics included the Intersection of Digital and Public History; StoryMaps; and ArcGIS.

Potential topics for the Spring 2016 lineup include

- **February 26:** Public History Phd Candidate Showcase
- **March 4:** DH Topic
- **April 1:** Podcasting
- **April 15:** Student Showcase

The Spring 2016 series will be held from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. once a month on select Fridays in February, March, and April.

Once the schedule is finalized, it will be published on the Digital Scholarship Initiatives website, library.mtsu.edu/dsi.

Attendance is welcome from anyone on campus with DH interests, including faculty, staff, and students.

Invitations are sent via email. To be added to the list, please email digitalscholar@mtsu.edu.

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**Library Study and Research Guides**

Did you know that Walker Library’s librarians have created research guides for a variety of subjects and for many MTSU courses to help you and your students locate information resources? Visit libraryguides.mtsu.edu to view the available guides.

Each library research guide is organized to point you to relevant library databases, reference materials, books, websites, and other reliable information sources. Research guides also provide citation formatting help and a link to Ask a Librarian, the library’s online chat service and FAQ system.
February. The month of love. The month when everyone thinks about heart-shaped candy, roses, and relationships. At Middle Tennessee State University, our relationship with our faculty and students is one we cherish, and we invite you to support the heart of MTSU—the James E. Walker Library. Love your library—to donate online visit: www.mtsu.edu/supportlibrary.

Donate by mail:
Walker Library, MTSU Box 13
Murfreesboro, TN 37132
(Make checks payable to the MTSU Foundation—Walker Library.)

Need more info?
Visit library.mtsu.edu or contact Kristen at 615-898-5376 by email kristen.keene@mtsu.edu.