2012


George C. Gordon Library

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Annual Report 2011-2012

Highlights

The 2011-2012 academic year was another record breaker for the Gordon Library. More visitors passed through the library doors, more instruction sessions were held, and more access was provided to library resources than in years past. An updated library website served as the online gateway to the vast array of electronic databases, journals, and now electronic book collections. The anchor in the center of the new website is a powerful searching tool called Summon. With this tool researchers are able to perform inquiries into huge numbers of sources with a single click and then easily narrow the results and link to many of the items in the collection in an instant. Finally, a suite of online tutorials expanded options for library access and instruction.

Links to significant library activities and initiatives:

Selected Yearbooks & WPI Journal/Transformations Now Accessible Online
Updated tutorials—How to get started on library research at WPI
IQP on Research Habits of Project Teams at WPI

Did you know?

On average 13,767 people entered the library each week last year.

The library provides access to over 200,000 electronic books and over 450,000 items — many available by open access sources.

The library hosted seven exhibits last year in two galleries and two display areas.

Over 924 people attended library receptions and events, many planned in partnership with WPI faculty and alumni.
Research and Instruction

With WPI’s project intensive curriculum, librarians were busy teaching students important lifelong research skills. Overall inquiries to research assistance staff increased by 65%. Librarians offered 363 course-related, general, and outreach sessions to 5,500+ attendees, a five-year increase of 32%. Course-embedded instruction increased by 4.4% during the year and librarians worked with more humanities inquiry seminar students, but fewer Interactive Qualifying Project (IQP) teams. During this academic year, librarians doubled the number of instruction sessions with graduate-level students. Librarians also offer consultation services to faculty for research or course support or for assistance with cited reference searching for tenure or promotion.

Exciting Research and Instruction programs during the past year:

The Personal Librarian program—pairing a librarian to each section of the Great Problem Seminars and ID2050 Research Methods, the preparation course for WPI’s Global Projects Program — continued to increase engagement with students. Having a “personal” contact in the library helps reduce some of the fear students may have about asking for help with research. Based on surveys, 92% of IQP Global Project students reported they “strongly agree” or “agree” the research consultation improved their ability to perform research for their project.

A library-sponsored IQP co-advised by a librarian studied research habits of IQP teams and compared students’ skills to those of a research expert. This work helped librarians update the instructional program for the 100+ IQP project teams supported each year.

IEEE supported an engaging contest for science/engineering students using re-

Quick Facts

Two hundred sixty-four course-embedded research sessions reached 2,922 users.

Fifty general research workshops reached 253 attendees.

Sessions for graduate students increased from 17 last year to 36 this year.

More than 4,367 inquiries were answered by librarians and student research assistants.

This year librarians worked with Department Heads and Deans to provide more summative citation impact data for WPI.
search tools. More than 100 students participated, some completing the work as a course requirement.

Librarians worked with faculty on an Educational Development Grant to create a Namibia Travel Companion. Well received by students, this companion prepared them for their time abroad.

A new suite of online tutorials supports student research on all levels. These received inclusion in PRIMO Peer Reviewed Instructional Materials Online Database, a nationally recognized resource, for other libraries to share and use.

**Collections Management**

Collection Management Services staff provide access to print, electronic, and audio visual materials and collections through the library’s online catalog and digital collections systems and are responsible for preservation of materials. They participate in many projects, including digitizing past student IQP/MQP reports.

**Acquisitions**

Two new programs to improve library book selection were instituted in 2012. Library liaisons assigned to academic departments receive notification slips for new books and forward the most pertinent to faculty for consideration. The Collections Management Associate coordinated these efforts. The second, a new patron driven acquisitions process also began this year. Electronic book titles are listed the library catalog, but not purchased until viewed and used by a library patron. The Coutts’ MyiLibrary service supplied the library with items in the Humanities and Science, Technology, and Engineering.

**Cataloging**

In FY2012, 2375 new books and films were cataloged, 678 of these were visual materials, which will support increased use of films in many courses and a new film course in 2013. Collections Management also cataloged 325 gift books. Although most cataloging procedures remain as they have for many years, the library is looking ahead to the implementa-
tion of the new cataloging standard, Resource Description and Access (RDA) by the Library of Congress.

Preservation

The Preservation department faced several challenges during the past year. This included the rebinding of a datebook kept by Aldus Higgins, Class of 1893, part of a recent donation from the Higgins family, which detailed the construction of Higgins House. The book had been damaged by water and was still damp when received. The front cover was detached and the spine and back cover were missing. After carefully drying the volume, the spine was cleaned of old glue, new endpapers were constructed and sewn on, and a new cover made with cloth dyed to match the original.

Other work done by the Preservation Librarian included contracting with painting conservators at the Worcester Art Museum to treat the portrait of founding father Ichabod Washburn which had hung in Alden Hall. After restoration, the painting was hung in the Gordon Library Conference Room. The Preservation Librarian also facilitated the purchase of an oil painting of Charles Dickens painted shortly after his death. WPI librarians assisted curators of the “Dickens and Massachusetts” exhibition at the National Historic Park in Lowell in installation of artifacts and facilitated loan of material from Gordon Library’s Fellman Dickens Collection.

Quick Facts

This year 2375 items were added to the library collections. eBook Collections greatly expanded and we include Open Access titles: 4M+

800+ print IQP & MQP reports were scanned this year. Total since 2008 = 2291 scanned. Find them with the library’s Project search tab.

Collection of computer games to be circulated began with 60 games in xbox360, PS3, and DS format.

Over 100 volumes of WPI newspapers 1885-1999 were digitized from microfilm. Print versions of the Peddler 1960-1979 and the WPI Journal and Transformations 1971-2011 were digitized from print. These will form the core of WPI History Collection on Digital Commons@WPI. (For more information see page 7)
Collections

This year an intern from the Simmons College Graduate School of Library and Information Science, worked on collection assessments. Areas included in the analysis were architectural engineering, cyber security, neuroscience, nuclear engineering, systems dynamics, and professional writing. This work helps the library to better support growing research areas.

At the request of the Interactive Media and Game Collection Program, the library created a circulating collection of 60 computer games in xBox, Playstation, and DS formats. The film and bestseller collections were relocated to the third floor early in the summer of 2012 to accommodate growth of the very popular Information Commons on the second floor.

Library Exhibits

Library exhibits continue to be informative and/or inspirational. Gordon Library encourages participation by the WPI community. The Thomas Card Camera Collection exhibition was curated by WPI alumna and Archives volunteer Rachel Katz. The Morgan Construction Company exhibition told the story of a great corporation with many ties to WPI through the recent donation of the Morgan archives by the Morgan family. Images of China and Our Art highlighted the photographic and artistic talents of WPI students, faculty, and staff. Two additional exhibits were shown in the Class of 1941 Gallery: “Prints, Textiles, and Photographs: Architectural Abstractions across Three Generations” by Armin Landeck, Olga Rothschild, and Michael Heming and “Moving Parts: Steam Engine Models and Student Engineering Drawings.”

In addition, library exhibit cases displayed WPI faculty publications, the history of athletics on campus, and the Goat’s Head tradition, and recognized Black History month. Various rotating displays were installed stimulate the intellectual curiosity of the campus community.
Technology and E-Resources

The Technology and E-Resources Department, which includes the Associate Director for Technology and E-Resource Management and the Electronic Resources Librarian, manages the licenses and subscriptions to more than 150 databases and electronic journal and book packages, and the maintenance contracts for library software and hardware services. These subscriptions and services annually cost nearly two million dollars and make up a significant portion of the library budget. The department also administers the library catalog, serials, and digital asset management systems, along with the link resolver, proxy and discovery services. The department works closely with the WPI IT Department on software and hardware management and implementation.

Among the new resources added this year were AccessEngineering (engineering handbooks), Foundation Directory Online (grants information), and IBISWorld (business and industry analysis). Three existing resources were augmented with additional content: JSTOR (journal archives), Project Muse (full collection), and Scientific American (online back to 1845).

This year the E-Resources Department was involved in three major projects. The first was the rollout of the new Summon discovery service in August 2011. With Summon researchers can find most of the library’s physical and electronic resources from a single search box on the library home page. From mid-August 2011 to mid-July 2012 there were 60,676 visits (connections, sessions) to Summon, averaging 175 visits per day, and 237,636 searches, averaging 686 per day. Because Summon searches books, videos, and other materials found in the library catalog, library users do not need to consult the catalog as often because most items are in Summon. To keep Summon current, the library updates Summon nightly with items added to and deleted from the catalog. The need to consult the catalog less often appears to be borne out by comparing library catalog usage data from 2010-2011 (before Summon) with data from 2011-2012 (Summon’s first year). In 2010-2011 there were 161,140 catalog searches and 86,234 sessions (visits). In 2011-2012 those numbers dropped to 86,234 searches and 33,437 sessions. The department will continue to monitor usage data for both systems.
The second major project was the complete redesign of the library website and its migration to the WPI Content Management System. The department and other library staff worked closely with the WPI Web Operations team and an outside consultant on the transition of the website to the CMS, with the new site introduced to the community during the 2011-2012 winter break. The department also participates in the library’s new collaborative approach to website management.

A third major project was the selection and implementation of the Digital Commons repository, which will continue into 2013. The department also worked closely with the Research and Instruction Department on the implementation of two new tools, Libstats for tracking research assistance inquiries and Library H3lp, a tool which allows the library to provide reference service through online chat and text messages.

In the coming year the department will conclude an examination of next generation library systems that will inform FY14 budget requests and position the library to be ready to move to a new system in the coming 18-24 months. Also in the year ahead, the department will welcome a new Digital Initiatives Librarian who will lead the library’s digitization efforts.

**Archives and Special Collections**

During the past year, Archives & Special Collections has worked with donors and received and processed important collections and created finding aids for them, and provided reference services to WPI students, faculty and staff, and the general public.

The Archives and Special Collections department also prepared and installed a major exhibit of the Morgan Construction Company, with help from WPI Adjunct Assistant Professor
Charles Innis, a former long-time Morgan employee, and others. The opening reception during Homecoming Weekend was sponsored by the Alden Society and well-attended by the Morgan family, WPI faculty and staff, and community members. Professor Innis led tours of the exhibit for the WPI community and to a group of Morgan Retirees.

Students Xiaowen and Xiaolin Zhen completed translation of the Biography of Sarcey Chen. Mr. Chen was a member of the Class of 1924 and part of a Chinese rebellion against Japanese invaders. The library co-hosted, with the Alumni Office, a reception to celebrate Mr. Chen’s life and the book’s translation and publication. The Archives had 352 visitors to Archives & Special Collections, and assisted 152 people with reference queries, through visits, e-mail and phone calls.

Archives staff provided tours to the Student Alumni Society and the Chairs of the Sesquicentennial Committee, and hosted a tea for the Development and Alumni Relations staff. In a visit of students from Professor Fehribach’s Calculus IV class, Preservation Librarian Kathy Markees and Archivist Margaret Anderson showed and told about Newton’s Principia (published 1728) and some of the other old, rare books.

Some of the important donations received in the past year are:

- The Autobiography of Gompei Kuwada, in Japanese, received through his great-grandnephew, Arata Ichikawa, after Professor Ichikawa’s visit to WPI.
- Papers from the Higgins family, including patents and other papers of Milton P. Higgins, first Superintendent of the Washburn Shops; papers related to Norton Company; and photographs of the Higgins family and Higgins House while the Aldus Higgins family lived there.
- Papers of Biomedical Engineering Professor Christopher Sotak.
- Papers of Robert Harvey, who received his Ph.D. in biomedical engineering in 1970 from WPI, and founded two companies, the second of which, Thoratec, makes Ventricular Assist Devices.
- A prototype of the inner landing gear (“lunar leg”) for the Apollo 11 lunar module, made by Allan Glazer’s (WPI Class of 1947) company, Honematic.

The Archives purchased a serialized edition of Charles Dickens’ David Copperfield this year and prepared a new exhibit.
of materials from the Fellman Collection in celebration of Dicken’s 200th birthday in 2012. Plans for a new permanent display to be called “Profiles in Innovation” are underway. Lifetime achievement awards for Richard Whitcomb ’43 and artifacts from Robert Goddard ’08 will be highlighted in the cases and other WPI innovators works showcased on a rotating basis.

Access Services

Access Services staff oversees borrowing, course reserves, interlibrary loan/resource sharing and stacks maintenance. Staff also oversee Tech Suite reservations, all library student employment, and safety.

The Library is open 105 hours per week during the academic year. Extended hours were offered at the end of each term during the year. In response to student requests, the library implemented a pilot program for the full 7 weeks of C term to explore the volume and type of library use during late night hours. This program extended hours Sunday through Thursday until 3:00 am under the supervision of two temporary staff members. Statistics were collected each evening to evaluate usage. Overall, usage was lower than expected. Students from all years, all majors, and some graduate students used the library spaces, but not many services. After careful consideration, and discussion with student staff and others, it was decided not to continue with the program without additional funding to cover staffing and building expenses.

Statistics show an increase in usage in many areas. Visits to the building increased by 12.6%, course reserve material usage increased by 26% and Tech Suite usage climbed by 41%. Overall, the library checked out 12% more items than the previous year. Some of the increases were in the area of non-traditional items such as network cables and surge

Quick Facts

Document Delivery service provides WPI owned materials to offices and homes of faculty and online students.

Course Reserve usage increased by 26%.

Circulation transactions increased overall by 12%. However use of print books declined.

Tech Suite usage increased by 41% to 13,665 reservations.

Interlibrary Loan borrowed over 3,000 items for WPI community from libraries around the world.

Two Interlibrary Loan items supplied to the Executive Office of the President of the United States.

Dry erase kits, USB hard drives, and other loaners proved popular with students.
protectors but for the first time in several years book circulations increased, up by 4%.

Interlibrary loan borrowing requests declined as 22% fewer requests for non-WPI owned materials were made. This may be related to the increase in journal back files and eBooks that the library has acquired this past year to improve our collections. Since 2009, Gordon Library has supplied at least one item per year to this office.

Access Services staff responded to almost 5,000 in-person, telephone and email questions. The largest number of questions were asked during A term as the school year commenced.

Student employees provide many of the front desk services for the library building. Student super-visors take charge of the building operations after regular staff leave at 9:00 pm.

Support for the Gordon Library

Many generous gifts provide help for library programs, resources, and facilities. In the past year, these gifts enabled us to do the following:

- Purchase new eBook collections and support new or expanding programs
- Support the Student Advisory Committee meetings
- Support library student appreciation events
- Purchase portable white boards for the Information Commons

As part of our ongoing duties, library staff select the best resources for student and faculty
research needs. Endowed funds and gifts allow us to stretch the dollars just a little further and add to the generous support we receive through the annual budget process.

**A few library budget facts:**

- The average annual increase for library periodicals is 5%.
- 225,000 of “freely available” titles added to the catalog in 2012.
- Materials budget spent per student in FY 12 was $410.

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**Quick Facts**

Jo-Ann G. Alessandrini
Donald F. Berth
Deborah Bockus*
Daniel E. Breen, Jr.
Lora T. Brueck*
Gerald A. Bujaucius
Richard L. Collins
Joan and Harold Dickert*
Christine Drew*
Stephen F. Dudzik
Judith Fallon*
Gerald J. Gould
V. Kenneth Grace
Martha Gunnarson*
Duncan R. Hannah
Brian D. Huntley, PE, PMP, CISA
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Jean M. Siddall-Bensson
Prof. Scott M. Sieburth
Peter J. Sugda
John T. Vaughey
Jerry H. Warren
Jeremy J. Weldon
Philip I. Wengloski
Adam L. Wilbur

* Library staff donors
Looking Ahead

The staff are looking forward to 2012-2013 and already starting the academic year with more students, improving spaces for collaborative research, expanding digital access to historic materials, and continuing to provide evolving suite of electronic resources to WPI library users.

Featured New Electronic Resources FY2012

- Scientific American Historical Archives
- JSTOR & Project Muse – Expanded Collections
- Foundation Directory Online
- AccessEngineering eBooks
- Taylor and Francis Online: 1000s of Online Journals
- ASTM Digital Library: Standards Now Available Online

Resources or services added in FY2012

- IBISWorld Industry Reports
- New chat service and text a librarian
- EndNote Desktop
- Digital Commons @ WPI institutional repository

Thank You!

Thanks to all the library staff and student employees who continue to make the Gordon Library, both in-person and online, a better experience for students, faculty and staff. The staff welcome your comments and suggestions.

Please contact:
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