

LAFAYETTE LIBRARY

THE MISSION OF LAFAYETTE COLLEGE

In an environment that fosters the free exchange of ideas, Lafayette College seeks to nurture the inquiring mind and to integrate intellectual, social, and personal growth. The College strives to develop students' skills of critical thinking, verbal communication, and quantitative reasoning and their capacity for creative endeavor; it encourages students to examine the traditions of their own culture and those of others, to develop systems of values that include an understanding of personal, social, and professional responsibility, and to regard education as an indispensable, life-long process.



LAFAYETTE COLLEGE LIBRARY

ACRL EXCELLENCE IN

ACADEMIC LIBRARIES APPLICATION

Lafayette College fosters a community that “seeks to nurture the inquiring mind and to integrate intellectual, social, and personal growth.” This educational mission is clearly reflected in the profile of the Lafayette College Library. Our success in building a complement of resources and services tailored to the goals of the institution stems from a variety of factors but chiefly—and it is what we want to highlight in this application—from our sustained and creative engagement with the entire Lafayette community, engagement that goes beyond simply publicizing our services and talking to users, to initiating strategic conversations and partnering with faculty and students to help them attain their goals as teachers, scholars, and learners.

Our adoption of an engagement-centered mission doesn’t necessarily set the Lafayette Library apart from other academic libraries. Many academic libraries, both large and small,



have been moving away from a traditional collection-centered mission. Increasingly, we see ourselves not just as providers of information but as partners in the core academic enterprise. Like others, the Lafayette Library has undergone a profound personality change in the last half-dozen years, moving toward greater engagement with its local community of users as well as with

the outside world. This transformation is so profound that we sometimes find ourselves no longer in the familiar role of “service provider” but in the challenging new role of partner and collaborator. This is a development that Lafayette has not only welcomed but actively promoted, both locally and within the profession; we believe we have demonstrated some distinctive and innovative strategies to engage with our users and that this experience has made us exemplary in ways that many college librarians today find highly encouraging for the future of our profession and for its continued relevance to higher education.

ENGAGING TEACHERS AND LEARNERS: INFORMATION LITERACY

The Library's information literacy program has been built through sustained engagement with faculty over more than 20 years. Information literacy, taught collaboratively by librarians and classroom faculty, has been an essential part of the College's First Year Seminar (FYS) program since its inception in 1992. This collaboration between the Library and FYS faculty has been so successful that it's been invoked as an example upon which to build; in its latest report on Lafayette, the Middle States Commission Evaluation Team recommended that changes to Lafayette's Common Course of Study "draw on successes already achieved by librarians and faculty in their work to integrate information literacy into the FYS program."

Spurred on by this success and by our conviction that students need repeated opportunities to develop their information literacy skills, librarians have been working to infuse information literacy into classes beyond First Year Seminars and other classes with which we have had long-standing relationships. Since 2002, librarians have developed special partnerships with 28 faculty members to incorporate information literacy goals into upper



*Librarian
Terese Heidenwolf
assisting first
year students*

level classes through our information literacy grants program. The grants provide an important opportunity for faculty, especially new faculty, to work closely with a librarian and improve their information literacy assignments and pedagogy. Interviews with faculty who have received the grants consistently show that they think the quality of student research improves in classes that have this information literacy component; that they continue to incorporate information literacy assignments into their class in subsequent years, as well as carry it over to other classes; that they have become advocates for information

literacy within their departments; and in some cases, that they have been an impetus for departments to formally adopt information literacy objectives. Colleagues at other institutions have repeatedly shown interest in the success of this program, and librarians and faculty who have participated in it have been invited to speak at a number of conferences and workshops over the years.¹

Librarians have tried to leverage this information literacy activity by providing multiple platforms for faculty members to talk about their experiences with First Year Seminars, information literacy grant classes, and other classes, engaging even more members of the community in a conversation about information literacy. The Library publishes interviews with faculty in our print newsletter and online,² sponsors information literacy brown bag discussions, and partners with the College Writing Program and Center for the Integration of Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship to develop events connecting information literacy with writing, academic integrity, assignment design, and innovative teaching.



Professor Diane Ahl (Art) teaches with Special Collections materials

There are a number of signs that Lafayette faculty are committed to teaching students to be information literate. In a survey conducted in 2007-08 in preparation for a revision of the curriculum, faculty ranked “the ability to evaluate the quality and reliability of information” as a “very important” educational goal of a core curriculum, second only to “the ability to think critically.” When the faculty recently revised the college’s Common Course of Study (CCS), librarians proposed that the college strengthen its commitment to information literacy education by adding to the CCS a new category of learning outcomes devoted solely to information literacy. Faculty voted resoundingly to adopt this new category. Indeed, of the six new categories of learning outcomes proposed, it passed by the widest margin. A task

1 For example, presentations at meetings of the Pennsylvania Library Association, the Patriot League, and the Lehigh Valley Association of Independent Colleges; workshops at St. Francis University (PA) and Trinity University (TX).

2 See “Information literacy interviews” <<http://library.lafayette.edu/instruction/interviews>>. For complete issues of the Library newsletter, Bytes & Books, see <<http://dspace.lafayette.edu/handle/10385/404>>.

force that includes librarians is now looking at ways of assessing progress toward meeting this learning outcome.

The Library's information literacy program extends well beyond the classroom. During our annual orientation, first year students immediately get the message that using the Library will be critical to their success and that librarians are here to help them take advantage of library resources and services. Each year we succeed in generating student excitement about the first year orientation by building it around an enticing theme, such as this year's "Research Games" theme, a take-off of the popular *Hunger Games* books and movies. In other years we gained attention, both on and off campus, with our innovative use of QR codes.³ Students loved gathering QR code clues on a scavenger hunt, which culminated in "finding" and having their photos taken with the Marquis de Lafayette's sword.



First year students preparing for the Research Games.

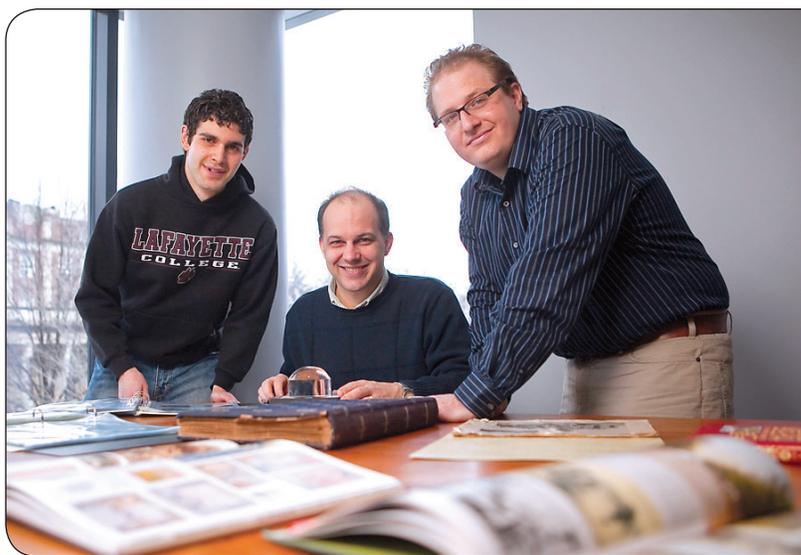
During their time at Lafayette, many students further develop and strengthen their information literacy skills by taking advantage of our Personalized Research Assistance (PRA). The popularity of this appointment-based service and a similar service specially designed for students writing honors theses is due in some measure to the playful postcards we send to students once a semester reminding them of it. The postcards, which feature the faces of reference librarians superimposed on movie or TV stills and copy that plays on slogans from the movie or show, have proved popular with our students and have garnered some attention from librarians who visit our online PRA gallery or hear about them at conferences.⁴

3 "Your New Campus Guide: A Small Patterned Square That Talks to Your Smartphone." Jie Jenny Zou. *The Wired Campus*. August 3, 2011. <<http://chronicle.com/blogs/wiredcampus/your-new-campus-guide-a-small-patterned-square-that-talks-to-your-smartphone/32669>>; "Smartphones in the Library." Jane-Rebecca Cannarella. *ACRLog*. November 12, 2011. <<http://acrlog.org/2011/11/12/smartphones-in-the-library/>>

4 PRA Gallery. <<http://library.lafayette.edu/pragallery/>>; "What a Bunch of Cards! Guest post from Rebecca Metzger." *Library Marketing: Thinking Outside the Book*. Edited by Jill Stover. January 25, 2008. <<http://librarymarketing.blogspot.com/2008/01/what-bunch-of-cards-guest-post-from.html>>

ENGAGING SCHOLARS: DIGITAL SCHOLARSHIP AND OPEN ACCESS

The College's latest strategic plan pointed out that Lafayette has been developing "a more prominent research culture, as is evidenced by ... the growing numbers of faculty who secure prestigious grants and fellowships." Indeed, Lafayette faculty have active research programs and are expected to make "meaningful contributions to the knowledge and conduct of their disciplines." Although the Library has a long history of supporting faculty research with collections and reference services, in the past several years staff have also engaged with faculty as scholars in the production and dissemination of digital scholarship. This type of work, very new for a college library, is generating excitement among faculty and librarians and recently got an important boost when Lafayette was awarded a four-year \$700,000 Mellon Foundation grant.



*Eric Luhrs, Head,
Digital Scholarship
Services works with
Professor Paul Barclay
(History) and
Lafayette student
Emmanuel Santo-Donato
on the East Asia
Image Collection*

The grant, which was announced in August, will foster the participation of increasing numbers of Lafayette faculty and their students in the digital humanities and will support training in digital humanities methods, faculty and student research, and the integration of digital scholarship into the curriculum. The grant proposal grew out of the Library's aspiration to expand support for the digital humanities, which already includes a growing number of practitioners among Lafayette's faculty. Many of the initiatives that will be undertaken within the framework of the Mellon grant will be made possible by the Library's Digital Scholarship Services (DSS) team, which has become a leader among liberal arts colleges in developing the infrastructure to support digital scholarship, particularly in the humanities.

As part of the Mellon grant Lafayette will develop a model for digital scholarship support that other institutions, particularly liberal arts colleges, will be able to emulate. To foster

engagement with other institutions on this topic the Library organized a day-long forum for representatives from about 18 liberal arts colleges and research universities to identify the requirements for the creation and sustainable management of digital scholarship in conjunction with the Digital Library Foundation's annual meeting this fall in Austin, Texas.⁵ The outcome of this Lafayette-hosted event was a set of agreements to collaborate and engage more institutions in the shared enterprise.

Lafayette has also been developing a protocol to support the technical infrastructure required to create generative scholarship—a challenge that's particularly difficult for small college libraries. Digital Scholarship Services is in the process of migrating content from several small digital platforms into a single, more robust repository architecture built on Fedora Commons and the Drupal-based Islandora platform. Rather than develop future faculty research projects using multiple unrelated technologies that compete for limited technical resources, we are creating Virtual Research Environments (VREs) using the same front-end technologies and



Professor Rachel Goshgarian (History) and her students studying the Middle East use materials from Special Collections in the Rothkopf Reading Room.

backed by the same repository. Not only does this provide persistent access and preservation services from the beginning, but it has also allowed us to master a smaller set of languages and technologies. To support this work, we have developed a test-based software development methodology that makes it possible to break complex programming tasks into small parts that can be distributed among collaborators, then reassembled and shared. Having successfully used this model internally, we are now sharing our work with several interested peer institutions with similar aspirations.

5 For a reflection on the conference, see "Liberal Arts Colleges and Digital Scholarship." Carrie Ramp. CLIR Connect. November 8, 2013. <<http://connect.clir.org/CLIR/Go.aspx?c=BlogViewer&BlogKey=a196f135-698a-4f16-b6d3-2afa99cddb38>>

For the past several years the Library has been collaborating with faculty researchers to build digital collections and make them available to the broader community of scholars. The most notable of these is the East Asia Image Collection, over 5,000 images digitized from postcards, photographs, negatives, and slides of imperial Japan, its Asian empire, and occupied Japan. Developed as a collaboration between an associate professor in Lafayette's history department and the Library's Head of DSS, the collection has been attracting international attention and has helped this faculty member become a pioneer in the field of colonial media studies. Additional digital scholarship projects, including an NEH-funded electronic edition of Jonathan Swift's poetry, a relational database of lending records from the Easton Library Company, a Silk Road Instrument Database, and a mapping application that tracks the arrival and movement of Malagasy slaves in and around Williamsburg, are in various stages of development.



"Sea of Arawashi: Our Ace Pilots in Flight"
A postcard from the East Asia Image Collection

Projects like these give Lafayette scholars and librarians an opportunity to teach by engaging students in their research. Students are involved in all of these projects as special undergraduate researchers who work directly with faculty scholars. And Digital Scholarship Services itself engages students as collaborators as when the Head of DSS, with the assistance of two computer science students, developed MetaDB, a web application that allows the task of building a digital collection to be divided among several people, including remote users.

While our digital collections and the recent Mellon grant are signal successes in the Library's work in digital scholarship, they are only a part of the story. Since 2008 Library staff have also maintained a locally hosted DSpace-based institutional repository that provides open access to faculty scholarship. At present the repository holds over 500 articles representing the work of well over half of the faculty. Some faculty have noticed almost immediate results when their articles were made openly accessible in the repository. One associate professor of English,

for example, reported that shortly after she deposited an article that was a bit outside the area in which she usually publishes, she was contacted to review some work in that area and attributes this directly to the availability of her article in the repository. Other faculty who faced the requirement of having to include data management plans with their NSF grant applications were pleased to find that a secure institutional repository was already in place that could be used to preserve and provide access to their research data.

In spring 2011, the Lafayette faculty as a whole registered support for both the repository and open access when it adopted an open access resolution, whereby each faculty member granted to the College permission to make available his or her scholarly articles in the repository. The resolution was the result of the work of a faculty-library subcommittee that, over the course of a year, investigated issues relating to open access, sponsored campus discussions on the topic, drafted and revised a policy for the faculty's consideration, and then brought it before the entire faculty. Its adoption put Lafayette faculty at the forefront of the open access movement since at that time there were only three other liberal arts colleges with similar resolutions.



Students study in Kirby Library

ENGAGING SELECTORS: TAKING RISKS, BREAKING BOUNDARIES

Lafayette librarians are frequently contacted by librarians at other institutions, particularly other liberal arts colleges, about three collections decisions that we've made in the past few years: the decision to cancel a significant number of journal subscriptions in favor of pay-per-view access, to become the first liberal arts college to join HathiTrust, and to embark upon one of the first consortial patron driven acquisitions programs for electronic books. Each of these decisions has transformed our collection in some way, and has allowed us to support innovation, collaborate with regional institutions, and engage the entire Lafayette community as selectors for our collection.



*Students studying
in the reference studio
during finals week*

The Library was at the forefront of an access revolution when, at the end of 2008, we canceled all of our Elsevier subscriptions and provided faculty and students with access to almost all of Elsevier's titles via ArticleChoice pay-per-view. Implementation of this change was a team effort, involving librarians and library staff in collections, research services, technical services, and interlibrary loan. This experiment was a tremendous boon, especially for our science and engineering programs, and proved to be so successful that we have expanded pay-per-view access to other publishers' journals.⁶ It's rare that a month goes by that we don't get contacted by other libraries asking how we budgeted for this change or implemented it.

In June 2011, Lafayette became the first liberal arts college to join HathiTrust Digital Library, symbolizing our commitment to preserve and provide access to the published record in

⁶ For more on what we learned from our pay-per-view experience, see "Making the Right Choices: Pay-per-view Use Data and Selection Decisions." Michael Hanson and Terese Heidenwolf. *College & Research Libraries News* 71 (2010): 586-8. <http://crln.acrl.org/content/71/11/586.full>

digital form. Many questioned why a small college would choose to support Hathi when we could enjoy most of its resources without becoming a member. While the decision was not easy to make given the amount of money involved, we felt a strong obligation to support Hathi's effort to build a digital archive that is co-owned and managed by academic institutions rather than commercial interests. We have not regretted the decision—and in fact have become an informal advocate for Hathi among smaller institutions as we field many emails and phone calls about our involvement—and have been particularly pleased when faculty have told us how much they enjoy the additional benefits (such as easily being able to download an entire book) that come with Lafayette being a member.

In November 2012, Lafayette embarked upon another innovative collections project when we joined with the five other private institutions in the Lehigh Valley Association of Independent Colleges (LVAIC) consortium to provide users with one of the first consortial PDA e-book programs in the country. Led by Lafayette, LVAIC librarians worked hard to hammer out a deal with ebrary and publishers that was truly consortial—funded by a pooled collection of money and with triggered titles available to all institutions in the consortium. After a year, what began as a pilot project is a clear success, particularly for users, each of whom becomes in essence a selector at their point of need.



Skillman Library's renovation and expansion won the AIA/ALA Library Building Award in 2007

ENGAGING A COMMUNITY: SPECIAL COLLECTIONS AND COLLEGE ARCHIVES

The Library is fortunate to have extraordinary Special Collections that we can take advantage of to engage with the entire Lafayette community, and even the larger Easton community. This is perhaps best exemplified by the story of the McDonogh Project, an ongoing College Archives initiative that influenced students, artists, historians, and alumni/ae and has promoted diversity and inclusiveness efforts across campus.

The McDonogh Project is an effort to gather all of the known documentation on the education of two former slaves at Lafayette College in the 1830s and 1840s. The project began with the dedication of the monumental sculpture “Transcendence” beside Skillman Library in the fall of 2008. The commission for the sculpture was a result of President Daniel Weiss’s inaugural address in which he mentioned David McDonogh, the slave-turned-Lafayette



*“Transcendence”
by sculptor Mel Edwards
graces the north side
of Skillman Library*

-student who went on to become a doctor. The College Archives had supplied the President with that information and continued to be a resource to Professor Curlee Holton and the sculptor Mel Edwards as they worked on the commission. Student Ng’ang’a wa Muchiri ’09 worked with archivists on the project, transcribing letters, and doing research at the Presbyterian Historical Society, the New York Eye and Ear Infirmary, and at various repositories in Louisiana. When a historian at Stanford University heard of our work on the McDonogh Project, the College Archivist was invited to participate in a three-day conference on the historical relationships of institutions of higher education to slavery and presented a paper entitled “‘Two Youths (Slaves) of Great Promise’: The Education of David and Washington McDonogh at Lafayette College, 1838-1844.” The project spurred the creation of the McDonogh Network, a new group of black alumni/ae, and piqued the interest of other faculty who are interested in the curricular opportunities of the McDonogh story. Most recently, the project

inspired student Robert Young '14 to work with the College Archives to curate an exhibit about the McDonoghs, “Tales of Our Brothers,” which is currently on display in one of the main classroom buildings on campus. The McDonogh materials were also the focus of a three-week unit for students in The Black Experience class, overseen by the Archives. The McDonogh Project has been time-consuming but it has also fostered community in its broadest sense and showcases how Archives initiatives can blossom into campus—and life—changing projects.

As this example shows, staff in Special Collections work hard to connect rare books, manuscripts, and archival materials to issues and ideas with which students and faculty are already engaged and thus to prompt further occasions for learning and research. Exhibits, programs, and work with student employees and interns are as much a part of Special Collections’ teaching program as staff’s work in the classroom.⁷ Materials from Special Collections feature prominently in the Library’s exhibits, the scope and pace of which are unprecedented in a small, undergraduate liberal arts college. Exhibits are the centerpiece of a lively and well supported public program and lecture series that features both faculty authors and guest speakers from around the country. The Lafayette Library is the fortunate beneficiary of two endowed lectureships—one that focuses on the art and history of the book and another that allows us to celebrate various forms of literature, with such speakers as David Henry Hwang, Geraldine Brooks, and Natasha Trethewey.



Robert Young '14 and Dr. Richard Kaplin '64 at the opening of the exhibit “Tales of Our Brothers: The Journey of David and Washington McDonogh.”

7 For examples of student work in Special Collections and College Archives, see Veritas Liberabit: Student Blog of Lafayette Special Collections and Archives <<http://sites.lafayette.edu/specialcollections/>>

CONTINUOUS ENGAGEMENT, ONGOING CONVERSATIONS

Although we take pride in the many ways we engage with the Lafayette community, we also work hard to gather data to ensure that the Library's resources, services, and programs all contribute to the learning environment on campus. We recently developed a communications plan and embarked on a series of personal meetings with faculty with whom we did not have much contact. We use the results of national surveys and other assessment tools to guide our decisions and shape our priorities. We seek advice from our various user constituencies (including both a student advisory group called the Library Ambassadors and an elected faculty advisory committee) and play an active role in the campus community at large so that we have contact with our users outside Skillman and Kirby, the two libraries on campus.

Since 2007 Lafayette has regularly participated in the MISO survey, a web-based quantitative survey designed to measure how faculty, students, and staff view library and computing services in higher education. (We're so committed to this survey that one of our librarians currently serves as a member of the national survey team.) In the 2010 MISO survey of the campus population, Lafayette faculty reported high satisfaction (3.5 or higher) with 25 services and resources. Overall, the Library received glowing ratings—words like “love,” “fantastic,” “the best,” “special” and “important” punctuated the comments section. As one faculty member concluded, “The library staff couldn't be more helpful if they tried—they are always there to assist both my students and me personally.”⁸ We have just finished preparing the version of the MISO survey that will be administered in spring and look forward to using it as an opportunity to engage in further conversations with faculty, students, and staff.

In the spring of 2013, we participated in the first local implementation of the national ITHAKA S+R Faculty Survey designed to capture faculty members' changing research and scholarly practices. By piloting a local version of the survey, we hoped to better understand our own faculty's evolving attitudes and practices related to scholarly research, publishing, and teaching in an increasingly digital environment. Although we're still working on interpreting the data, given the high response rate we're confident that the results will help us customize our services and resources even further to suit local needs.

8 For more analysis and data, see our MISO website: <http://sites.lafayette.edu/misosurvey/>

CONCLUSION

We have struggled to limit ourselves in this application; there is so much more that we do every day that we wished to include. Although the application process was arduous at times, it was gratifying to contemplate the creative ways we are engaging, encouraging, and even inspiring our community. In the process of writing this, we have rediscovered that at the heart of all our endeavors is the confidence that we are an excellent library team. Our Library has become the center of creative learning on the Lafayette campus; our librarians and library staff have become collaborators and partners with the academic community.

Ultimately, creating engagement is about imagining new possibilities, and we believe the innovative practices presented in this application are truly worthy of the ACRL Excellence in Academic Libraries award. To receive the award—particularly in this year when we are celebrating the 50th anniversary of Skillman Library—would be a great honor. Thank you for your consideration.



Librarians Katherine Furlong and Rebecca Metzger with student Library Ambassadors, 2011-12.

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