From top: Library Services mission statement, Library Services staff celebrate a colleague’s pandemic-era birthday with science-themed virtual Zoom backgrounds, and Wallace Library’s new tagline.

Prepared by Megan Brooks, Dean of Library Services, October 15, 2020
Executive Summary

Introduction & Summary

At the start of FY20, the Library Services team had focus and drive, and was eager, engaged, and excited to tackle what’s coming next, here at Wheaton and in higher education and libraries as whole. Who could have predicted what the year would bring?

Fall 2019 felt typical: Research & Instruction librarians taught students in dozens of classes, many of them first year seminars; Archives & Digital Initiatives librarians worked with students and faculty on using primary sources and digital projects; the Collections and Access teams completed the second semester of a comprehensive reserves pilot and prepared to make it a normal process; and Media Services responded to their usual onslaught of event support requests while short a staff member. Exciting things happened too. A successful search for Director of Research & Instruction wrapped up, even as the library had to hire an outside vendor for mold remediation in the stacks. Spring 2020 launched in a similar fashion: classes, collections, spaces, and services were humming along until mid-March, when the COVID-19 pandemic forced college operations to become fully remote.

Staff responses to these changes initially reflected their mindset at the start of FY20: focus, drive, engagement, and a willingness to tackle challenges even during a time of profound anxiety and disruption. They adjusted to working remotely, learned new tools, created learning objects and communications channels, and adjusted processes and budgets - all in support of the faculty, staff, and students of Wheaton College. However, this did not come without negative consequences: team members ended the year burned out from addressing non-stop changes and challenges, demoralized by the loss of open positions in the library and broad budget cuts, and struggling in the face of a disastrous national response to the pandemic.

The following report details progress made towards FY20 goals, Library Services’ full response to COVID-19 operational changes, support of student success, and much more.

Vision & Mission

Vision: The Wallace Library serves as a dynamic hub that supports scholarly inquiry, experiential research, and the College’s curriculum and also fosters innovative and effective pedagogy.

Mission: Library Services connects the Wheaton community to a world of ideas and information, creating an environment for self-exploration and boundless learning.

Overview of Significant Accomplishments & Outcomes

More accomplishments are in the accomplishments section and in department reports in the appendix.
Teaching and Learning

- Taught **149 information and digital literacy sessions** that reached 2868 students.
- Engaged in **548 one-on-one, in-depth consultations**.
- Responded to **327 classroom emergency calls** and fixed **228 classroom issues** before they became emergencies, and resolved **160 Zoom support questions**.
- Developed **training and support for remote teaching** (e.g. Teaching and Learning Online, Explore onCourse), met individually with 50+ faculty, and answered 300+ questions on remote learning.
- Launched 35 new **subject guides** created using best practices in universal design and pedagogy.

Outreach and Events

- Supported **29 Zoom webinars** hosted by Admissions, Athletics, and others.
- Administered college’s Zoom environment, which saw **14,795 scheduled meetings** in FY20.
- Hosted third **Faculty Speaker Series** event with Geoff Collins.
- Hosted a **Human Library** with the Marshall Center, and taught **May Fellows** to make dumplings.

Access to Materials

- Implemented **document delivery** for library-owned materials and **mail delivery** for books.
- Launched the **Syllabi Collection** (Wheaton login required).
- Launched a **comprehensive reserves program** and immediately revamped it to allow remote digital access to materials.

Response to COVID-19 Operational Changes

- Safely **closed the library building** while providing contactless materials pickup and drop-off.
- Shifted nearly **all library services operations to remote-only**.

Goals for Upcoming Year (2020-21)

Selected goals for Library Services in FY21 include:

- Keep the library building open and operating safely while students are on-campus.
- Articulate overall strategic directions and develop and execute a DEI action plan.
- Launch a three-year rolling assessment plan.
- Launch a Student Advisory Board.
- Develop and expand information literacy offerings.
- Advance faculty/staff technological readiness.
- Address increased demand for digital library collections.
- Expand and develop chat services.
- Improve availability, usability, discoverability, and preservation of unique collections and scholarship.