Earlier this year, the Libraries opened a new space in the Perry-Castañeda Library (PCL) designed to meet the specialized needs of graduate students and scholars who thrive in a more contemplative library environment.

The Scholars Commons is a proof-of-concept pilot envisioned to provide a place in the flagship branch of the Libraries for undisturbed study and scholarly collaboration by advanced degree program participants.

The Libraries conducted focus groups in spring 2015 with graduate students and faculty to learn more about their research and writing needs, and received survey input from over 1,100 participants. The Scholars Commons brings to life the spaces and services with support from other players in the campus research enterprise, including...
the Office of the Vice President for Research, the Graduate School and the Graduate Student Assembly. The space includes a silent study area, a Data Lab, a Graduate Landing Spot and a modest exhibition space, all situated in the former periodicals room and adjacent staff office spaces on the entry level of the PCL.

The silent study area was created specifically at the request of graduate student patrons of the Libraries whose needs have, at times, been deferred in order to support the larger undergraduate community on campus. Though open to all students, it’s expected that the solitary, meticulous learning style of advanced scholars will be more suited to the space.

The Data Lab will provide software for statistical analysis, data visualization, and text encoding, and users will have access to digital content management software and other web-based tools for digital scholarship. The Graduate Landing Spot will be an exclusive communal area where graduates from across the disciplines can meet, share ideas and potentially strike up interdisciplinary collaborations. A small exhibition space will provide opportunities for visual presentations to showcase faculty and student research in a condensed form.

The space also realizes a need to co-locate a community environment for graduates within reach of the valuable resources and the research lifecycle and expertise of subject liaison librarians at the PCL.

“We are leveraging entry level space made available through strategic facilities planning to introduce and assess responses to services scholars have identified as ideal for intellectual inquiry and productivity,” says Jenifer Flaxbart, Research and Liaison Services Librarian. “Ultimately, our ability to advocate for and justify an expanded, permanent Scholars Commons on another level in PCL will hinge on the response of the scholarly community to these pilot spaces and services.”

The launch of the Scholars Commons continues the trend of re-envisioning the entry-level of PCL as a sandbox for experimenting with ways to improve the user experience and expand collaborations with campus partners. This follows the August 2015 opening of the Learning Commons and precedes by mere days the opening of space for STEM students in the adjacent UFCU Room.
People-Building for Today and Tomorrow

“We will do things differently, and we will do different things.”

These were among the first words that Lorraine Haricombe offered to Libraries staff on her arrival one year ago, and that exhortation has been realized in large ways as a new strategic vision becomes reality.

While some changes are more subtle, the way that the human resources of the Libraries are being adapted to the evolving needs of our users and to technological advancements is distinctive. New faces are filling positions that are outside the traditional library mold as a means of addressing new currents and new fields of inquiry in ways that take advantage of opportunities in the digital realm, as well as within traditional institutional frameworks.

Over the past year, the Libraries have hired for a succession of new titles that were necessitated by adjustments in university priorities and developments in the practices of scholarship. One of the first moves made to reimagine the organizational structure within the Libraries occurred as the result of a vacancy at the Architecture & Planning Library, when head librarian Beth Dodd resumed her curatorial work in the Alexander Architectural Archive. Rather than simply refill the position as was originally planned, Haricombe worked with her executive team to adapt the title to a larger current in the field of digital humanities — an area of research and teaching at the intersection of computing and the disciplines of the humanities. The Libraries hired Katie Pierce Meyer as Humanities Librarian for Architecture and Planning both to take on a role as both administrative lead of the APL and also to focus on how to develop efforts in the digital humanities at a branch level that could be scaled to an organizational-wide scope.

The Libraries were in the process of reviewing its gifts policy even before Lorraine Haricombe arrived, and early decisions

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about putting controls on the intake of unsolicited gifts meant that head of gifts processing Sean O’Bryan could be redeployed toward another important priority. Sean was hired to the position of Collections Strategist, where he has become the catalyst for development of a new strategic policy for collections management. His work now is core to the improvement of efforts to move from print to electronic resources.

As African & African American Studies has joined the predominant fields at the university, the need for bibliographer support from the Libraries has become clear. Especially relevant to our existing resources is the growing focus on the African Diaspora in Latin America and the Caribbean, and with the recent attention given to our southern neighbors by UT President Greg Fenves, we recently hired Rachel Winston as Black Diaspora Archivist at the Benson Latin American Collection. Winston will work to enhance the Benson’s holdings while developing university collaborations to strengthen scholarship in this burgeoning field.

The importance of digital collections and electronic resources remains on an upward trajectory, so there is a constant need to reconsider strategy for making the most of campus technology for institutional gain. Between the expansion of digitization efforts, the prioritization of Open Access, and the unabated growth of Big Data in research, finding ways to manage a new universe of information has become essential. Jessica Trelogan recently became our new Data Management Coordinator to build, maintain and enhance the data services deployed by the Libraries. She’ll work closely with our campus partners at places like the Texas Advanced Computing Center and Information Technology Services to ensure that we’re making the best use of resources across the Forty Acres.

As digital collections continue to grow, the need has arisen for a dedicated custodian to manage both the born-digital and digitized materials that increasingly are the currency of library collections. Ashley Adair joined the Libraries Preservation Department last year to take over stewardship of digitized collections across its various libraries and archives, where she plays an active role in the acquisition, appraisal, arrangement and description of these modern core resources.

Technology has also created new opportunities for study at UT, and not just in the STEM fields. The university recently announced the formation of a degree in Creative Arts and Entertainment Technology within the College of Fine Arts, and the students of that program will rely heavily on a space being developed at the Fine Arts Library. The Foundry — a digitally-focused maker space within the library — will feature a recording studio, fiber art studio, video production studio, gaming studio, digital media lab and more. To support the student needs both within the new program and across relevant technology and design studies at UT, the Libraries created a librarian position for Arts and Creative Technologies, and hired FAL veteran Boris Brodsky. Brodsky will be the custodian of the Foundry, and will build from scratch the liaison role that the Libraries have with students and faculty in this exciting new program.

These are just the initial movements of a transformational time at the University of Texas Libraries, where we’re doing different things and doing things differently.
Libraries Open Space to Support University STEM Efforts

Continuing the trend of creating new library spaces for specialized purposes, the Libraries partnered with Student Success Initiatives in the Provost Office, the College of Natural Sciences, the Cockrell School of Engineering and the Sanger Learning Center to create a supported learning space for students in the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields at The University of Texas at Austin.

The new STEM Study Area was developed in coordination with partners to conceive a space accessible to students at the point of need in the heavily-trafficked, centrally-located Perry-Castañeda Library, the flagship of the University of Texas Libraries.

“For students looking for help in STEM courses, the new space in the PCL is a tremendous resource. It’s a collaborative learning environment where students can go and get help—whether it be from a TA, tutor, or fellow classmates—in the core STEM courses,” Senior Vice Provost for Enrollment and Graduation Management David Laude said.

Natural Sciences and Engineering provide instructor-led sessions with Teaching Assistants in new STEM Learning Spaces and the Sanger Learning Center conducts pop-up tutoring services in the STEM Study Area targeting students enrolled in STEM gateway courses. The presence of on-site support at the point of need is expected to enhance student outcomes in relevant fields.

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When Vice Provost Lorraine Haricombe joined the Libraries last year, she brought with her extensive experience in building support and policies for open access in libraries. So, it’s no surprise that she has brought her passion for the concept to her work here at the university.

Haricombe has made it an ongoing mission to reach out to administrators, deans, faculty and students to share the benefits of open access (OA) and build relationships with the goal of promoting the message of open as a necessity for campus. These efforts are already revealing increased comprehension and eagerness by the university community, especially in areas that would see near immediate benefit from adoption of OA practices.

Last fall, the Libraries and Texas Learning Sciences — a campus unit charged with integrating best practices for teaching and learning through technology — began collaboratively programming events and workshops as part of a “Year of Open” to raise the profile of open content by bringing OA luminaries to campus.

The first event in the series occurred in September and featured Dr. David Wiley, Co-Founder and Chief Academic Officer of Lumen Learning, an organization dedicated to increasing student success and improving the affordability of education through the adoption of open educational resources by schools, community and state colleges and universities. Wiley addressed a packed house on the rationale for moving from a resource ownership model to the shared model that is at the heart of the open content movement.

Dr. David Ernst visited campus in November to discuss how the adoption of open textbooks can help overcome the impediments of access and cost to improve student success outcomes. Ernst is the Chief Information Officer in the Col-

A (First) Year of Open Access

Head of Texas Learning Sciences Phil Long, David Wiley and Lorraine Haricombe.
lege of Education and Human Development at the University of Minnesota, as well as Executive Director of the Open Academics Textbook Initiative — a program developed to improve higher education access, affordability and success for all students through the use of open textbooks. Ernst created and manages the Open Academics textbook catalog — a single source for faculty to find quality openly licensed textbooks — and he and his colleagues are also developing a toolkit to help other institutions interested in starting their own open textbook initiative on campus.

The “Year of Open” will continue this spring with events scheduled for April and May, and as work ramps up to begin instituting OA policies and practices with the Libraries, look for more programming and partnerships to arise in the near future.

David Ernst

When TA sessions or tutoring services are not scheduled, renovated areas are available for use by any library user, regardless of major, so that a partnership developed to benefit a specific user group has benefits for all library patrons. An increase in the availability of power outlets, new mobile furniture, and a significant increase in whiteboards are just a few of the upgrades that enrich the space.

“The Libraries, as community centers for users across the disciplines, are well-placed to host resources and services — developed in collaboration with our campus partners — that meet the needs of the campus community,” says Vice Provost and Director of the Libraries Lorraine Haricombe. “This new space at PCL will help to ensure that students in these essential fields have the support for their work in tandem with the informational resources needed for academic success.”
There’s no doubt that the embrace of digitization by museums and libraries has significant benefit for the devotees of art history. The preservation of the cultural record from the degrading effects of time is the most utilitarian benefit of the practice, but archival digitization also allows for non-linear consideration of creative works in its ability to allow art to be partnered with other data, information, critical context, etc. Digitization efforts are limited, though, by the sheer volume of historical works that exist and by that which continues to be created. Sometimes, the only sure way for art to be preserved digitally, is for a specific need to arise.

Such is the case with the work of Sandow Birk, a visual artist in southern California, whose art contemplates modern American society with a nod to past masters.

Earlier this year, UT College of Fine Arts Ph.D. candidate Rose G. Salseda began research for her dissertation by interviewing several artists who created artworks in response to five days of civil unrest caused by a jury’s acquittal of four white Los Angeles police officers who had been charged with the videotaped beating of Rodney King, a black motorist.

“These riots were the first in history to be heavily documented through live news coverage, film, video, and photographs,” says Salseda. “Yet, past scholarship has failed to recognize the potential encompassed within art to speak to the history of the riots.”

“My dissertation seeks to unearth a missing visual narrative. Moreover, it reveals the capacity of art to unhinge and complicate polarizing histories of the 1992 LA Riots.”
Along with Birk, Salseda had interviewed sculptor Seth Kaufman and graffiti artist Man One, only to discover that virtually none of the artists’ work from the 1980s-90s had been digitally preserved.

“It really alarmed me,” says Salseda, “because, since most of these artworks were in private collections or in unprotected public spaces, no one would have the opportunity to see them again.”

In working with Birk, Kaufman and Man One, Salseda was able to gain access to slides, photos and ephemera directly from the artists themselves.

“Birk was the first of the three artists that I met. He shared slides of his work with me and I was surprised that only a few had ever been digitized,” recalls Salseda. “I knew that if the documentation of the work was not updated, it may continue to be overlooked by scholars, teachers, and others.”

Salseda remembered from previous work with staff at the Visual Resources Collection at UT that a library might be able to help her capture the imagery, thus ensuring that it would be preserved for both her use, as well as the use of future researchers. But she needed to find someone close by in Southern California that would be willing and able to assist.

“I contacted the head art librarian at Cal State Long Beach — the university closest to Birk’s studio. She then directed me to Jeffrey Ryan, the CSULB Visual Resource Center staff,” recounts Salseda. “I spoke with Ryan and he volunteered to digitize Birk’s images, as well as that of other artists whose work has not been digitized. Thus far, he has digitized several hundred slides for me and the artists I work with — all of which are now available to CSULB students, faculty and staff.”

Salseda then followed up with Sydney Kilgore, media coordinator for the UT’s VRC — an actively growing collection of some 80,000 digital images of art and architecture located at the university’s Fine Arts Library — to see if it would be possible to ingest a selection of Birk’s work into the university’s repository for the benefit of students, faculty and researchers at UT.

“When Ms. Salseda approached us with the Birk project we knew it would be another win/win situation,” says Kilgore. “In this case, the VRC additions resulted with Rose Salseda wanting to share her research, and artist Sandow Birk being willing to personally choose and share 30 images of his art which he felt were representative of his career.”

Salseda is currently working with Kaufman and Man One to secure digital images of their work for inclusion in the VRC, as well, which are expected to arrive next year.

She believes that there is a larger history to be told by the art that was created in the wake of the unrest, but due to a lack of documentation, the story of the period has an incomplete context.

“Due to the numerous artworks the riots inspired and the surprisingly scant scholarly and curatorial consideration of this work, I am positive there are many more artworks out there that have not been properly digitized and archived,” Salseda says. “In general, the lack of art history on the riots and the unbalanced focus on a small pool of artists means that other artist contributions to this important episode in LA and US history are forgotten or go untold.”

It’s this personal, practical experience that Salseda had in the process of her own research that prompted some realizations about the temporality of art and the necessity of digital preservation.

“I have come to realize even more the importance of digitizing...
A happy convergence of circumstances at the beginning of the recent academic year resulted in a creative endeavor that benefits the Libraries, its users and the students who represent the quality of talent at the university.

Last fall, the Fine Arts Library’s (FAL) music librarian David Hunter received a generous donation of pristine and rare punk vinyl records in the form of 700 LPs and 400 singles (45s) from a collection carefully amassed by the late Justin Gibran (Freud) Reia.

Reia was a guitarist for Berkeley-area punk band The Criminals in the 1990s, active during a time when the city was spawning a pop-punk revival that manifested bands that would go on to garner broad attention, such as Rancid, The Offspring and Green Day. His connection to the punk music scene and the various players in a place where record stores are in abundance made it possible for Reia to build an exceptional collection of genre-specific gems.

Reia’s collection was donated to the FAL’s Historical Music Recordings Collection (HMRC) by Reia’s mother, Flora Salyers, and his wife, Tamara Schatz, with the hope that the music he had spent his life gathering would benefit future students, faculty and researchers who rely on the archive as a resource. Salyers delivered the collection herself, hauling the records in her car on a road trip from Little Rock, Arkansas, after a series of consultations with Hunter.

The materials start to fill a genre gap in the HMRC, as well. Punk music was notably underrepresented as a focus, but the addition of such a range of items, many of which are uncom-
In an effort to expand the opportunities for the ULN students in the Media Lab, as well as to fill a need for the Libraries, Charisma and her fellow lab assistants Lucia Aremu — junior Government major — and Jocelyn Mendoza — junior, Education — were approached by the Libraries to see if they would be interested in making a short film to highlight some aspect of the Libraries efforts; the subject matter was left completely to the students’ own interests. All three enthusiastically agreed to take on the project, and settled on the Reia punk collection as the focus for their effort.

Working in coordination with Media Lab Manager Andy Wilbur, the students toured the HMRC collection (located at the Collections Deposit Library) with David Hunter, conducted preliminary interviews with Hunter and Katherine Strickland — PCL Map Collection manager and punk music aficionado — then organized, shot, edited and produced a short documentary film on the collection, which is viewable on the Libraries YouTube channel.

The Libraries are fortunate to have the support of generous donors, talented students and remarkable staff to make efforts such as this possible.

You can see the students’ film on the Libraries’ YouTube channel at: https://youtu.be/NGIuPGO0aNg

Music Librarian (and interim Head Librarian at FAL) David Hunter was interviewed for a student-created film on one of the music collections.

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Preserving Voices from the Past

In any given month, the university announces research achievements in such varied areas as varied as digital neuroscropy, millennial socioeconomic demography, biofuel farming practices, new species discovery and engineering to improve physical therapy. It’s a testament to how much starts here that really does change the world that we are constantly moving on to the next discovery or innovation.

But the basis for these discoveries doesn’t just disappear into some massive warehouse never to be seen again. Especially in the age of digital preservation, even those materials that could easily have fallen victim to the ravages of time can now be reasonably saved for contemplation or further consideration at some point in the future.

Such is the case with a trove of audio recordings compiled by Communications professor Robert Hopper (1945-1998) documenting the most seemingly commonplace of activities — human conversation.

Over the span of decades, Hopper meticulously captured thousands of hours of person-to-person interactions, phone conversations and phone messages in an attempt to understand how we connect with each other in the most basic of ways.

Hopper’s research resulted in nine books, over sixty essays and numerous papers on the subject, but just as importantly, he left us with a sizable snapshot of how people shared space with each other during a particular era in which the telephone was a significant tool for conversation.

From voice to magnetic tape and now to a collection of ones

Continued on page 14
Donation Supports Core Resources for Cancer Research

This fall, the Libraries was happy to announce a new collection in the Life Science Library that will support the incoming class of the new Dell Medical School next year — the Gillson Longenbaugh Foundation Oncology Research Collection.

This new collection was funded by a generous contribution of $50,000 by the Gillson Longenbaugh Foundation (Houston) in honor of namesake Alta G. Longenbaugh. Harold and Alta Longenbaugh started a small rice farm in Katy in the 1930s which grew to 4000 acres and became one of the largest land holdings in Harris County.

The Foundation supports medical research across Texas, identifying researchers and centers at the cutting-edge of their fields. The gift will enable the purchase of substantial electronic resources to support cancer research at the university.

The donation was memorialized in a ceremonial unveiling of a plaque in the Life Science Library on January 16. Members of the foundation along with friends and family were present for a modest presentation by Vice Provost and Director Lorraine Haricombe.

STEM researchers are increasingly reliant on electronic resources since they provide the most up-to-date information, but current collection funding allocations are inadequate to address the rising costs of these vital materials. The Libraries is working closely with the Dell Medical School to ensure our collection will provide the basic fundamental resources necessary for medical research, and longstanding Life Science Head Librarian Nancy Elder volunteered to assist with resource selection in advance of the hiring of a specialized librarian to coordinate resources for the new enterprise.

The Libraries would like to extend thanks to the Gillson Longenbaugh Foundation and in particular, board members E.W. “Ned” Torian, Dr. Neal R. Pellis, and foundation president Lawrence I. Levy. Special thanks to UT Libraries Advisory Council Chair JD Torian who facilitated this gift. We also extend our appreciation to Nancy Elder for her years of service and her recent efforts on behalf of the Dell Medical School. If you would like to honor Nancy Elder and/or help with the acquisition of other vital resources, please consider supporting the Life Science Library.
Tech Expertise for Campus

There’s a lot of talk about the collections (physical and digital) and spaces at the UT Libraries, but there’s a significant technology infrastructure in place to facilitate access and digitally preserve the Libraries’ massive assemblage of electronic resources. To maintain those important tools, a highly-trained cadre of technology professionals is constantly on call to respond to issues, discover and implement technological innovations and provide for the support needs of staff.

As the Libraries have continued to explore ways to expand services to address the needs of campus, we’ve considered how we might leverage technical expertise to provide support beyond the Libraries.

Chris Carter — the Libraries’ Director of Planning and Operations — was approached by the McCombs School of Business after hearing a description of the cost model for supporting UT Libraries labs. McCombs Director David Burns wondered if that support could be scaled to provide lab support in the Business School. Carter and his staff ran the numbers and took the proposal to Libraries administration, who roundly backed the evaluative project, and after a pilot period in Summer 2015, Libraries’ IT Infrastructure staff took over the tech support of a lab at the McCombs School.

Under the terms of service, the Business School purchases the hardware and secures licensing of specialized software, and the Libraries provides installation and support of operating systems, applications and updates for the computers; when there’s a problem with a PC, Libraries IT staff respond to address it. Fees charged per computer by the Libraries were determined to allow for the accommodation of additional IT staff should growth of the lab make it necessary.

Along with the branches, this brings the support coverage area maintained by Libraries staff to 14 locations, and Carter feels that there is room to expand provision of the service to other interested parties on campus.

“We structure the service so that it fits into our current, lean and efficient desktop support approach,” says Carter. “The cost per PC for support is intended to allow us to add an FTE if we increase the service so much that it needs an extra person. For now, we just rely on the excellent and efficient people we currently have. In particular, the excellent systems administration skills of David Roberts makes this possible.”

The College of Natural Sciences recently contributed 20 additional units to the Mallet Chemistry Library — bringing the number of computers to 32 — and provided specialized software, but, in this case, the Libraries simply took ownership of the expanded lab. The opportunities for growth in the third-party support model for campus computer labs, though, is extensive thanks to an ever-present need for technology.

Carter thinks the Libraries are well-suited to play the support role for other campus partners by virtue of what we’ve learned from internal efforts.

“We see the service from the perspective of supporting a high volume 24/7 kind of operation in PCL and extend the same service offering to anyone who wants to have a library lab in their space,” Carter says. “The McCombs lab is a 24/7 facility for business students and we’ve been able to both replicate what is available in PCL and customize it for their needs. It's a good model of a basic, replicable service that will both scale and also allow for local customization depending on the discipline.”
and zeroes spread across time and distance, this information has been carefully preserved from its origination in the 20th century to today, and is available through the Libraries digital repository, Texas ScholarWorks, for anyone to access.

Established in 2008 as the University of Texas Digital Repository, Texas ScholarWorks was created to provide open, online access to the products of the University’s research and scholarship, preserve these works for future generations, promote new models of scholarly communication and deepen community understanding of the value of higher education.

Along with its recent renaming, the repository received a significant upgrade making it easier than ever to access, utilize and synthesize data and knowledge generated at UT for broadening our understanding of the world and of ourselves.

In such a way as to warrant a reconsideration of his work — made possible through endeavors like Texas ScholarWorks — Hopper presaged the increasing centrality of technology to the human experience in his 1992 book, Telephone Conversation:

“As citizens in the telephone age become increasingly summons-vulnerable, technical innovation transforms and constrains possibilities for speaking. In constructing summons and in answering them, we use resources already available in the speech community. But adaptation to this new medium alters communications patterns that are among our most priceless community resources. Ecological pollution may strike semiotic systems as well as air and water. We experiment on ourselves by using the telephone which may be the electronic medium that transforms its users the most thoroughly.”

“Preserving Voices: continued from Page 11

images. These images are essential when original artworks are lost, reside in private collections, and/or are irregularly exhibited,” she says.

“It is also important for artists to update the format of their image archives to ensure that future generations have the potential to access images of their art when viewing equipment for older formats become scarce or defunct,” says Salseda. “However, taking on such tasks are out-of-reach for many artists: the equipment is expensive, as is hiring private companies to do such work, and it can take an extraordinary amount of time if one does not have the proper equipment or assistance.”

“Resources like UT’s VRC and CSULB’s Visual Resource Center are invaluable. From personal inquiries to professional ones, like documenting my exhibitions or archiving images related to my dissertation, I knew I could rely on these resources. I hope more students and faculty realize the important indispensable services they offer.”
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