# GRINNELL COLLEGE

# Grinnell College Libraries
## Annual Report, 2015-2016

*Contents:*

## 1. Progress on 2015-16 Strategic Plan Actions

**Teaching and Learning**

One of the most important duties of the Grinnell College Libraries is providing students and faculty with access to the materials they need for teaching and learning, and a crucial part of the way the Libraries fulfill that duty is by managing the College's reserve and e-reserve systems. This year, the Libraries made changes to those systems focused on improving the efficiency of the process for staff (both ASAs and library staff), **improving the e-reserve experience** for users with disability accommodations, keeping the College in compliance with ever-changing copyright laws, and making the most efficient use of the College's financial resources. These changes included moving the staff side of the e-reserves process into GrinnellShare and, in close collaboration with ITS, automating more of the process and giving ASAs more information about the status of their e-reserve requests. We have also begun, where possible, purchasing e-book copies of books to be placed on e-reserve, rather than scanning and posting chapters from the books. Scanned chapters can be problematic for users who consume the text via screen-readers, since the optical character recognition (OCR) process by which scanned text are made machine-readable is not perfect; using an e-book created by the publisher generally results in more accurate machine-readable text. Purchasing an e-book copy means that students who are intrigued by the excerpt they are assigned to read for class and want to read further in the book can do so, since, when we buy an e-book, all students on campus have access to the entire book forever. (When a chapter from a book is placed on e-reserve, only students in the class have

access to it, and they only have access to a limited portion of the book.) Also, if portions of the same book will be placed on e-reserve for multiple semesters, it often works out to be less expensive in the long run to buy the e-book rather than to pay for permission to post chapters from the book multiple times.

Additionally, the Grinnell College Libraries continue to work to **expand access to primary sources for teaching and learning**, both by purchasing primary source collections for our students and by digitizing our unique primary sources to be used by scholars and students around the world. This year we have collaborated with several faculty to help them and their students digitize primary source collections held by Grinnell. These include the "Grinnell in China" collection from the College Archives, a collection of Roman coins held by the Classics department, and the mineral and fossil collection that formerly was housed in the Parker Natural History Museum. In all of these cases, the digitization is carried out by students working under the dual supervision of a faculty advisor with domain knowledge and library staff with knowledge of digitization and cataloging. As these collections are digitized, they are entered into Digital Grinnell and made available to users both on and off campus. We have also purchased access to new digital primary source collections, including *American History, 1493-1945* (60,000 primary source documents); *African American Historical Newspapers, Series 2* (75 newspapers published in 22 states and the District of Columbia between 1835 and 1956); and the *Women's Magazine Archive* (six leading women's magazines published between 1883 and 2005).

We also spent much of the year **rethinking our research literacy instruction program**. In January of 2016 the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), the major professional organization for North American academic libraries, adopted a new "Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education." This Framework envisions information literacy in a radically different way than ACRL's former guiding document on information literacy, the Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education. While the Standards focused on mastery of specific research skills, the Framework encourages teaching a higher-level, more conceptual understanding of the activities of research and the processes by which information is created and disseminated. At the same time, three of Grinnell's librarians were working on a study of the impact of our research literacy instruction (described below under "Primary Analytic Activities and Plans"). Both these new professional guidelines and our study indicate that upper-division students will be best served by research literacy sessions focusing less on database search skills and more on conceptual topics such as identifying (rather than using) promising online and print research tools, considering a range of potential material for a given research assignment, and articulating how a potential source could be integrated into their academic writing. Throughout the past year, Grinnell's librarians met with faculty members at a range of departmental and campus gatherings to discuss disciplinary goals for student research. In the coming academic year, we will continue these discussions, exploring questions such as what research concepts should respective disciplinary majors learn, when in departmental curricula will this learning take place, and might research literacy sessions be developed to facilitate

student learning?  It is our intention that these discussions contribute to the campus initiative of creating significant research experiences for all Grinnell students.

**Grinnell Learning Place**

We continue to search for low-cost ways to enhance Burling and Kistle Libraries as spaces for collaborative and individual studying. In 2015-16, we built on the successful projects carried out in 2014-15 (expanding Burling Lounge and adding a hearing loop to the space) and 2013-14 (creating the Peer Mentoring and Collaboration Space). One of the popular innovations in the Peer Mentoring and Collaboration Space was "laptop bars": bar-height desks that allow students to work while standing, which lets them reap the widely-reported health benefits of spending less time sitting. This year we installed laptop bars in Kistle for the first time, and this summer we are adding two additional laptop bars on the south side of Burling's first floor. We also added two bicycle desks—stationary bicycles with large, adjustable-height work surfaces—to the south side of Burling for students who want to be even more physically active while studying.

This summer, space in the basement of Burling that was vacated when we moved the media collections to open, browsable stacks in 2011 is being renovated to create a production studio. The video production studio currently located in Faculty House (where it is available by appointment only and is not wheelchair accessible) will be moved into the space, allowing easy access by students, faculty and staff for the full 110 hours per week that Burling Library is open. Locating the production studio in Burling, immediately adjacent to the College's audiovisual collections, will make it easier for students to "close the loop" of scholarship, referring to and drawing on others' creative and scholarly efforts as they create their own works.

We also made changes to Burling and Kistle to better facilitate group work and peer mentoring. We enclosed two open study nooks in Kistle to create additional group study spaces, and the renovation of the media space in Burling's basement will create another group study room in the former media room office. We are also expanding "sound masking" (the use of sophisticated white noise generators that selectively dampen the frequencies used in human speech), which was previously only in use in the Peer Mentoring and Collaboration space in the northeast corner of the first floor of Burling, throughout the first and second floors. This will allow small groups to converse with each other as they study or work on group projects, but will not allow their speech to carry far enough to disturb others working nearby.

**Alumni Engagement**

The staff in Special Collections and Archives has continued and expanded their ongoing efforts to engage with alumni. A new initiative this year was a "photo identification table" near the registration desk for the Alumni Reunion. Special Collections houses a large number of photographs of Grinnell that lack identifying information. The staff selected some unidentified photographs from each reunion cohort and asked alumni to help identify the people and events

depicted. Roughly 75 people stopped by the table, looked at 234 photos, and helped identify 229 people. These photos can now be uploaded to Digital Grinnell with complete metadata, allowing alumni and others to search by name and find photographs of themselves, their friends, or their ancestors. This event was extremely popular with the alumni; DAR even got complaints from some alumni about the fact that the photo identification table was only available on Friday, not all weekend!

The staff in Special Collections and Archives have begun managing the Libraries' social media presence and using social media to more effectively connect with alumni. Every week they post a "Throwback Thursday" photograph on Facebook and Instagram; again, these are usually photographs with little identifying information. Alumni are encouraged to comment and identify people and events in the photographs or to share their memories of the person, place, or event depicted, and several alumni have done so.

## 2. Identifying and Addressing Areas of Risk

A major risk being faced by academic libraries of all types and sizes is the loss of access to critical parts of the historical and scholarly record. In some cases, Grinnell students and faculty may lose access to these resources because we can no longer afford to purchase them, as prices for scholarly journals continue to rise far faster than the rate of inflation. In other cases, access to "born-digital" documents may be lost completely when their publishers go out of business, or if the documents are not migrated to new formats as the old formats become obsolete.

Because this risk exists on so many different levels, a wide variety of strategies are necessary to address it. Locally, the Grinnell College Libraries continue to spend approximately $20,000 per year converting audio recordings of local concerts and events from the now-obsolete digital audiotape (DAT) format to modern digital audio formats such as MP3. At this rate, we expect to complete conversion of the DAT collection by 2018.

Within the state of Iowa, Grinnell is partnering with five other schools in the Central Iowa Collaborative Collections Initiative (CI-CCI) to ensure that at least two copies of older scholarly books are preserved within Iowa. As part of this partnership, certain schools agree to retain their copies of older, lesser-used books, which lets the other schools withdraw their copies, secure in the knowledge that their patrons will be able to interlibrary loan those books from other nearby schools should they need them. (Grinnell has not yet withdrawn any books based on the CI-CCI agreement.)

Nationally, the open-access movement is attempting to find a new economic model for scholarly publishing that will better control costs and increase access to scholarly materials for everyone. Grinnell supports several organizations that seek to make digital versions of scholarly materials freely available. Our largest commitment, in terms of both time and money, to these organizations has been to Lever Press, an open-access monographic press sponsored by

institutions within the Oberlin Group and operated as a collaboration between Amherst College Press and Michigan Publishing. A Grinnell history professor was named to Lever Press's editorial board this year, and the incoming Librarian of the College has been involved with Lever Press from the beginning and continues to serve on its Oversight Committee.

## 3. Challenges, Achievements, and Opportunities

A major achievement for the entire Iowa library community this year was the launch of the Iowa Academic Library Alliance (IALA). Although the members of the Iowa Private Academic Libraries group have long collaborated around a variety of issues, and have saved large sums of money by acting as a consortium for database purchasing, IALA marks the first time that all three types of academic libraries in Iowa--private institutions, Regents' institutions, and community colleges--have joined together in a statewide collaboration. This should lead to further cost savings for Grinnell, as this larger consortium will have more bargaining power with our database vendors, as well as providing opportunities to collaborate around other issues facing academic libraries in the state.

One of the first projects of IALA addresses the risk discussed in the section above, that access to parts of the scholarly record could be lost. As journal content has moved online and print journal collections are seeing negligible use, libraries are collaborating to ensure that some print copies of journals are retained. For several years, Grinnell has collaborated with the Center for Research Libraries (Chicago) and the Five College Library Repository (Massachusetts) on creating and maintaining print journal archives there; we are now working with IALA as well to ensure that printed copies of certain titles are retained by at least one library in Iowa.

Another statewide achievement this year is the launch of a courier service to facilitate interlibrary loan. Instead of relying on FedEx to transport interlibrary loaned books between libraries, as we do now, a dedicated courier will transport items between the participating libraries. Nineteen libraries in Iowa are participating in the first, pilot year of the service, including all three of the Regents' institutions, eleven private institutions, two community colleges, and three public libraries. The courier service we are using, MOBIUS, is also used by 75 libraries in Missouri, including large academic institutions such as Washington University and the University of Missouri system. Beginning soon, we will also be able to use the courier to send interlibrary loan items to and from these libraries as well. We are already able to interlibrary loan items with all of these institutions, but using the courier rather than FedEx for delivery should save staff time spent packaging and processing interlibrary loan items, as well as providing faster delivery times.

## 4. Primary Areas of Focus for 2016-2017

We expect 2016-2017 to be a year of change for the Libraries, as we welcome a new Librarian of the College and a new Discovery and Integrated Systems Librarian, and as a familiar face rejoins

us in a newly-defined position, Humanities and Digital Scholarship Librarian. Thus, our primary area of focus for the year will be looking at our goals and operations with fresh eyes and determining where, exactly, we want and need to be going as a library.

## 5. Primary Analytic Activities and Plans

Three of the librarians spent the last three years working on an assessment of our upper-level research literacy instruction as part of Assessment in Action, a national program carried out by the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL; the major professional organization for North American academic librarians) and funded by a grant from the Institute for Museum and Library Services. The results of this assessment project have spurred us to rethink how we are providing research literacy instruction in upper-level classes, as described above. Earlier this year, an article based on this work was published in *College and Research Libraries,* ACRL's flagship journal, and it won this year's Research Award from the Iowa Library Association's chapter of ACRL.

This fall, the librarians plan a follow-up assessment project that will use the same protocol as our Assessment in Action project, but with Tutorial classes, to assess the impact of our research literacy work with first-year students.

This coming academic year, we will be working with ITS and OASIR to conduct the MISO Survey (www.misosurvey.org), a faculty and student satisfaction survey, designed by and for liberal arts colleges, that measures satisfaction with information services provided by both IT and the library. MISO is a nationally-recognized survey that is conducted regularly by many of our peer institutions.

We also have begun an intensive assessment of our collection usage and collection development policies. We last intensively assessed the usage of our print book collection in 2010-11. Following that assessment, we made a number of changes in our policies for purchasing books, most notably moving away from a "just-in-case" model of purchasing books that we thought a student or faculty member might want someday towards a "just-in-time" model of purchasing books on demand. Since 2010-11 we have also greatly increased our purchases of e-books, especially when purchasing items for course reserve. Now that we have been operating under this new collection development model for five years, we feel that we have enough data to do a full, fair analysis of its cost-effectiveness.

# I. Statistics (2014-2015 and 2013-2014)

NOTE: Annual statistics are prepared in the fall for the preceding fiscal year. This report covers FY2014-2015 and 2013-2014.

|  | *2014-2015* | *2013-2014* |
|---|---|---|
| *Library Use:* | | |
| **Gate count (typical week)** | 4,097 | 3,349 |
| **Total circulation (books, CDs, DVDs, etc.)** | 37,524 | 44,719 |
| **Total full-text article downloads** | 470,710 | 296,811 |
| **ILL borrowed** | 3,672 | 3,737 |
| **ILL provided** | 4,996 | 4,738 |
| **Reference Questions** | 4,200 | 4,020 |
| **Group Instructional Sessions** | 137 | 137 |
| **Hours per week** | 110 | 110 |
| *Library Staff:* | | |
| **Librarians** | 10 | 8 |
| **Professional staff** | 3 | 3 |
| **Support staff** | 11.7 | 11.7 |
| **Annual student hours** | 16,376 | 16,891 |
| *Library Collections:* | | |
| **Total physical volumes held (including Gov Docs)** | 768,671 | 758,551 |
| **E-books available** | 409,888 | 399,201 |
| **Serials subscriptions received (all formats)** | 57,817 | 45,515 |
| **Audiovisual items** | 37,430 | 37,146 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Acquisitions expenditures (one-time purchases)** | $333,102 | $304,933 |
| **Acquisitions expenditures (subscriptions)** | $1,161,447 | $1,284,776 |