DeWitt Wallace Library

Macalester College

Application for
ACRL Excellence in Academic Libraries Award

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On behalf of
the Entire Staff of the DeWitt Wallace Library
"...truly one of the jewels of the institution.
We would not be what we are as a college did we not have our library at our heart."

Macalester College President Brian Rosenberg, June 2013

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DeWitt Wallace Library

Macalester College

Library Vision Statement

Linking scholars to knowledge
innovation · collaboration · service
Our connections work for you!

- Offering resources and innovative services for inspired scholarship
- Providing exceptional virtual and physical spaces for learning
- Fostering community and conversation
- Preserving and promoting the history of the college

Through our endeavors we enhance the transformational experience of a Macalester education, preparing individuals for global citizenship and lives that make a difference.

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**Introduction**

The DeWitt Wallace Library staff work as a highly collaborative team that emphasizes excellence in service, building community, embracing change, and fostering innovative ideas. We support and promote lifelong-learning, inspired scholarship and creativity, and the generation and dissemination of knowledge. Our library is a vibrant, bustling center of activity for the Macalester community which includes faculty, students, staff, alumni, emeriti faculty, community neighbors and visitors from around the world. We strive to create a supportive and enriching experience for our students—our primary audience—aiming to ensure that our efforts closely support the mission of the college:

“Macalester is committed to being a preeminent liberal arts college with an educational program known for its high standards for scholarship and its special emphasis on internationalism, multiculturalism, and service to society.”

From our highly-regarded instruction program, to our numerous collaborative partnerships on and off campus; from our leadership in championing open access and fair use efforts, to providing avenues for publishing in a variety of formats; from deeply engaging in activities that support inclusion and social justice, to providing a safe and welcoming space for our community which includes a large component of international students; our work resonates well beyond our four walls. By way of these efforts we firmly stand behind our statement:

“Through our endeavors we enhance the transformational experience of a Macalester education, preparing individuals for global citizenship and lives that make a difference.” — DeWitt Wallace Library Vision Statement

We believe that the library makes a profound difference in the lives of our community members. We know that we have a direct impact on the education and development of the students. We also know that we can influence the development of the information world in which we all live. All of this is possible through collaboration with others—students, faculty, campus partners, and countless colleagues far and wide. We are committed to learning from others and generously sharing our knowledge and expertise in an effort to enhance the education of all. Our values, beliefs, and ideals inform and influence the work each of us do every day, and they are evident as we showcase areas of distinction of the Macalester College Library. We are delighted to share our story.

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2 Mission Statement, [https://www.macalester.edu/about/mission/](https://www.macalester.edu/about/mission/).

How we shine

Productive Relationships with Faculty, Students, and Community Members

Fostering collaborative relationships with our community has been a primary focus for us, leading to improvements in our services and benefits for students and faculty. The following projects are just a few examples of our successful collaborations.

Liaison Realignment

A 2013 MISO4 survey revealed high satisfaction among faculty, students and staff with the library and its services, but also pointed to some areas for improvement. In particular, while 90% of faculty agreed that library support was essential for student scholarship, only 50% used our library instruction services. We decided to realign our liaison program, matching librarians with divisions rather than scattered individual departments. This simple, yet powerful change has led to improvements in outreach and collaboration with faculty and increased the number of library instruction sessions in previously underrepresented divisions. We developed a divisional newsletter to help advertise our services and the liaison librarians, and used the Value of Academic Libraries’ poster template to promote liaisons’ expertise on departmental bulletin boards. We have seen a dramatic increase in the number of faculty referrals of their students for one-on-one consultations with their liaison librarian, and greater awareness of our liaison librarians among students. Comparing consultation numbers from 2012-13 with the most recent academic year, 2014-15, we saw an 82% rise in total number of consultations.

One success story: As the students in her Endangered and Minority Languages class began working on a research project last semester, Marianne Milligan, Visiting Assistant Professor in Linguistics, reached out to the library. Concerned that many of her students were first years and sophomores who may have had only limited experience doing research, and finding that the quality of the sources they selected wasn’t as high as she

4  MISO, Measuring Information Service Outcomes, see http://www.misosurvey.org/ for more information.
had hoped, she asked each of her students to schedule a brief meeting with a librarian. During these consultations, each student received assistance with identifying the best research databases for their research topic and help with strategies for locating and evaluating sources. Professor Milligan was happy with the improved quality of the sources her students used, and asked them to reflect on their experiences. She shared those reflections with us. Perhaps the most enjoyable comment was: “This [consultation] session was mind-blowing...I learned so much from it. I wish I had done this a long long time ago.”

**Ethnographic Study**

We have a tradition of assessing our services and programs, always seeking improvement. In 2010, an external review recommended we explore combining our four service desks to give patrons one place to go for assistance. We opened our single service point in 2013 and sought to evaluate its effectiveness in 2015. Traditional tools for assessment, such as surveys and statistics, are useful, but by their nature tend to be filtered through the expertise and bias of library staff. In order to gain a more balanced view of our users’ experiences, we partnered with Professor of Anthropology Dianna Shandy and her senior seminar class to conduct an ethnographic study focused on the consolidated service desk. Senior Anthropology majors used their skills in such methods as participant observations, key stakeholder interviews, focus groups, and auto-ethnography. The students were asked to research the following questions:

- Do people feel welcomed at the service desk and are their needs being met?
- Did we achieve our goals internal to the service desk such as efficiency, clarity, collaboration, creativity, community, and flexibility among staff and student employees?

The class presented their findings to library staff in May 2015. There were many important take-aways from their observations. Our patrons appreciate how we reach out to them and follow through, our flexibility, and our approachability. Users expressed an overall sense that the consolidated desk was serving them well. However, we learned that our spaces and services are perhaps more difficult to navigate than we thought, and that we need better infographics and other visual clues. Overall, we found that collaborating with a class of student-ethnographers was valuable for both us and them. The students were able to apply their knowledge and skills to address a real-world question and we had the unique experience of seeing ourselves through the eyes of others. Their efforts have had a positive and lasting effect on our library and services. We have already used their findings to improve navigation and services, and will continue to incorporate them into our annual planning.

**Collaboration with Information Technology Services (ITS)**

Our partnership with our campus ITS is a strong point of pride. The following recent communication summarizes this sentiment:

> Dear ITS,
> As you perhaps know, it is a common occurrence for us to hear when we are out among our colleagues that most libraries feel they suffer greatly due to lack of a strong or positive relationship with their campus IT. We sadly heard this repeatedly last week during 2 occasions to connect with a broad array of library professionals. Overall, it seems a given that there will be a poor or even adversarial relationship between libraries and IT departments.

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5 Statement from student evaluations for the course shared by Marianne Mulligan.
6 More information on this change is included later in this application.
So, let us take this opportunity to say thank you ITS! We hope to never take for granted how critical our positive relationship is, especially as it results in providing the best service to our community. Let us never get complacent in ensuring that we continue to make our partnership just one more thing that makes Macalester great.

Sincerely, Angi [on behalf of the library]

Collaboration with ITS yields significant returns for both patron services and staff resources. For many years, library staff had handled many technology related services within the library. However, when we consolidated the service desk, we consulted with ITS and together decided to try a pilot program. ITS would take over support for all technology within the library, and a new ITS outpost would be established at the consolidated service desk, staffed by an ITS student. This produced the following benefits: library staff time and resources previously devoted to technology support were directed toward increased reference and liaison work, ITS had increased knowledge of and control over the largest public computer lab on campus, patrons were able to receive ITS support at a more central campus location and during times when that support was previously unavailable. The pilot has been a huge success, and we will continue this collaborative service going forward, tweaking, as always, for improvement.

Integrating Special Collections into Classroom Instruction
Recent improvements and additions to our special collections has led to very productive relationships with faculty and a growing interest in using special collections and archives for classroom instruction and student research. One example of how recent additions combined with partnering with faculty helped spark interest in our special collections is the purchase of a series of illuminated manuscripts. Pieces were selected from pages including public choir hymnals and private books of hours that, “show stains and injuries to the page that allow students see[sic] the living hand of the writer.” Professor Theresa Krier, English, says that seeing the pleasure her students take in learning about the history and culture of these resources, helps her “manage my anxiety about where all of these new...

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7 Email to Jerry Sanders, Associate Vice President for Information Technology Services, October 26, 2015.
technologies are taking us. Now I take the longer view that the technology of the written word has been in all these forms, and everyone seems very comfortable surfing from one to the next."\(^8\)

Another example of increased interest in using special collections is evident in the work of Macalester student Alexandra Greenler (’15). Visiting Art Professor Eric Carroll directed students in his Introduction to Photography class to work with an archives for their photography project. Greenler, a History major and former student worker in the college archives engaged with Macalester’s own archives for her project. Greenler chose a portrait of a woman student from each decade—beginning in 1915 and culminating with her own graduation year of 2015—and re-created each portrait using herself as a model. “I had the idea of putting myself in their shoes,” says Greenler. “I asked myself, what was it like to be a student at Macalester in 1925, 1955, or 1975?”\(^9\)

**Information Fluency: Measuring Student Success**

Collaboration is a key component of our information fluency efforts. Instruction librarians partner with faculty and ITS staff for a required information fluency instruction session in all first year seminars. Our goals for the session include introducing students to academic scholarship, critical evaluation and analysis of scholarly information, and library and ITS resources and strategies for finding and using information. Students work in groups to find, select, and briefly evaluate sources on a topic relevant to the class, sharing their selections, properly cited, through a Google document. Librarians provide feedback on their work after the class session. We have created a rubric to measure the effectiveness of our instruction, based on the work students do in the session, and survey the first year course faculty. Each year, a group consisting of librarians and ITS staff review formal and informal assessments in order to make improvements to the session for the next year.

In 2014-15, we participated in the ACRL Assessment in Action Program, exploring whether our information fluency instruction contributed to improving student learning in the areas of critical thinking and communication. The project involved analyzing senior capstone papers from students in History, Political Science, International Studies, Theatre, and Physics and Astronomy. We used a rubric to score student competencies in attribution, evaluation of sources, and communication of evidence. We had data on the number of times students had met with librarians in course instruction sessions and individual consultations. We connected rubric score with the attendance data and found that students who participated in multiple instruction sessions and research consultations scored higher. More information on this project will be found at the AiA program site.\(^10\)

Macalester has in recent years developed campus Student Learning Outcomes. The library director serves on the campus-wide committee that developed and is now evaluating the student learning goals for the campus. The six learning goals are outlined in "6 Steps to Educational Success."\(^11\) The second learning outcome focuses on thinking critically and analyzing effectively, which meshes well with our information fluency goals. Part of the goal of the Student Learning Outcomes is for all departments to measure how we are meeting one or more of these outcomes. Both the first year seminar information

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\(^10\) Assessment in Action Project Reports, Macalester College, [https://apply.ala.org/aiadocs/project/10178](https://apply.ala.org/aiadocs/project/10178).

\(^11\) 6 Steps to Educational Success. [http://www.macalester.edu/sixsteps](http://www.macalester.edu/sixsteps).
fluency session assessment and the AiA project fulfill this goal. In addition, we have developed rubrics connected with our evaluation of student workers that measures how our work with students through employment contributes to campus learning outcomes.

**Academic Integrity Efforts**
We have worked closely with the Director of Academic Programs in developing a customizable Academic Integrity Module. Students who have been found to be in violation of Macalester’s academic integrity policy meet with a librarian to develop an individualized series of steps for education and reflection that is part of their resolution process. Recently, we have been developing support in broader areas of academic integrity to be used as conversation starters for students and faculty and to complement our ongoing work. Some examples of these new areas of focus: using online translation tools to complete assignments in a language course, using code sharing sites for a computer science course, re-using previous papers or work without consulting the current instructor, falsifying or manipulating data in an experiment to get desired results, the use of non-text formats (data, images, etc.), and issues with “credit” and plagiarism within group work.

**Data Literacy and Management**
Staff from the library and ITS are collaborating on the development of a program for data literacy and management that will support students and faculty as they work on data-focused research assignments. We are creating online instruction modules covering such areas in data literacy as: finding and collecting data, intellectual property and ethics, organization and preservation, and more. In fall 2015, we launched a pilot project using the Finding and Collecting Data module with classes in a statistics class and political science class. We have received great feedback from students and faculty that will inform our ongoing development of the modules.
Collaborative Digital Projects
We have engaged with faculty and students on a variety of digital projects. Among the highlights:

- Human Computers at NASA is an Omeka project led by American Studies professor Duchess Harris and her students. “The Human Computer Project is a student/faculty collaborative project at the Macalester College’s American Studies Department that seeks to shed light on the buried stories of African American women with math and science degrees who began working at NACA (now NASA) in 1943 in secret, segregated facilities.”1 This is a creative undertaking that contributes to new scholarship and historical awareness of contributions made by minority women that are too often overlooked. The second project is with professor Dan Keyser in the Theatre and Dance Department, and it is called Macalester College Theatre Productions. The long term goal of this project is to provide the Macalester community with a history of all theatre productions and activities that have taken place in what is now the Theatre and Dance Department. The library is supporting Professor Keyser as he goes through records and yearbooks to bring forth details and images of productions of each decade in the 20th century. We are helping with identifying
and locating books and archival materials that contain records of past productions, providing technical advice, scanning, and long-term archiving of the production photographs.

- Student production of an online journal integrated into an American Studies course: *Tapestries*.
- Producing an open access scholarly society journal: *Himalaya*.
- Use of images and data sets are growing areas in faculty teaching and research. The library provides support in maintaining and preserving these resources using CONTENTdm for images and Digital Commons for data sets. Although CONTENTdm was originally primarily used by the Art Department for managing images used in teaching, our use of CONTENTdm has expanded to a wider range of departments. Some of our current projects include images on the history of Macalester, Mao’s African Railway, anthropological research, and the Macalester Ordway Field Station.
- We worked with Suzanne Hansen in the Macalester Sustainability Office to preserve many of their data files in Digital Commons to make this data available for use by students on campus.
- Recently, the library worked with Scott Legge in Anthropology to create a digital collection using CONTENTdm for his collection of roughly 11,000 images of primate mandibles.

**Creativity and Innovation in Meeting the Needs of our Community**

**Advocacy and Support for Improving the User Experience**

One of the guiding principles in all of our planning is the key question: *How will this improve the user experience?* Because of this focus, we have become advocates on behalf of our users in areas such as open access, open textbooks, and e-books.

For many years we have worked to support open access in a variety of ways. We have reached out to our community to increase awareness of open access among faculty and students. Scholarly communication is an integral part of our information fluency program and we talk with students about open access issues and the need to increase access to scholarly resources that are, too often, kept behind paywalls.

Students and faculty both need to know more about their rights as authors and producers of information. Helping our students understand their rights as authors also helps to increase their awareness and understanding for respecting the rights of others when it comes to using copyrighted materials.

A special emphasis this year has been to increase student and faculty awareness of the open textbook movement and open access publishing for monographs. Currently, we collaborate with student government to purchase textbooks to put on Reserves, and to promote the Open Textbook Network and Open Textbook Library with students. In spring 2014, we held a workshop for faculty on open textbooks, increasing awareness and interest. One faculty member has developed a sabbatical around producing an open access textbook. We are planning a spring 2016 workshop to assist faculty interested in adopting, adapting, or creating an open textbook for their courses.

Meanwhile, we have continued our advocacy in the area of e-books, where the marketplace continues to create challenges for libraries. In 2013, we published an E-Book Rights
Advocacy document\textsuperscript{12} that has been endorsed by over 30 institutions and organizations. We continue to engage in positive conversations on this topic with multiple publishers and content providers, and share our efforts with colleagues informally and through presentations. From O’Reilly Media we purchased DRM-free e-books that we will be able to lend through interlibrary loan. We also purchased and have interlibrary loan rights for two Springer e-book collections. One of our own patrons had an interlibrary loan request fulfilled with an e-book from another institution. While these may seem like small steps, they give us hope that we can continue to move in a good direction on this important issue.

**The Library As Publisher: Digital Projects and Publishing**

Our vision for the library of 2020 includes an emphasis on enabling “faculty and students to create new scholarly works made visible to the larger world through our publishing services.”\textsuperscript{13}

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**Digital Commons: “over one million served”**

In May 2015, we celebrated the 10th anniversary of our institutional repository, DigitalCommons@Macalester. Launched in May 2005, our first focus area was our student Honors projects. Because we had always cataloged our Honors projects, they were discoverable to the world and were frequently requested on campus and through interlibrary loan, yet we had only a physical copy in the limited-access Archives. In order to improve access to the papers and allow our students to share their scholarship with a broader audience, we developed our institutional repository. We began with just ten student projects that were recommended by faculty. Today we provide access to over 500 student Honors projects, and students upload their own papers. One Honors project, published in 2006, has been on the list of the most downloaded papers in our repository for 9 continuous years.

Since that start in May 2005, our repository has grown to include student-produced journals,

\textsuperscript{12} E-Book Rights Advocacy, \url{http://www.macalester.edu/library/changingebooksforlibraries/advocacy/}.

\textsuperscript{13} Library Annual Report 2013-14, p.17, \url{http://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/libanreport/8}.
campus publications, image galleries, one scholarly society publication, oral histories and one open access multi-media book: *Captive Audiences / Captive Performers: Music and Theater as Strategies for Survival on the Thailand-Burma Railway 1942-1945*. The book has received over 15,000 views since being published online in spring 2014. This year we created a visual presentation of *Captive Audiences/Captive Performers* that can be browsed in the Great Scots Collection (a showcase for published works by faculty, students and alumni) located in our Harmon Room, which is used by the community for presentations, speakers, and special events.

We are thrilled to see global interest in our students’ scholarship, allowing them, through open access, to truly contribute to the ongoing scholarly conversation in a wide range of disciplines and interdisciplinary areas of study. We hope to eventually also host faculty produced open access textbooks in our repository as well.

While larger university libraries have embarked on joint publishing efforts with their university presses, smaller liberal arts college libraries are in the early stages of expanding publishing efforts. We have become involved with an Oberlin Group venture to launch an open access peer-reviewed press. The Lever Press Initiative seeks to publish and promote quality scholarship at small, liberal arts colleges. This initiative is just another indicator of the role academic libraries see in publishing efforts and as the press gets underway in 2016 we see this as a great opportunity for our faculty members.

### Collection Management Project

The role of libraries has changed significantly over the last 25 years. Libraries have moved from being a storehouse for print materials to providing access to a vast network of information resources, workspaces, and services that facilitate the creation of content. In order to be flexible and adaptive in meeting the needs of today’s and tomorrow’s learners, in 2013 we embarked on a multi-year project to significantly reduce the number of print volumes in the collection. The project aimed to balance space and new service needs with our permanent collection needs. Because the library collection belongs to the Macalester community, we are keeping everyone informed and engaged in the project. We have met with departments and individual faculty members to answer questions, created a schedule to share lists of items that are targeted for withdrawal so that faculty could review them, and revised procedures as needed. Withdrawn items have been donated to Better World Books, a key provider for Books for Africa.

### Pop up Makerspace

Our first pop-up makerspace activity was held during the 2014 National Library Week. We started with a low tech activity to gauge the interest of our community regarding makerspaces. Participants enjoyed eating cookies, making buttons from discarded books, and creating corner bookmarks. Over thirty people stopped by to flex their creative muscles. We even had to extend the time so that everyone who had expressed interest could finish their creations. Since then we have set out jigsaw puzzles, provided historical yearbooks for creative projects, hosted an old-fashioned letter-writing and crafting event, and more. We are certain our community is craving creativity and we are actively developing ways in which the library can support that need.

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Our library spaces are continually evolving to meet the needs of our community and our own staff. We have welcomed campus partners such as the Jan Serie Center for Scholarship and Teaching into our building while also creating additional high-demand group study and collaboration spaces. We highlight a few recent developments below.

**Single Service Point**

During the summer of 2013, we executed a main level makeover several years in the making. At the center of that makeover was the consolidation of all library services into a single service point. This move was one that we had discussed internally for years. The physical compartmentalization of Technology, Reference, and Circulation/Reserves mirrored a philosophical handling of library services that no longer truly reflected our library. So many of our services now overlap and work in synergy, it felt outdated for those staff and resources to live in separate locations. It certainly no longer made sense for our patrons. In December 2010, an external review of our library recommended a reduction in student workforce and number of service points, more efficient collaboration amongst a “staff spread thin,” and finally, a continuation of efforts to “re-think library physical spaces in ways that foster student learning.”

The design of our library service points often created a ‘ping-pong’ effect for patrons, while also reinforcing a sense of our individual areas of expertise, downplaying their true interconnectedness.

It took us over a year of planning, but we built a single service point that can handle the heavy load of patron support and provide appropriate expertise in all areas of library services. We deliberately created a space that will not stand the test of time, but instead allows us the flexibility to meet the changing demands of our patrons. The physical change freed up space on the lower level and first floor for patron use, gave us better sight lines

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for both building security and patron assistance, and eliminated the need for patrons to self-select their services. Any question that comes to the desk can be addressed, so that our patrons never feel like they are asking the wrong questions or are in the wrong place.

When we started this makeover, we knew the physical changes would be the less radical aspect of the project. The real transformation would be in workflows and staff roles. We also knew that this sort of widespread change would require an elevated level of planfulness on our part, and would have to result in a holistic approach to the services we offer. To that end, we used a consensus-based meeting model to bring together the institutional knowledge we’d accumulated. In the process, we developed training sessions for student workers, redesigned online resources for staff and students, and reached out to our friends in ITS in meaningful collaboration.

We have accomplished all of our goals with the redesign of our service desk and addressed the three suggestions of our 2010 external review. We have been able to: rededicate our staff to library-specific needs, free up large amounts of space for patron use, encourage a more collaborative approach to staffing, reduce the number of student workers required to provide full library service, and eliminate the ‘ping-pong’ effect of multiple desks. Perhaps our biggest achievement, however, involves a recognition of the true value of our library resources. Increasingly, libraries are finding that the most valuable thing that they offer patrons is not an item from their well-curated collections, but the multitalented staff members and professional librarians who populate their buildings. In the previous incarnation of service points, the busiest desk of all, the circulation/reserves desk, was separated from the reference desk at which sat our invaluable research librarians. Student workers at the circulation desk had little knowledge of what a reference consultation entailed or how to refer patrons. We feared that we were missing opportunities to connect incidental interactions (e.g. talking to a patron about a paper while checking their items out) with meaningful research assistance. By combining reference with all other services, we are able to recommit our service priorities toward connecting patrons to reference librarians. This contributed to a stunning 50% increase in the number of reference consultations over the course of the academic year, an additional 135 consultations total. Sometimes a makeover is simply a makeover. In the case of the library’s redesign, however, it has resulted in an institutional breaking down of outdated knowledge silos, and the commitment to a single outward-facing point of service that every member of the library, regardless of work area, is committed to. This is one of the clearest expressions yet of the values to which we are committed and a response to the continuously changing nature of our field.

**Media Services Moves into the Library**

Continuing the consolidation theme, in May 2014, Media Services, including equipment and collections, moved back into the Library. Media materials, previously housed in a locked room, were placed on main floor open shelving so that they were accessible to all Macalester patrons. Smaller and more frequently checked out media equipment items were moved to the library service desk while the majority of equipment was moved to the library lower level along with offices and workrooms. All media and equipment checkouts, including faculty reservations for classroom viewings, are handled at the library service desk. With the successful completion of this consolidation, patrons are now able to access the entire media services collection for all hours the library is open, while faculty members still receive the high level of curricular support to which they’ve been accustomed.

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16 Media Services was originally in the previous library building, Weyerhaeuser, but was relocated when the new library was designed in 1988.
**DVD Kiosk**
One of the first things students and faculty notice when they walk into the library is the new media kiosk, just to the left of the service desk. The Apple iMac that serves as the media kiosk gives library users an easy and attractive way to browse over 13,600 physical films that were added to the library when the Media Services collection was incorporated in 2014. In addition to the physical films, the kiosk also allow users to browse over 18,800 e-videos that are available from the library. The new media kiosk is a result of collaboration between library and ITS staff.

**Wood Room**
The Wood Collection of children’s books is a legacy of Macalester’s affiliation with the Miss Woods School of Kindergarten and Elementary Education dating back to 1949. Although Macalester no longer has an elementary education program, the Wood room and collection remains popular with students, faculty, staff and community members. Usage date, and informal surveys confirmed anecdotal evidence that the collection and room were of value to our community. This assessment led to a decision to revitalize both the collection and the physical room—adding comfortable furniture, fun decorations that reflect its character as a children’s book room, and puppets! The improvements have made it a heavily used and unique area for study, reading, and relaxation.

**A Space for Everyone**
The library traditionally is inclusive of all viewpoints, but we also strive to make sure the space is welcoming to everyone. In 2014 the library, along with other campus buildings, converted four restrooms to gender neutral restrooms. We recognize that we have a number of community members who do not identify as traditional gender roles, so creating spaces that were also comfortable for them was an important change.

**It’s Your library - Do What You Wanna Do!**
The library is many things to many people, serving as a hub for scholarship in all forms, as well as a community space. We have hosted many events such as Banned Books activities, mini-golf at Orientation, National Library Week, and Mac@Nite (a late-night after hours campus activity). The latter featured a carnival theme, complete with pony hops, a photo booth, free food, a DJ, and games. We have watched beanbag chairs and white boards move according to student needs, and jigsaw puzzles slowly emerge. The library is also a place that is open right up until the Twilight Zone when night begins to turn to morning. That’s when things get weird in our lovely, lively library. We think back to finals, when half-empty coffee cups dot the landscape and it is not uncommon to see a pair of friends slowly walking laps around the main level, singing Disney songs for stress relief. There have been streakers and sleepwalkers, stray cats and surprise plates of brownies, but one thing remains the same—the sense that we’re all in it together. It is fair to say
that our library is not shy about admitting that we like to have fun. In fact in 2014 we made “whimsy” an official annual goal, followed by “more whimsy” in 2015!

Engaging the Campus and Beyond: External Relations

One of our strategic goals is “Imagine our community inside the library and our library out in the community.” Here are some of the many ways in which we intentionally stay “in the community”:

Collaboration with Faculty: Jan Serie Center for Scholarship and Teaching
One of our most fruitful collaboration partners resides within the library. Celebrating its 10th anniversary in 2012, the Center for Scholarship and Teaching, is the home for faculty development. It is also a location for discovering potential partnerships with faculty, especially in the emerging field of Digital Liberal Arts. The Jan Serie Center was our early partner in developing an outreach program to faculty for scholarly communication issues, but our partnership has grown and expanded in so many ways. Our relationship with the CST has led to co-hosted faculty and staff happy hours, new faculty orientation, as well as presentations on author rights for faculty, a workshop on preparing information fluency assignments for first year courses, and open access textbooks.

Collaborating with Others: Library Technology Conference
2016 will be our 9th year hosting of the LibTech Conference. Last year the conference registration of nearly 500 participants closed in 28 hours! This conference was the brain-storm of our long-time librarian, Ron Joslin. His vision was to create a regional, hands-on conference where participants could share creative solutions using new technologies so that other participants could learn and take back new methods to their own institutions.
The conference provides an opportunity for library professionals to come together to discuss the changing technologies that are affecting how users interact with libraries and to see how libraries are using technology to create new and better ways to manage their resources. There is a mix of sessions including keynote presentations, traditional lecture-style concurrent sessions, panel discussions, and hands-on workshops. Sessions are offered on a wide range of topics and at varying skill levels for anyone interested in the changing technologies that are affecting libraries.

Collaborating with Others: SPARCS@Mac

Macalester library staff have been exploring opportunities to support the goal of encouraging girls to engage with technology and to consider education and career paths in STEM fields, including Library Science. There are multiple reasons for this goal such as increasing the diversity of the future Information Technology workforce, to empower girls to engage in STEM education and fields, to bring higher education and college to the forefront for those who may need that exposure, and to create a community among girls and young women as they prepare for college and the workforce.

In 2015, we launched a “proof-of-concept” pilot program in partnership with Advance IT Minnesota (AITM) staff to deliver the SPARCS@Mac program providing youth technology development opportunities for female high school students in Minnesota. Our collaborative vision is to create an annual five-day, affordable, high quality technology day camp for young women entering grades 9-12, reducing as many barriers as possible to include girls from historically underrepresented populations, students of color, and would-be first generation college students. In June 2015, we partnered with several organizations and volunteers to host twenty-four young women for our first program. Our assessment indicated it was a clear success. Both participants and volunteers shared a unanimously high level of satisfaction as well as a clear message that the program should continue. We are now planning for 2016, seeking to continue the programming that participants found most valuable, and piloting new features, such as a field trip to a technology-focused organization and conversion of the camp from a daytime experience to a residential experience.

Outside Recognition

We have an exceptionally motivated staff who work collaboratively to solve problems, implement new solutions, and find creative ways to meet the needs of our users. In our first external review completed in 2010, the review team noted, “The library staff also has a reputation for innovation and creativity, including a willingness to take on perceived problems and find effective solutions.”\footnote{DeWitt Wallace Library and Media Services Update on Actions Taken Since 2010 External Review, December 2014, p.1. \url{http://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/annrep/9/}.} We believe our organization model of staff inclusion, continual planning, and assessment lead to this willingness to find effective solutions. Ongoing planning and assessment is accomplished in several ways. All members of the library meet on a weekly basis for a Friday morning staff meeting where all aspects of the library are discussed. The staff meeting is preceded by an informal coffee and treats gathering that allow us to socialize and get caught up with events other than work. In addition to our weekly staff meetings, we have an annual meeting in January to plan for the year and to set goals. As part of our annual meeting, we reflect on the accomplishments of the previous year and celebrate our successes. An annual Milestone Celebration is held each May to celebrate the accomplishments of our academic year.
We often receive feedback on, and sometimes curiosity about, our openness to innovation and change, and our general “can-do” approach to a rapidly changing environment. We know that we would not be as effective as we are without the firm organizational foundation we have created and diligently work towards sustaining. It is always affirming when our distinctions are noticed and reflected back to us:

**Email message:**

“I have found the Macalester library staff to be, to a person, incredibly kind and welcoming. In our investigation of a new ILS system we visited with Macalester library staff to learn from their experience and were met with a group of people willing to spend as much time as we needed talking through our questions and showing us their operation. After we made the decision to go with the same ILS as Macalester some of our staff were able to participate in a regional user group meeting where a number of Macalester library staff approached me offering additional help and support as we go through our migration process. I’ve talked to so many people from the library and found each and every one to be positive and open to change. While acknowledging that the work of a migration isn’t easy I heard person after person echo the idea that challenges are opportunities and it is clear that this group came out of the migration a stronger and more agile unit.”

Sincerely,
Miranda Novak
Technology Services Manager
Clemens Library/Alcuin Library
College of Saint Benedict/Saint John’s University

**Email message from faculty member to the Director:** “You run an amazing library, and I am always bragging about the quality of you, your staff, and your programs to my envious colleagues at other institutions.”

e-mail Sept. 22, 2015, Professor Jaine Strauss, Psychology

**Quote from OCLC:**

“I can always count on DeWitt Wallace Library staff at Macalester College to be forward-thinking in their approach to serving their faculty and students, and to look beyond their institution for ideas and perspective. Bringing this broader context to their work—whether it be from consumer technology or from other libraries’ worldwide—invariably results in a better solution for everyone involved. I find their staff super smart, fun to work with and they always go above and beyond what is expected of an academic library.”

Alice Sneary, OCLC
CONCLUSION

We are proud to share this story of what our small organization of twenty-five individuals has been able to accomplish and offer to others. Our success is due to our hard-working, creative, dedicated, thoughtful, and generous library staff working in concert with partners near and far—all focused on the goal of “enhancing the transformational experience of a Macalester education.” Together we make a difference in the lives of those we serve.

Left to right, clockwise: broadcasting the weekly DeWitt Wallace Library radio show; a SPARCS@Mac participant; the library is a “hopping place” as it hosts a carnival for Mac@nite; Banned Books Week fun on the plaza.