

FOCUS: University Libraries Pier

The Office of the Provost recently introduced a refreshed organization model which includes six Program Piers. This week's newsletter details the University Libraries Pier—its structure, mission, and specialized components. Subsequent issues will outline the other structures.

The [University Libraries](#), led by Dean John Zenelis, is a research-level academic library system providing a wide range of expertise, resources, services, technology, and facilities. The Libraries Pier of the Office of the Provost is focused on meeting the educational and research/scholarship needs of students and faculty at George Mason University. Its resources encompass [research](#) and collaborative learning facilities, digital platforms, extensive research [databases](#), a wide array of scholarly and scientific journals, special collections and archives, and over 3 million items in its circulating collection, including e-books. These resources are amplified by a dedicated, knowledgeable library team of over 130 [library faculty and staff](#) (as well as over 100 student assistants and GRA/GPAs) and delivered to Mason's diverse community of students, faculty and staff, alumni, and Virginia residents. Each year this includes many thousands of research and data services consultations, [instruction](#) sessions, [workshops](#), educational courses, print and digital research materials circulated, databases made available, and other services. Additionally, the Libraries hosts community events and provides key partnerships with academic and other units across the university's campuses.

A member of the Association of Southeastern Libraries (ASERL), the Virtual Library of Virginia (VIVA), the Virginia Research Libraries group (VRL), and the Washington Research Library Consortium (WLRC), the Libraries is part of a broader academic network to ensure Mason students and faculty have access to the global research resources they need. As part of a public institution, the University Libraries is mindful of its role as responsible stewards of state funds as well as its commitment to ensure research is publicly available to advance knowledge for the benefit of our community and broader society. With this commitment, it has launched a [Sustainable Collections](#) initiative with the aim to demand and invest in less exploitative scholarly communications ecosystems, in which research is more publicly available - advancing knowledge for the benefit of all.

2021-22 Goals

- Amplify the university's 50th Anniversary celebrations with a special exhibit curated by the Libraries' Special Collections Research Center and a commemorative book published by the Libraries' Mason Publishing Group.
- Expand on Sustainable Collections and [Open Educational Resources](#) (OER) initiatives.
- Expand on current [Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#) initiatives and finalize Inclusive Excellence plan.

Mission, Vision, Values

The Libraries' [vision](#) is to model the modern academic research library, in all of its forms and modes, through the cultivation of innovative services and resources for teaching, learning, research, and scholarship at George Mason University.

The Libraries' [mission](#) is to foster innovation, creativity, and imagination by facilitating access to scholarship and information, providing expert consultation in the research process, and actively teaching the effective and critical use of information. And, we fulfill a critical role in the creation, dissemination, and preservation of knowledge. Our full vision, mission, and values statement is available [here](#).

Divisions & Teams

- **Office of the Dean of Libraries and University Librarian** – the senior leadership and administrative component of the Libraries, including the Office of the Dean, Development and Grants, Communications and Marketing, and Administrative Services.
- **Digital Strategies and Systems** – comprising Digital Technologies and Services, Digital Scholarship Center, Mason Publishing Group and GMU Press, University Dissertation & Thesis Services, and Assessment and Planning.
- **Access and Resource Management** – comprising Database Integrity and Analysis, Preservation Services, Access Services, Resource Licensing and Delivery, Metadata Services, and Resource Acquisition.
- **Learning, Research and Engagement** – comprising Collections Strategy, Special Collections Research Center (including University Records Management), Teaching & Learning Team, Arts and Humanities Team, Sciences and Technology Team (and Mercer Library), Social Sciences Team (and Arlington Campus Library).

Specialized Units and Services

- The Libraries' [Special Collections Research Center](#) (SCRC) supports the research and teaching missions of the university by acquiring, documenting, preserving and providing access to primary research, archival and rare book collections relevant to academic programs. SCRC also manages the non-current and archival records of George Mason University; is responsible for the preservation and access to the University's theses and dissertations; and undertakes the creation of audiovisual documentary resources through the Oral History Program. SCRC holds a range of materials, including nationally significant collections, but also collections related to George Mason University, Northern Virginia, and the broader D.C. metropolitan area. Among its collections' strengths are politics and government, performing arts, transportation and planning, and photography. SCRC collects oral histories pertaining to Northern Virginia; the Federal Theatre Project; Reston, Virginia; and George Mason University's history.
- The [Center for Mason Legacies](#) (CML) is a new interdisciplinary and collaborative research center established by the University Libraries and the College of Humanities and Social Sciences in July 2020. CML's mission is to preserve and examine the legacy of George Mason IV (1725-1792), his ancestors and heirs, and the people he enslaved. The Center engages student researchers in studying the past and present influences of our university's namesake through a combination of scholarly research, public history, teaching innovation, and community outreach.
- The Libraries' [Digital Scholarship Center](#) (DiSC) partners with students, faculty, and staff by providing research support to facilitate digital research through workshops, class presentations, and research consultations in the areas of data creation, discovery and acquisition; quantitative and qualitative data analysis; geographic information systems (GIS) and data visualization; text and data mining; digital humanities and digital projects (including coding and metadata support); research data management including support for writing data management plans; and data archiving and sharing using the Mason Archival Repository Service (MARS).
- The Libraries' [Scholarly Productions @ the Research Commons Lab](#) (SP@RC) provides point of need assistance for scholars in disseminating their research, regardless of format, with the goal of creating self-sufficient scholars who are able to apply best practices in design and research presentation to their work.
- The **Music Library** supports the instructional, research, and performance programs of Mason's School of Music. The Music Library's resources also supplement related academic department collections, and enrich the music-related needs and interests of the Mason community, with

musical scores, books, audio recordings (LP records and CDs), and video recordings (VHS tapes and DVDs).

- The Mason Publishing Group – consisting of [Mason Publishing](#) and the [George Mason University Press](#) – provides support and resources to the George Mason University community for creating, curating, and disseminating scholarly, creative, and educational works. Operating in the forefront of Open Access, it facilitates and supports digital publication of journals, conference proceedings and books, and assists faculty with Open Educational Resources (OER) for teaching initiatives. The George Mason University Press supports the academic mission of George Mason University by publishing peer-reviewed, scholarly works of distinction, written by authors from a wide range of intellectual perspectives, for a diverse, worldwide readership.
- The [University Dissertation & Thesis Services](#) (UDTS) unit assists Mason graduate students create, complete, and submit their thesis or dissertation by university deadlines. To do so, UDTS offers a variety of resources that assist students in formatting their documents, preparing them for submission, and obtaining the necessary signatures. In addition to individual consultations and workshops, UDTS reviews format, accepts, processes, and archives over 500 theses and dissertations per year.
- Digital Repository Services enable George Mason researchers to share their research openly and reliably for the long term. University Libraries provides two platforms for this purpose: [MARS](#) (Mason Archival Repository Service) which makes research publications, presentations and electronic theses and dissertations available and [DATAVERSE](#), which provides an archival, accessible platform for research datasets. University Libraries also is a member of the Qualitative Data Repository (QDR) which gives Mason researchers access to QDR's curation and storage services.
- [University Records Management](#) (URM) assists university offices and programs with the implementation of their records processes by providing exemplary service through active education, the application of best records practices, and secure services to ensure the proper retention and disposition of our public records. public records serve as evidence of business conducted and as a means of transparency and accountability to the university's community and the citizens of Virginia. Proper records management policies and procedures protects Mason against litigation, security breaches, and loss of vital information. Serving as one of the university's compliance programs, URM not only consults on procedures and policies, but collaborates with other records and information-oriented units to keep Mason in line with University policies, retention requirements set by the Commonwealth, as well as federal and international laws.