



FOR INFORMATION

PUBLIC

OPEN SESSION

TO: UTM Academic Affairs Committee

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PRESENTER: N/A
CONTACT INFO:

DATE: May 2, 2022 for May 9, 2022

AGENDA ITEM: 8

ITEM IDENTIFICATION:

Annual Report: UTM Library, 2020-21

JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:

Under section 5.7 of its terms of reference, the Academic Affairs Committee receives annually, from the appropriate administrators, reports on services within its areas of responsibility, including research.

GOVERNANCE PATH:

- 1. UTM Academic Affairs Committee [For Information] (May 9, 2022)**

PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN:

The annual report was provided for information to the Academic Affairs Committee on May 3, 2021.

HIGHLIGHTS:

The professional and academic expertise of librarians and the strong service ethos of library staff supported the UTM Library through the pivot to remote service delivery and essential onsite operations throughout the first year of the pandemic. The Library ensured the continuity of core teaching, learning, and research activities by expanding remote access to collections and moving many services to virtual formats, while at the same time providing essential study spaces and technology to support those who remained on campus.

The Library Instructional Technology Support team played a pivotal role in UTM's shift to online learning, ensuring effective use of Quercus, Zoom, and other technologies in the virtual classroom; the Syllabus Service likewise supported the rapid shift from print to digital learning materials, including extensive digitization of video content. In addition to record investment in electronic

collections, the Library also acquired the *Syd Bolton Collection*, a unique set of materials documenting the material history of 50 years of video games that will make UTM a prime destination for researchers in this emerging field.

Overall, Library usage metrics continue to reflect high demand for both collections and services, whether in person or online; while year-over-year comparisons are complicated due to the pandemic, the data reflect the importance of the Library for both study and support and point to its continued impact on the success of UTM's mission.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

There are no implications for the Campus operating budget.

RECOMMENDATION:

For information.

DOCUMENTATION PROVIDED:

Annual Report: UTM Library, 2020-21

University of Toronto Mississauga Library

2019-20 Annual Report

Introduction

From the office of the Chief Librarian

The UTM Library (UTML) provides collections, services, tools, and spaces that support teaching, learning, and research activities across the UTM campus. UTML is also part of the University of Toronto Libraries (UTL), which is the largest academic library system in Canada and consistently ranked among the top ten research libraries in North America by the Association of Research Libraries.

I am pleased to present the UTM Library Annual report for 2020–21. This report highlights exemplary work and provides high-level data to demonstrate the Library's important role in ensuring UTM's ongoing success as an essential part of a world-class institution.

Overview of Library activities

As partners in digital and print collection development at the University of Toronto, UTM librarians contribute to the development of U of T's world-class research collections central to an unparalleled learning and research environment. Our staff and librarians provide expert instruction on research practices, advanced reference support, and core services that are essential to academic life at UTM. They also represent UTML on committees, working groups, and task force teams at UTM, UTL, and across the tri-campus.

The services and professional activities of librarians and staff described in the following sections demonstrate how UTML positively impacts the teaching, learning, and research mission of both UTM and the University.

Changes due to COVID-19

UTML staff and librarians continued providing an exceptionally high level of service throughout 2020–21 as the pandemic continued to restrict many on-campus activities. After successfully pivoting to remote service delivery to support the community's new ways of working, some librarians and staff returned to campus to perform activities that could not be completed remotely and were essential to academic continuity.

Our team continued to innovate and launch new programs to meet user needs throughout the pandemic while continuing those online services already in place. We anticipate that we

will continue many of these initiatives when we return fully to on-campus work, and to incorporate the lessons we have learned to continually improve service to our community.

Where possible, this report acknowledges the influence of the pandemic on collections, programs, and services, but evaluation of the Library's overall impact should be made with this context in mind.

Spaces, technology, and people

Throughout 2020–21, our staff and librarians worked to ensure continued access to the spaces and technology essential to teaching, learning, and research.

While much of this work was completed remotely, the Library was fully closed for only a short period. Staff and librarians worked on site providing access to study space, computers, printers, and other technology; facilitating a curbside pickup service for items only available in print; and digitizing films to support the curriculum via the Syllabus Service.

Please see below and in the subsequent sections for more details on these activities.

Access to online learning technology

Throughout the closure of the UTM campus, the Library provided space and technology for our community members to learn remotely, supporting the continuity of UTM's academic mission during a period of exceptional change. Students who lacked personal computers or reliable internet connectivity were thus able to continue their studies uninterrupted; we also provided an essential space of connection for students living on campus.

Remote access to Library computers and software

In addition to in-person demand, many members of our community also required access from home to the specialized software installed on Library computers. In response, we arranged for remote access to those computers not earmarked for in-person use: in the RBC Learning Commons on the main floor, the Amgen Smart Classrooms on the first floor, and the Li Koon Chun Finance Learning Centre in the Innovation Complex.

Remote access to this software—such as Bloomberg, R, and ArcGIS—ensured consistent availability of programs essential to campus research and learning.

Wellness resource hub

During spring and summer 2020, we created a virtual wellness resource guide with materials that promote health, relaxation, and learning.

New staff

The Library welcomed employees in two new positions during this period:

- **Archivist** (October 2020): Processes, describes, and facilitates access to archival materials and special collections.
- **Reference and Instruction Librarian** (January 2021): Provides reference services and teaches curricular and co-curricular information literacy sessions.

Commented [RM1]: I only included the new positions, not empty staff positions that have been filled.

Supporting teaching and learning

Our librarians and staff play an integral role in teaching and learning and are proud of their impact on the student experience. UTML boasts robust curricular and co-curricular instructional programs, complemented by the programming and services we develop, in collaboration with campus partners, to meet a wide range of student needs.

Quercus support for teaching and learning

The Library Instructional Technologies team played an integral role in UTM's successful pivot to online teaching and learning beginning in March 2020. The team continued this support throughout 2020–21, providing guidance, documentation, and referrals to external resources to support the effective use of online tools and technologies. These resources include the Learn Anywhere and Teach Anywhere guides, a Teach Anywhere Quercus shell for faculty to share knowledge and expertise, and a similar Quercus shell for UTL librarians. The Library Instructional Technologies Team **answered over 2600 reference queries for Quercus and provided 56 group sessions for over 1000 faculty members. They also provided over 330 individual consultations.**

Syllabus Service and digitization

UTML's Syllabus Service plays an important role in the learning process, connecting students directly with the materials that facilitate their learning. Library staff enhance course syllabi with permalinks to electronic resources and digitized copies of print resources while respecting the University's licensing agreements and Canadian copyright legislation.

The Syllabus Service played a pivotal role during the transition to online learning, particularly as liaison librarians worked with faculty to find electronic replacements for analog learning materials; UTML's collection of DVDs was of particular note, as our team worked to obtain permission and then digitize dozens of films for streaming on MyMedia.

Liaison librarian program

The robust liaison librarian model used at UTML is among the most highly developed among Ontario's university libraries and is emulated by other libraries across the University. Liaison librarians provide in-person (in classrooms and in the Library) and virtual instruction, co-create assignments with faculty, offer in-depth reference consultations both in-person and virtually, and develop print and digital collections to support the curriculum.

Synchronous instruction

Librarians played an essential role in the transition to online learning. In addition to the sessions listed below, they supported faculty seeking technical and pedagogical guidance in using technology for instruction; they also constantly revised their own instructional materials to meet changing learning requirements.

In 2020–21 UTML librarians delivered **413 synchronous virtual sessions to 10,833** attendees in three main modes:

- **Curricular:** Information literacy sessions tailored to specific courses and learning outcomes in consultation with instructors.

- **Internal co-curricular:** Workshops on research skills and tools to help students succeed in their coursework and projects.
 - [Library 101](#): Information Literacy Certificate Program
 - [Library 501](#): Graduate Student Workshops
- **External co-curricular:** Workshops delivered through campus initiatives such as the LAUNCH orientation program and the Program for Accessing Research Training.

Asynchronous instruction

Library research guides

UTML librarians create and maintain hundreds of guides that provide discipline-specific (often course-specific) guidance on research resources and topics and facilitate learning.

These expert resources are very heavily used: in 2020–21, UTML's **507 guides** received **201,120 views**, demonstrating the continued value of instructional materials created by librarians. UTML guides are among those most heavily used at U of T. Below are some representative examples:

- [ISP100: Writing for University and Beyond](#)
- [SOC353: Borders and Human Rights](#)

Instructional videos

In order to support students learning remotely, to supplement live instruction, and to provide permanent 'just in time' resources, UTML staff and librarians created many instructional videos during 2020–21, hosted on the Library's YouTube channel:

- **Reference guides:** Staff created a series of videos on the new LibrarySearch platform and existing web interfaces to assist students in locating resources for assignments.
- **Curricular videos:** Librarians recorded videos on content previously taught in the classroom, allowing reuse, review, and adaptation as needed.

Reference and research support

We offered robust research support in a variety of synchronous and asynchronous modes in response to our community's needs; in many cases, these expanded upon services we had already offered before the onset of the pandemic.

In total, our staff and librarians answered **7,992 questions** among the following modes.

Zoom Reference and Research

As a proxy for the Reference and Research Desk, drop-in reference services were available via Zoom multiple days each week and at various times to accommodate students in other time zones; students received support in breakout rooms for additional privacy.

In addition, liaison librarians and reference staff provided targeted support to larger courses at preset times; these sessions were very well-attended and students demonstrated exceptionally high engagement with reference services.

Live chat

Patrons received live assistance from UTML librarians and reference staff via text-based chat; this service was available before the pandemic.

In addition, when patrons visited the UTML website after hours or visited other UTL websites, they connected with the Ask a Librarian provincial service; these questions are not reflected in the usage data above.

Reference consultations

Building on their success providing dedicated support in person, our liaison librarians met with students for one-on-one research consultations over Zoom; meetings often took place outside of normal work hours to accommodate students learning overseas.

Asynchronous support

Students received asynchronous support from reference staff and librarians via email, Quercus, and social media; in many cases these queries were referred to the synchronous services listed above, particularly reference consultations with liaison librarians.

Supporting research

Library Services Platform migration

UTL launched a new integrated library services platform (LSP) in January 2021. The new cloud-based system from Ex Libris Group replaced the legacy system, SirsiDynix, which had been used for the last 19 years.

This once-a-generation migration was the culmination of years of hard work across the UTL system; completing the project and adapting to the new system during the pandemic was a significant achievement, and we were proud to offer a modern, adaptive system that can be adapted to changing user needs.

Collections

HathiTrust Emergency Temporary Access Service

In spring 2021, UTL negotiated access to the HathiTrust Digital Library for the U of T community. Through the Emergency Temporary Access Services (ETAS), our users connected to digitized copies of older books that were normally available in print at UTL. The service saw extremely heavy use, demonstrating the continued value of our print collections, and continued to be available through the period covered by this report.

Curbside pickup

In July 2020, the Library began offering a curbside pickup service to safely provide access to print materials not available electronically, including through the HathiTrust ETAS; in order to minimize contact, materials were signed out prior to patron arrival.

During the period covered by this report, we received **1,653 requests** for curbside pickup and **completed 1,575 (95%)** requests.

New and updated electronic collections

Each year, UTML contributes financially to the acquisition and licensing of electronic resources for the U of T community through a distributed tri-campus model; in all cases, purchases are made for use across all campuses. However, we also purchase collections of unique importance to UTM researchers that may not be a priority for the other campuses.

Due to extremely high demand for digital alternatives to print materials, electronic acquisitions reached an all-time high in 2020–21. Significant UTML acquisitions included:

- Adam Matthew Digital complete primary documents collection
- Bloomsbury Drama Collection
- Significant ebook collections from Edward Elgar and Sage Publications

UTML also contributed to the acquisition of many significant digital collections for 2020–21, including:

- The American Chemical Society
- De Gruyter ebook collections
- Canadian, American, and UK University Presses' complete ebook collections

New and updated special collections

In 2020, UTML acquired the **Syd Bolton Collection**, a unique set of materials covering the history of video games from the past 50 years. The collection includes almost 14,000 video games, hundreds of consoles and systems, and thousands of copies of related literature and ephemera; it is one of the largest collections of its kind in the world and the largest known in Canada. In 2020–21, our staff worked to accession this large collection and create a finding aid to assist in making the collection available to UTM researchers.

Research services and digital scholarship

UTML's librarians and expert staff support students and faculty throughout the research process via a wide range of programs and services, such as support for knowledge synthesis; copyright and author rights; open access funding requirements and TSpace deposit; and research data management and visualization.

We also support various digital scholarship projects by consulting with researchers about theories, methods, and tools; we also provide spaces, equipment, technology, and expertise when partnering on projects.

Conclusion

UTML staff and librarians are leaders at U of T in providing impactful services that support faculty research, enable student academic achievement, and play an essential role in the success of the University of Toronto Mississauga's mission.

We look forward to building on our successful support of the community during the pandemic as we return to on-campus life, and to integrating what we have learned into our approaches to meeting user needs.

Shelley Hawrychuk
Chief Librarian
UTM Library
April 2022

