

Vision Statement: Library as Learning Commons

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Statement:

The 21st century academic library inspires the individual and the intellect to engage in personal and social growth through information, knowledge and service.

- The Library strives to serve the needs and mission of the University of West Florida.
- The Library is the intellectual hub and learning center on campus.
- The Library holds service to learning, teaching, and research as primary value.
- The Library holds reliability and integrity as core values, keeping its promises to users and the library staff.
- The Library designs and plans new spaces that have community-wide ownership, heavily reflecting the learning modes of students and faculty teaching strategies.
- The Library provides spaces well fitted for individual/group study, reflection and collaborative and social interaction.
- The Library is a center for knowledge navigation and creation, as well as traditional storehouse of information.
- The Library continues to be a place where traditional library services are offered.
- The Library is proactive in response to the revolution that has been taking place in information and instructional technologies.
- The Library collaborates and partners with other divisions of the university, going beyond institutional walls to design and provide information, teaching, media, and digitization support services and programs.
- The Library administration is flexible, embracing and adapting to change readily and quickly.

Story:

Designed as a physical and virtual learning environment, the library's programs, services and architectural design pronounce the university's commitment to quality and innovative research, teaching and scholarship. A UWF undergraduate and intern at a local maritime architectural firm hurries towards the John C. Pace Library building. Her PDA reminds her of an appointment she has scheduled to meet her classmates and the librarian. Approaching, she is attracted by the building's elegant architecture. Stepping inside, she notices the scholarly atmosphere and the library subject specialist who invites her to discuss the group's research project due in digital and paper formats.

The student perceives the library's harmonious spatial design which directs her in locating other group members. Although the group has tossed a few topics around and

sent a research profile to the information specialist, they need to learn how to best utilize the available electronic and physical resources and come up with the final draft plan to show the class.

As the student wanders past a virtual exhibition kiosk and physical library archives exhibition on West Florida history, she spies the rest of their group. They have gathered around a larger set of study spaces and unique collaborative study tables with digital terminals highlighting the library's electronic resources.

Convenience, easy access and delivery of this information are vital to the group's course work and the possibilities it might bring to the student's internship outside the university. The subject specialist directs the group's attention to the library's extensive set of electronic resources. Her classmates view some image and map online databases that have been identified by an archaeology information specialist.

During the group's conversation, supplementary resources arrive on the screen emailed by the course instructor. He could not be with the group physically for the research consultation but has arranged to Instant Message from his PDA (Portable Digital Assistant). The subject specialist points out other resources for the project held in the physical stacks and special collections. The instructor asks about copyright issues that the group should keep in mind. The librarian points the group to wider university, local and state service agencies teaming to provide grant initiatives for digital partnerships, extending an academic project's benefits to the university and wider community. The librarian also points out the UWF Libraries' local digital archive and virtual exhibit web presence. Their project could be a valuable contribution and historical resource to the wider community. Learning to integrate various library media resources, the group peruses documents and is also aided by the library technologists in working with other media elements.

The students appreciate the librarians' ability to provide the information the group needs, whether from local, regional print collections, or leased and locally developed digital resources. From a previous course last semester, the students had concurred with their classmates that the amount and quality of information related to regional history, as well as to health, environmental, scientific, business, social, and literary issues, has been particularly helpful and relevant to building professional qualifications. Whether in the building, at home, or at some location away from campus, the group can conveniently and expeditiously work on their project through the library's resources; this set of possibilities opens wider angles and directions.

The library offers the students a comprehensive range of learning-related services: information literacy, subject area consultations and necessary instructional technology. As the group navigates through the library's information portal which contains a simple and intuitive search interface, they quickly identify an array of relevant intellectual resources. Print, audio, digital, datasets and other media formats can be easily downloaded to the students' home computers. The convenience of discovery, access, and delivery of this information is vital to the group's learning process.

After developing the class research project, the student and her classmates preview their digital essay for the following week's in-class delivery in the group study rooms on the upper floor of the library commons. Throughout the entire process of developing the research project, the group has felt supported by a larger library team integrating library, writing centered academic technology specialists.

Researching other assignments, the group asks for and receives professional and effective assistance from the courteous and knowledgeable staff. Whether in-person, by cell or online, this interaction reinforces the students' appreciation for the level of competent and committed service they have received. The library staff supports progressive learning and technology needs. The students' sense of research self-confidence is bolstered by the information literacy skills previously acquired through the library's learning, information literacy and digital programs. These skills undergird the students' confidence to approach the rigors of current research assignments, whether related to a university program or to other research assignments that they might face in their future careers.

Leaving the library, our students feel confident, having brought successful progress to their work. The library faculty and staff have been instrumental in the students' discovery, consultation and project design of a complex research assignment. The students have a sense of achievement about what they have learned and the level of quality that the library has enabled. Tonight, one of the students will attend a program in the library showcasing a UWF author/professor's work to the larger faculty, students and greater West Florida community. For the duration of their degrees and hopefully beyond, the students look forward to working, studying, meeting and collaborating at the library.