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Project Overview

MGT Consulting was hired by the Texas A&M University System in June 2021 to conduct a high-level, comprehensive review of major functional areas at TAMU. This review focused on the organizational structure of the University and as part of that process the report included recommendations regarding the University Libraries. As a follow up to the study, President Banks issued her *Path Forward* document directing the redesign of the libraries. This report captures findings and recommendations based on additional work conducted for the University to assist with redesign of the University Libraries. Specific information can be found on the following pages:

- Future Trends and Analysis – Page 3
- Current State of Texas A&M Libraries – Page 9
- Findings and Recommendations – Page 19

In this review, MGT was charged with developing recommendations to assist in redesigning TAMU’s University Libraries to create an innovative resource for the future that meets the needs of the campus community. The study consisted of reviewing the current TAMU University Libraries information and organizational structure, researching future trends of libraries as service units in supporting student and faculty success, and delivering findings and recommendations that address the organizational structure and envision the future of university libraries. Further, MGT’s directive for this study included answering key questions focused on the purpose of libraries, accreditation principles and impacts, information service needs, access for faculty and students, defining a service library, determining staffing, clarifying the link between investments and performance as well as how to use space most effectively.

**Key Questions to Consider**

- What is the purpose of libraries in the future?
- What accreditation principles impact libraries?
- What are the information service needs of the campus?
- What access do students and faculty need?
- What is a service library?
- What staffing is needed?
- How are investments and performance linked?
- How is space most effectively used?

**MGT’s methodology for this study included:**

- Environmental Scan
- Review of the current state of the University Libraries
- Future Library Trends and Analysis
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Findings and Recommendations

Constituents who participated in group interviews in person, virtually, and in hybrid settings February 22-24, 2022, were asked to provide responses, and then rank the responses. The following summarizes
the responses to each of the questions and is disaggregated by faculty and staff and students. Given the sizes of some of the groups and the limited time, not all groups were able to respond to all questions. The questions were shared with all groups during each session and participants were invited to follow up via email to MGT. MGT received approximately 50 responses from emails, most of which came from students and focused on not removing all the books from the libraries. Feedback from the emails that were related to the questions were incorporated in this summary.

**Context**

During the same time as this Library Redesign Study, the Path Forward Working Group 14 was working to review the integration of faculty librarians into academic departments for the purposes of tenure and promotion. Acknowledging the Working Group’s charge is important to providing context – particularly for the feedback stakeholders provided. Based on feedback, especially from students, misconceptions regarding the purpose of the Library Redesign Study were apparent. Additionally, librarian faculty and staff members focused primarily on highlighting the great work they have accomplished.

Through COVID-19 the Texas A&M Libraries continued to provide services and accelerated some initiatives to provide greater access through digital means as needed and requested. The current state of user engagement may be limited due to the environmental context and various health concerns. This study is conducted with a focus on how Libraries continue to re-examine their role, address new challenges, and identify solutions to user needs.

This study is an opportunity to elevate the work of the Libraries to further engage, collaborate, and support student success.
Future Library Trends and Analysis

Purpose of Libraries of the Future

Libraries historically have served as the space where community members could explore collections of resources, increase knowledge, and enhance and develop skills to lead society. The libraries of the future will continue to contribute to knowledge, creativity, and wisdom for generations to come, not just as a space or a collection, but as an active participant in the learning and creative process. As a collaborator bringing together the resources, services, and facilities to meet the needs of students, faculty, and staff in the development of knowledge, innovation, and creativity, TAMU libraries will become even more identified as a hub of academic life. The charge is to shift from being place-focused and collections-focused to user-focused and service-focused regardless of a user’s location or desired format of accessing resources and facilities. To accomplish this, the Libraries need to rethink the ways in which they operate.

As the visualization above shows, there is a projection that libraries will continue to focus more of their energies on the needs and uses of those who interact with the libraries. This trajectory supports the forecast by Ex Libris in the Library Journal (January 2022). According to that essay, the three challenges that face libraries are: 1) the ongoing challenges of the digital revolution to provide digital services and delivery models; 2) the increasing demand by users for prompt and quality services; and 3) budgetary pressures to make libraries more efficient.

The digital revolution brought changes to the way individuals access information, and the COVID-19 pandemic further dislocated library users from library spaces and physical materials, making them even more dependent on web-based information and content. However, not all information and content on the Internet is verifiable and trustworthy. Libraries have positioned themselves at the forefront of information literacy and discernment for decades, and their role is even more critical in the current education climate. As partners and facilitators in the learning process, librarians guide users through the tools to access reliable sources of information and to assess the veracity of those sources. According to the General Knowledge Paper of King William’s College, “The greatest part of education is to know where to find something.” This sentiment is paraphrased in the heading above the entrance to Dodd Hall, which served as the library at Florida State University from 1925 to 1951: “The half of knowledge is to know where to find knowledge.” Libraries of the future will be engaged even more in providing information literacy and discernment services to the campus community through in-person and digital service programming that anticipate and answer users’ questions as well as to integrate those services and programs within the university curriculum.

For decades, the demand for printed materials has waned due to more access to digital resources. As a result, the need for the library footprint to house physical, printed resources has diminished and opened opportunities for libraries to utilize some of that space possibly for collaboration with campus partners to maximize the learning and creative experience.

According to a recent report from the Chronicle of Higher Education, the future of academic libraries involves increased collaboration and engagement with student support services to create a more wholistic and comprehensive approach to supporting student success. Thus, the learning commons model is essential to the future of libraries.

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1 https://exlibrisgroup.com/
4 https://legacywalk.fsu.edu/locations/dodd-hall/
A learning commons is a cooperation between university departments focused on serving students and faculty engage in producing knowledge, researching, and supporting academic success. A learning commons inhabits a space—often a library or student union. However, the objective of a learning commons as a shared space is to make services accessible to students and faculty. Services include library reference and circulation, information technology, and academic success tutoring.

**Institutional Comparisons**

TAMU libraries have identified the following schools as peers or aspirant peers for comparison:

- University of Arizona Libraries
- University of Florida Libraries
- North Carolina State University Libraries
- University of Minnesota - Twin Cities
- University of California, Berkeley
- University of Houston
- University of Maryland - College Park
- Cornell University - Kroch Library
- University of Washington
- Gallaudet University

**Learning Commons as Spaces**

Not all peer schools have designated learning commons. The University of Florida is completing the renovation of Newell Hall to serve as an undergraduate study space and to house the Center for Undergraduate Research. The University of Arizona had a learning commons, but that facility now houses a library and the Office of Instruction and Assessment. Gallaudet University’s 2020 Strategic Plan prioritized the creation of a learning commons by 2023, but there does not appear to be one yet.

In some cases, peer schools have established learning commons that involve library services and study spaces. In these instances, the learning commons is thought to be a space or collection of spaces to foster student learning. For example, the Hill Library at North Carolina State promotes its learning commons under the “Explore Spaces” link on the library website.
Case Study: Purdue University Wilmeth Active Learning Center

Opened in 2017, the Thomas S. and Harvey D. Wilmeth Active Learning Center is a redesign of library space for teaching, learning, and study.

Houses the Library of Engineering and Science, which consolidates six former libraries.

Includes 27 classrooms organized into seven layouts for lecture, performance, large group, and small group formats.

The Data Visualization Experience Lab of Purdue (D-VELoP) includes a visualization lab, visualization screen, and 3D printing as well as support services in visualizing data.

Learning Commons as Library and IT Partnership

In other cases, peer schools combine library and technology services. For example, this is the arrangement at the Oldegaard Library at the University of Washington where students access a computing help desk and library reference at the same point of service. Students may also borrow laptops, equipment, and software. The University of Maryland’s learning commons at McKeldin Library also loans hardware and equipment. At Indiana University’s Wells Library, the Learning Commons also offers library circulation and reference services along with technical support for printing and software.

Case Study: University of Minnesota—Twin Cities SMART Learning Commons

The SMART Learning Commons is a partnership of the Office of Undergraduate Education and University Libraries.

Designated Learning Commons Spaces: Walter Library, Wilson Library, Magrath Library, as well as Virtual Space.

Coordinated Academic Support Services:

Peer tutoring is available to undergraduates in 250 subjects.

Peer research consultations help students in their research endeavors through a peer-based model similar to tutoring.

Student Writing Support offers individual writing consultations for undergraduate students.

Media Services consultations assist students and faculty in recording and publishing audio and video content that demonstrates learning, research, and teaching in the digital environment.

Learning Commons as Comprehensive Service Suite

A more robust understanding of a learning commons involves the services and amenities that support student learning, research, and creativity as well as faculty teaching, research, and creativity. The University of Minnesota’s SMART Learning Commons exists at three library buildings and integrates library services along with peer tutoring, the Writing Center, and peer research consultations. The
University of Houston’s Anderson library houses a multimedia studio, makerspace, and a digital research commons with podcasting studios and visualization stations.

**Case Study: University of the Pacific Reimagined Library**

The renovation focused on creating a Student Academic Support Hub through opportunities for projects through space where the Library is a resource. The space was divided into four commons: Innovation, Learning, Reading and Academic Commons.

**The Four Commons**

The library’s first and second floors are divided into four commons—Innovation, Learning, Reading and Academic.

**Innovation Commons:** Found on the first floor, this 8,000-square-foot space is for individuals to explore, experiment and exhibit using state-of-the-art technology. It includes The Cube—a glass-walled digital maker space featuring 3D printing, drone services and more—a 100-inch touch screen for presentations, production studios, editing suites, an experimental exhibition space and learning lab.

**Learning Commons:** This space on the first floor includes group study rooms, collaborative spaces, a Starbucks café, computers and includes the John Muir Experience, which is home to the naturalist's bookshelves, a digital touch screen, books and writing desk.

**Reading Commons:** Meant to be a quiet space, this second-floor area features floor-to-ceiling windows for students to study while enjoying Pacific’s natural beauty. There are individual study pods, as well as study rooms.

**Academic Commons:** Visible from the library’s entrance, this second-floor space brought vital student success services together to make them accessible and convenient for students. Here you will find the Student Academic Success Hub—tutoring, learning skills, and writing and math help—as well as research librarians' offices, and the Center for Teaching and Learning where instructional designers and faculty collaborate.

**Learning Commons with Technical Amenities**

As libraries across the country have been reducing their collections of physical, printed materials, there is an increase in available spaces for new technological amenities. Makerspaces are a popular choice, as they invite students in the arts and sciences engaged in hands-on learning as well as students with personal interests in skills like sewing, woodworking, or robotics. Makerspaces also regularly include three-dimensional printing and scanning. Makerspaces are present at the Hill Library at North Carolina State University and the Anderson Library at the University of Houston.

Another use of library space for student creativity and faculty instruction is the inclusion of multimedia studios with video and audio recording and production capabilities. North Carolina State University and the University of Houston have digital media production studios within their learning commons. TAMU Libraries has The Studio with a video recording studio, two audio recording studios, and a digital media computer lab. This space is a partnership between IT media services, IT learning and outreach, and the TAMU Libraries. This partnership is ideal for cooperative consultations from both IT technicians and librarians. Other areas for exploration would be visualization and virtual reality studios such as at NC State and Houston. At Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, students can go to Killam Library to access a geographic information systems (GIS) lab with consultation services.
While peer schools are ahead of TAMU in developing learning commons models in library buildings, there is an opportunity for TAMU to lead by combining its plurality of amenities and services available as a comprehensive learning commons.
Current State of Texas A&M Libraries

According to the Texas A&M University accreditation review, section 11.1 indicates the Libraries are integral to the teaching, research, and outreach missions of Texas A&M University. As part of a land-grant, sea-grant, and space-grant institution, the libraries have a commitment to the public in five specific ways. Through a variety of services, expertise, resources, collections, facilities, and technologies the Libraries carry out these functions.

The University Libraries include ten libraries on five different campuses. College Station is home to six libraries including the Business Library and Collaboration Commons, Cushing Special Collections and Archives, the Medical Sciences Library, Policy Sciences and Economics Library, Sterling C. Evans Library and Annex including the Joint Library Facility, an off-site storage facility. Four additional libraries serve and administratively report through specific programs in Qatar, Galveston, Dallas, and Fort Worth. The six libraries on the main campus broadly serve Texas A&M University through discovery, learning, and creativity, as well as support the needs of students, faculty, and staff in specific colleges, departments, and programs.

All the libraries have “Ask Us” desks at the front that provide a central, consistent location for students to connect with librarians, services, and resources to meet their needs. The Ask Us desks serve as hubs to connect users to a variety of resources and services.

Students can checkout equipment to support study and research such as cameras, laptops, projectors, GPS, and other technologies. Students are also able to print and scan materials as well as collaborate in a variety of study spaces and rooms that include wireless and wired digital screens.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the Libraries remained open although on modified schedules and waived fees during this time to increase access and providing comfort for patrons to make returns in a safe timeframe. Ten percent of the requests during COVID-19 came from the Center for Disease Control and National Instituted of Health. In the fall of 2020, the Libraries created a system where students could check each library’s occupancy. The Libraries continue to adjust and adapt as the University’s response to the pandemic evolves.

Given the need for greater access as accelerated by COVID-19 and based on remote locations, the Libraries offer virtual programs and services including electronic resources and interlibrary loan materials that can be delivered to locations on campus to a user. Reference support and instruction was available through virtual chat, email, phone, and Zoom and increased in use during COVID-19.
Many of the libraries also house a variety of services that support student success such as space for the Writing Center and Computer Labs under the oversight of Information Technology.

**Accreditation Principles Impacting Libraries**

Texas A&M recently received good results with the reaccreditation site visit through the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). A formal written review will come later this year. In addition to SACSCOC, specific academic programs also fall under various accreditation entities and impact libraries.

SCASCOC accreditation requires the following four principles related to libraries:

1.1 The institution provides adequate and appropriate library and learning/information resources, services, and support for its mission. (Library and learning/information resources)

1.2 The institution ensures an adequate number of professional and other staff with appropriate education or experiences in library and/or other learning/information resources to accomplish the mission of the institution. (Library and learning/information staff)

1.3 The institution provides (a) student and faculty access and user privileges to its library services and (b) access to regular and timely instruction in the use of the library and other learning/information resources. (Library and learning/information access)

8.2c. The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the results for academic and student services that support student success.

The University Libraries also support program, degree, department, and college accreditation. In 2021, the University Libraries conducted five assessment reports for re-accreditation. The University is undergoing its decennial review with the on-campus site visit the last week of March 2022. The compliance certification was submitted in September of 2021 based on data from academic year 2021-2022.

The University Libraries also support accreditation for other organizations such as the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA). The most relevant principle from AVMA is Standard 7.5, Information Resources: “Timely access to information resources and information professional must be available to students and faculty at core training sites. The college shall have access to the human, digital, and physical resources for retrieval of relevant veterinary and supporting literature and development of instructional materials and provide appropriate training for students and faculty. The program must be able to demonstrate, using its outcomes assessment data, that students are competent in retrieving, evaluating, and efficiently applying information through the use of electronic and other appropriate information technologies.”

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Adequate and Appropriate Resources

Annually the University Libraries in College Station and Galveston have conducted the Association of Research Libraries’ LibQUAL+ survey to assess and identify user needs and satisfaction. The results from the LibQUAL+ 2001-2019 indicated that the Texas A&M Libraries reached 50% satisfaction or greater for the majority of core questions since 2006 and remained at that level through 2019. Libraries who reach 50% or greater for the majority of core questions are considered to have adequate and appropriate resources.

Adequate and Qualified Professionals

During MGT’s review, the University Libraries demonstrated adequacy in the number of professional and other staff with appropriate education and experiences. The first review was by types of positions: Librarians/Faculty and non-academic professionals. Librarians/Faculty hold a terminal degree in a library or related field. Non-academic professionals (NAP) have specific field expertise of five or more years of focused experience. NAPs may also hold an administrative position with a high level of responsibility or supervisory duties that do not require technical expertise.

The Libraries designate a Subject Librarian and Specialized Services Librarian as a liaison for each university college, department, program, institute, or center. These assignments occur in various ways. The Subject Librarian is a joint/adjunct faculty in the department, a collaborative group may work with a unit such as Qatar Library, or a Librarian may be assigned to a certain number of faculty such as law faculty through the Kelly Law Library. These assignments allow a close rapport and a quick response to new initiatives and changing needs. Some of the librarians teach for-credit courses within the department.

To determine the adequacy and qualifications of Texas A&M’s library professionals, Texas A&M staff comparisons to peers serve as a benchmark, especially considering Texas A&M is compared among the top 15 ARL U.S. Public University Libraries. As noted in Exhibit 1 below, Texas A&M University Libraries are well positioned to these peers. Even though the comparison is with the top 15 University Libraries, Texas A&M may wish to address the instructional faculty to librarian ratio to provide more access and support for faculty.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Among all 15 Libraries</th>
<th>Among Top 5 Enrollments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students to Librarian</td>
<td>4th out of 15</td>
<td>1st out of 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Faculty to Librarian</td>
<td>10th out of 15</td>
<td>2nd out of 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Texas A&M

Professional development is a priority and funds are available to support these activities. The Libraries award nine endowed professorships designed to support the research efforts of high impact librarians with an emphasis on specific organizational or focus-drive areas. The McLemore Scholarship Endowment provides funding for staff and faculty to pursue graduate degrees that support the Libraries’ mission.
Access to Services and Resources

Texas A&M University Libraries provide full access to information resources and services in support of teaching, learning, research, and scholarship that enhances student success and strengthens the University’s faculty and research. Access rights are extended to local communities only within the Libraries’ facilities. Regular and timely instruction is provided to faculty, staff, and students. In addition to broad access to print and electronic services the Libraries also provide access through instruction and consultation. Way finding in the physical and virtual sense are important aspects of library access and the Texas A&M Libraries have paid particular attention to signage as well as the website to ensure access is enhanced.

The Libraries offer a variety of instruction through planned and on-demand activities. Texas A&M Library users have shared their desire to independently access resources, creating a need for instruction to be timely and embedded with the access pathways.

Business Library and Collaboration Commons

The Business Library and Collaboration Commons (BLCC) provides access for a variety of users. Of users visiting the library during a census taken in 2019, approximately 65% were from the Mays Business School, 16% were from Agriculture & Life Sciences while the other patrons came from a variety of other schools. Students have access to patents including plant patents.

BLCC is home to the Patent and Trademark Resource Center (PTRC), which includes a complete set of plant patents in microfiche and print and is in the R.C. Barclay Reference and Retailing Resources Center. PTRC staff provide instruction on the search process.

Other services include:

- The Writing Center offers tutoring in the evenings.
- Open computer labs are available for students.
- IT staff offices are located within the library.
- Two classrooms are used for credit bearing classes.
- Students have access to 30 laptops at the AskUs Desk.
- The library maintains hardcopies of books for all business classes, 1 per 50 students in a class with a limit of five textbooks per class that are available for students to use.

BLCC consists of three floors. Some space is minimally used. For example, a conference room that could be used for training and workshops is currently being used to store books awaiting transfer to the Joint Library Facility.
BLCC is currently staffed with a director who is tenured, 1 tenure track faculty, 1 open position, 1 tenure-track faculty member, 1 tenure-track faculty member who reports through Director of Learning and Outreach, and 12 staff.

Cushing Memorial Library and Archives

The Cushing Memorial Library and Archives is located in the center of the main Texas A&M Campus, directly behind the Evans Library and Annex. Cushing Memorial Library serves many roles for Texas A&M and the community. As a Land Grant University, with one of the primary goals to educate everyone, Cushing offers access to anyone and was able to maintain access to in person visitors through the pandemic. The Reading Room is a popular and iconic space. Patrons must reserve space to use the reading room. Cushing houses the archives for Texas A&M as designated by the state. This library also houses special collections in print and digital formats. Currently, staff indicated that the space is at 95% capacity. Recently, Cushing inventoried its collection of 300,000 books and other resources. The staff is in the process of shifting to the Library of Congress System. Cushing is also responsible for warehousing space.

Cushing Library is home to the Texas A&M University Archives as well as the repository for state records. Services include access to historic photos which are stored in Remstar systems.

The first floor of Cushing includes office space, a recently renovated conference room, and an exhibit area. The second floor includes a public, historic reading room and staff space. The third floor and basement are closed to the public, housing work and storage space.

Cushing is currently staffed with an associate dean Academic Professional Track (APT), 7 tenured faculty members, 1 tenure-track, 2 APT, and 5 staff.

Medical Sciences Library

The Medical Sciences Library (MSL) is adjacent to the Reynolds Medical Building and located on the west side of the main Texas A&M Campus close to the areas served including veterinary medicine, human medicine, nursing, pharmacy, and public health.

MSL primarily services students, faculty, and staff in human and animal health professional programs. MSL provides access to many physical medical science library locations, through travel, and through virtual access.

MSL has an annual service agreement with TAMU Health and also received financial support from the College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences through dedicated library faculty embedded in
programs. MSL supports accreditation standards for professional, graduate, and undergraduate health programs. Additionally, library faculty serve on curriculum committees and are frequently invited to join task forces and working groups for research and other initiatives. One of the areas with the greatest growth is support for systematic and scoping reviews which grew by 348% from 2020 to 2021.

Professional and graduate students have swipe badge access to space specifically designed for individuals and groups 24 hours a day on the first floor. On the second floor, the Medical Sciences Library includes a special collection of veterinary resources, the Historical Veterinary Research Collection, which includes an archive of texts and items used throughout the history of veterinary medicine.

Next steps for MSL include opening a location in Houston for the recently named Intercollegiate School of Engineering Medicine (EnMed) that will graduate “Physicaneers” who will earn a Doctor of Medicine and a Master of Engineering.

The Medical Sciences Library is currently staffed with an associate dean APT, 5 tenured faculty members, 1 tenure-track, 5 APT, and 12 staff.

**Policy Sciences and Economics Library**

The Policy Sciences and Economics Library (PSEL) is located on the first floor of the Annenberg Presidential Conference Center and is near the George Bush Presidential Library and Museum. PSEL supports students, faculty, and staff at the Bush School. PSEL supports course reserves for 86 courses and sections and hosts 1881 articles, chapters, and other resources on e-reserve. PSEL includes a few books and study space for students. A librarian and a staff member manage PSEL.

**Sterling C. Evans Library and Annex**

Located in the center of the main Texas A&M Campus, the Sterling C. Evans Library and Annex is the largest of the University Libraries with the primary focus of meeting the research and study needs of students and faculty across campus. Evans and the Annex offer comprehensive access to many different resources and library expertise to help accelerate success with studies and research. Within The Studio, experts are available to assist with multimedia tools and to support media-enriched instructional projects.

This library is open to the public, with a mix of spaces that range from quiet individual space to collaborative technology-supported areas to a Starbucks where students, faculty, staff, and other users can take a break and connect with coffee or tea. The welcoming, open atmosphere promotes opportunities for all patrons to come together and learn.

The Annex includes The Studio which is a place specifically designed for students to create graphics, videos, audios, and multimedia. The area includes two video production rooms, three sound production rooms, and two editing labs.
Library leadership in Evans and the Annex have developed a plan to remove 30-40% of volumes. Given that portions of the building were erected in 1979, a structural engineering report determined that compact shelving cannot be placed on these floors. The plans include removing shelving from the outer walls and near windows for prime study and activity space. The plan includes a STEM floor on the 3rd floor, so all hard sciences are in one place. The plan also includes moving the ADA spaced shelves on the 6th floor to reorient them so that they are no longer perpendicular to the other compact shelves. Users find the shifted alignment confusing for finding resources.

The TAMU Libraries provide online access to more than 5.8 million catalog records, including guides, over 1,100 databases, 1.8 million ebooks, 114,000 eJournals, articles, maps & GIS, newspapers, audio, theses & dissertations, video, music scores, statistics & data, and governmental information, including special collections, including Digital Collections, Oak Trust, Online Journal System.

**Open Access for Student Education Success**

University Libraries and classroom faculty have led the charge in identifying, licensing, and adopting open access educational resources (OER). At TAMU, the Open Access for Student Education Success (OASES) team involves 13 librarians who partner with classroom faculty. The Mathematics, Biology, and English departments have worked to adopt and adapt open access texts for high-enrollment courses. Two gateway courses in Biology that adopted OERs saved students more than $1 million in 2019-2020. Mathematics made similar efforts, creating a savings of nearly $100 per student.

These innovations have been so successful and appreciated that current and former students have made investments in the continuation and expansion of OERs. The Aggie Class of 2019 created an endowment for University Libraries’ open access textbook project. The Student Government Association has created an award that recognizes faculty efforts to increase educational quality and decrease educational costs.

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New Academic Program Approval

As part of the new academic program approval process, library staff reviewed collections and faculty expertise to ensure alignment of appropriate resources. Since 2015, the University Libraries provided collection assessment reports for 36 new programs.

![Exhibit 2. Number of New Program Collection Assessments.](image)

Source: Texas A&M University Libraries.

Joint Library Facility (JLF)

As a cost-effective solution to library space constraints, the JLF serves Texas A&M System and the University of Texas System along with other Texas institutions by providing a high density, cost effective, collaborative storage facility for all their system libraries. The JLF has three sections that are each approximately 18,000 square feet and can hold approximately 1 million print volumes, for a total of 3 million print volumes. Ownership of the items deposited rest with both institutions and items of low use are de-duplicated. Institutions across the state of Texas are permitted to use items in the JLF for free.

According to information shared by the University Libraries, annual cost savings to the State are estimated at $48,639,726.86 for this joint storage facility. Through a revenue generating module to other Texas institutions the JLF has brought in $88,044.80 and recaptures 57.44 miles of linear library space to support student engagement. Some of the participating institutions have transformed their library spaces to:

- Team-based learning space
- Private study pods for individual student learning
- Development of student testing centers
- Increased space to collaborative partners
- Reclaimed space for university administration usage

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According to the most recent accreditation report, the cost of maintaining volumes through the Resources in Common Program is 80% less than maintaining these items in the main library collections. The access that the JLF provides to shared resources expands Texas A&M’s ability for library patrons to locate and review more resources than just those available at Texas A&M’s Libraries, especially considering the large medical collection.

The JLF currently serves Texas A&M and ten institutions by holding books and materials as well as allowing institutions to claim access to all the titles and resources commonly available in the JLF. Three modules in the JLF hold one million books each and currently one and half of the modules are full. There is no space for additional modules, as the JLF was not designed to be a space to house archival materials. The JLF is staffed with two staff members.

Additional Observations

The campus needs to know what information services are available through the University Libraries. The libraries do not produce an annual report or coordinated way of highlighting services and resources.

Information found on the website is minimal for some services and scattered for others with many clicks to access such information. The home page is focused on searches and service updates and lacks engaging visual appeal as well as limited information on how to access some of the libraries most useful services such as AskUs for Help or Get it for Me.

![Exhibit 3. Texas A&M University Libraries Homepage.](image)

Library faculty and staff outlined the challenges and lack of coordination in promoting events, services, and offers to students, faculty, the campus, and the community. Often, promotional efforts are placed on websites and buried. For example, in Exhibit 4 the Library Calendar was shared with the MGT team.
However, this page—although part of the University Libraries’ website—is not easily found from the Libraries’ home page.

Findings and Recommendations

The following recommendations, supported by evidence-based findings and stakeholder engagement collected throughout the study, elevate and enhance the support, services, access, and space the Libraries offer to drive the mission of Texas A&M University.

Texas A&M University Libraries are members of the Association Research Libraries (ARL) with established principles of membership. The principles are mission and process-oriented and do not speak to the employment classification of library staff, square footage for library collections, or designated usage of library space. Therefore, changes to organizational structure, services, and space usage of University Libraries recommended within this report do not jeopardize ARL membership.

The integration of library services and academic success services is an important partnership within the learning commons. A common presence in university libraries is the university writing center. At TAMU, the Writing Center is in Evans Library. **Given that students are accustomed to visiting the library for peer-based learning assistance, peer tutoring and the math learning center should be located in Evans Library and a library on the west side of campus.** Additionally, writing services designed to meet the needs of graduate students with lengthier and in-depth writing projects would need staffing by fellow graduate students.

A group of undergraduate students reflected on how much they seek physical spaces for interdisciplinary collaboration with research collections that are carefully curated with high quality information. Data visualization, GIS, and makerspaces are collaborative spaces for students to develop skills in presenting their research and creativity. TAMU has existing labs and makerspaces, but their location and province of specific colleges limits access for other students. There are two makerspaces on the College Station campus: one in the College of Architecture and the other in the Fischer Engineering Design Center. TAMU has the Center for Geospatial Sciences, Applications, and Technology, a GIS lab. This is located on the eighth floor of the Eller Oceanic and Meteorology Building. Because these facilities are resident to specific colleges and in designated buildings for those colleges, not all students would have access to the facilities. This disparity of access is even more pronounced when certain academic buildings are restricted by after-hours key card access to students within the designated colleges. **MGT recommends that with the opening of square footage within the libraries due to long-planned off-site collections storage TAMU explore either relocating the makerspaces and/or GIS lab into the learning commons or institute additional labs within the learning commons.**

Purpose of Libraries of the Future

forge new partnerships to establish a learning commons within library facilities that will contain those constituent services that enhance student learning, creativity, and academic success. A learning commons at TAMU libraries should involve a partnership among entities such as University Libraries, Academic Success Center, and Information Technology. This model would create a singular point of contact for students for wrap-around learning support services. Although some services, such as the Writing Center and IT Computer Labs are collocated within TAMU libraries,
engagement and collaboration appear to be a missed opportunity for furthering student success. These services are viewed from the perspective of library staff as separate areas with limited collaboration. Other stakeholders expressed that the library is an important site for learning and that services need to be embedded further into a seamless, reimagined learning commons. These stakeholders based this opinion on observing that students seek support at a single point of service and are interested in convenience not the separation of the services by department. Student perspectives echoed these notions by talking about the Writing Center Services and Information Technology labs as part of the library. Students view these areas as part of the Libraries, not as separate entities. Thus, students view the combination of research, writing, and IT services within the libraries as a cohesive whole. Coordination and planning of a learning commons within TAMU libraries will reinforce that experience for student users.

Commons should be created for innovation, learning, knowledge, and study to ensure students’ academic experiences include lecture, lab, and library experiences that is led by a Commons Council. These specific commons will set the foundation for a dynamic library that effectively adapts to meet the ever-changing priorities of Texas A&M. Each of these commons should have physical and virtual spaces and places to meet the outcomes.

- **Innovation Commons**: Identify available spaces within the library facilities where dynamic, hands-on learning and creating occurs. These spaces can include makerspaces; classrooms; galleries. Makerspaces allow students to explore creativity through hands-on work related to sciences and arts.
- **Knowledge Commons**: The Knowledge Commons should provide space for special exhibits as well as spaces where students, faculty, the campus community, and other individuals can come together to learn and share.
- **Study Commons**: Identify multiple spaces and places where students can enjoy quiet spaces to read and study. The Cushing Reading Room serves as such a space as do the individual pods located in the BLCC.
- **Learning Commons**: Develop an integrated suite of learning assistance services that engage a student’s scholarly and creative work at any stage of the process. These services involve peer-based assistance with research, writing, presenting, and multimedia. Additionally, students seeking subject-specific tutoring can access walk-in and appointment-based tutoring within the Learning Commons. This Learning Commons point would involve access to reference, tutoring, writing, and IT services. Develop a point of service that assists students with researching, writing, and presenting information. Identify a space for other student support offices to have a temporary, rotating presence within the Learning Commons for immediate access for students. Offices such as Academic Advising, Financial Aid, and Dean of Students could hold “office hours” in this space at peak times of students’ need.

Enhance relationships through more frequent meetings and a strategic focus with partners to enhance student success and support for meeting the mission of the University. Currently, the libraries meet internally semi-annually to communicate, collaborate on joint programs, and
identify savings with shared licensing and access. These meetings need to occur monthly and include others such as the Writing Center, Information Technology, and other departments identified moving forward. These meetings should be driven by opportunities to collaborate with updates sent ahead of the meeting for transparency and to allow for an agenda focused on action. Examples of policies and procedures for this group to address may include University wide collection development and opportunities to further support student success.

Campus Information Service Needs

Showcase the services, resources, and events available to support students, faculty, staff, and the community through an annual report, fact book, and the webpage. The University Libraries do not highlight the current support for student success and other resources that are available. The university’s webpage does not highlight facts about the Libraries in terms of the services, resources, and support that is available. Nor does the webpage highlight the additional resources available in the library such as the Writing Center and Information Technology Computer Labs. The current design of the webpages are too myopic on the search function and fail to highlight the resources and services the Libraries have to offer. The website also has a large number of 404 errors and does not allow access back to the main University website.

Enhance faculty support for teaching and learning services. Stakeholders shared that some faculty are not aware of the resources and the value of librarians to support student success, particularly considering many undergraduates may not work with a librarian. For example, promoting the library digitization services with faculty and departments can support teaching and learning. Librarians have focused on text and material delivery to faculty offices and have failed at educating faculty on the additional services and opportunities that are available to support faculty professional development and academic success.

Advocate for additional graduate student writing services. Graduate students shared that the writing support is inadequate because of the 45-minute time limit for review of papers. Graduate-level writing in preparation for a research paper, thesis, or dissertation is often significantly longer than undergraduate papers and should receive the additional attention required of a higher level of scholarly work. Although this is not a support directly offered through the library, this finding is indicative of the perspective of students in viewing services offered in the libraries as comprehensive. The libraries as partners to these units can be advocates on behalf of students.

Access for Students and Faculty

Expand access, communication, and promotion of library resources through digital and print services such as Get It For Me. Not all books can be digitized because of copyright and other issues. To address this, the University Libraries offer a service called Get It for Me where students may access interlibrary loans from all over the world, electronic delivery of article-length copies, and request books for pick up at the library services desk. These services are critical to ensuring faculty, staff, students, and the community continue to have access to the largest possible collections.
Librarians should continue to engage in negotiating contracts to expand access to critical resources. Recently, librarians negotiated a contract with scientific, technical, and medical content publisher Elsevier, for an amount of approximately $10 million. This investment is an example of the behind the scenes work the librarians do to ensure access and provide needed services. It is critical that Librarians continue to be part of selecting and sourcing resources, as they have the knowledge and expertise to be able to compare resource offerings that meet the needs of the largest number of users.

Consistent Collection Development Policies and Procedures would ensure students and faculty have access to cohesive resources related to specific topics. Library leadership expressed concern regarding collection development stating that some acquired items do not appear to meet the intent of some of the special collections and there is a need for more consistent policies to best use funding resources. A consistent policy would ensure that collections align with the University mission and balance resources with the proper type and location of collection storage.

Provide more electrical outlets. More than anything else, students want more outlets with easy access to plug in when they are studying and working. They were frustrated with how challenging it was to find a place to access electricity for all their devices. Nationally, older facilities fail to provide the necessary electrical outlets that students need to power a variety of devices. Many of the new library furniture options provide built-in electrical outlets for easy access. With the addition of more study space, more power outlets can be added through the mindful selection of furniture pieces and the addition of electrical outlets as feasible.

Add additional hours to provide greater access for students. During finals, students would like Evans to be open 24/7 and shared that there is currently no space available to study during those times. They would also like later access on the weekends and find it inconvenient that the Annex is only open until 2am. They also noted that the library should more effectively communicate changes to hours.

On the west campus, target more than business and health majors. Students suggested targeting other courses that are offered near the library, including engineering, who believe these library spaces may not be designed for their major. Students also requested tutoring in the libraries to make it easy to get support where they are studying and learning. The BLCC and the MSL are located in close proximity but operate separately, potentially missing collaborative opportunities to support student success. The resources available within the BLCC are targeted to more than just business students but the name leads people to believe the space has a singular focus. For example, the patent and trademark collection within the BLCC has patents related to plants and agriculture. These patents are printed on special paper to accurately display the unique color of every type of plant.

Service Library

A service library of the future is oriented towards providing services and innovative opportunities to the campus and community in the areas of instructional services, technical services, user services, research, and outreach services. A service library leverages the expertise of professionally trained librarians and
library staff to connect, network, and collaborate with all users. The biggest shift with a service library is moving from primarily place-based entities to an entity that serves all users regardless of location. Further, a service library collaborates with other entities to ensure students have timely and proximal access to essential support and resources services.

**University Libraries should be organized by service functions as opposed to organized around the physical library buildings.** This organizational shift is focused on increasing high-quality service to Libraries’ users and reducing the territorial, physical barriers that limit opportunities for collaboration and partnership.

**Streamline and increase support for TAMU-authored publications and publication access.** TAMU currently manages multiple instances of Book Press. Creating a single instance of Book Press can save financial and personnel resources and create opportunities for increased participation. Similarly, the OAKFund provides opportunities for authors to create open access materials that are publicly available immediately. Increasing financial support to the OAKFund may provide additional opportunities for increased publications that can directly be used increase access to research and scholarship.

### Needed Staffing

Appropriate staffing needs to be determined to meet the future purpose of the Libraries, to increase access, and provide information services. **Streamline functional areas to improve efficiency by reorganizing by service areas and ensuring library services are managed and staffed by those full-time staff assigned to the Libraries.** As we move forward into the next phase of work it will be critical to map each of our resources in the current organization to identified roles in the new organization. This will allow us to better understand where our skill gaps are, so we can create a plan regarding additional needs. For example, cataloguers who currently work in Cushing will report to a supervisor who has a primary responsibility to oversee cataloguers across all Libraries and may be in a different physical space. This staffing adjustment will require a varied level of modification of some job descriptions. Library staff will need to work with colleges and departments to assess, identify, and provide services.

**Create a department to manage the Open Educational Resource (OER) process for a consistent and concerted effort across campus to support student success.** Departmental faculty own the OERs. The OER department will manage one campus wide instance of Press Books for all departments.

**Strengthen the partnership between the Office of Research and the Libraries specifically regarding TAMU Scholars to advance the mission of serving the research and scholarly support needs of Texas A&M faculty, graduate students, and other campus scholars through the provision of modern, web-based publishing and repository services.** The Libraries should serve as the digital repository for the OAKTrust collection and manage this for all departments. Scholarly Communication should continue to advance the use and awareness of these resources.
Reorganize the University Libraries staffing structure based on service areas. The University Librarian must focus on meeting the comprehensive operational and strategic goals of the Libraries. This work must balance internal and external priorities and should engage with individuals and organizations who can advance the mission of the Libraries. The Assistant and Associate Librarians are responsible for the strategic and operational direction of individual service units that prioritize meeting the needs of all users across all Libraries spaces. Staff position job descriptions will need to be revised to meet the needs and priorities of the new direction of Libraries leadership. More students have been added each year without much additional staff support to meet their needs. At the time of this report, Faculty Librarians are still making decisions about their futures and Working Group 14 is working closely with the Library leadership to negotiate these transitions.

The new organizational structures within the Libraries serve as an opportunity to address staffing shortages and wage classifications through job description modifications, reviews, and alignments. In one area, staff noted that they are down 10 to 15 positions over the past 10 to 12 years during a time when student enrollment has increased considerably. Other areas indicated that staff retention is problematic due to low wages and lack of opportunity for career advancement. The current organizational chart of the University Libraries indicates numerous vacancies. As the campus enrollment continues to grow, it is also important that staffing continues to increase to provide wholistic student support services.

Investments and Performance Linkages

Texas A&M needs to expand access to OASES (Open Access for Student Educational Success) and continue to expand opportunities to save students money. More importantly increase student success by expanding access to course related resources and materials. With the rising costs of textbooks, there is a substantial financial burden for students that hampers access and academic success. According to Financial aid estimates, students at TAMU spend approximately $2000 per year on books and supplies, including books, educational supplies, course materials, and computer-related expenses excluding the purchase of a personal computer. As a cost-savings, 65% of students choosing not to purchase some textbooks at any given point in their academic career. Students without required classroom resources jeopardize their academic performance and overall success. Students at Texas A&M have saved approximately $4 million because of Open Educational Resources that librarians have curated to replace expensive textbooks. Successes through OASES include some full departmental adoption of Open Access textbooks at the 100-200 level, several custom course packs (library subscribed e-books and/or OERs). This opens access to students and provides them with the resources they need on the first day of the class. For faculty, OER allows the flexibility to update resources and materials as the field changes without having to adopt a new edition of a textbook, a practice which limits access to used books.

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TAMU faculty should move quickly to adopt OERs for high-enrollment courses for which open-access textbooks are currently available. There is much potential for the ongoing embrace of OERs at TAMU, with significant savings to students. Textbooks available through OpenStax are ready for adoption in subjects such as Mathematics, Physics, History, Government, Accounting, and Management. The University Library estimates that adopting open-access textbooks in these high-enrollment courses could save Aggie students $7.1 million dollars per year.

Adopting and adapting OERs does take time and effort. Classroom faculty will need to work with librarians to navigate open-access copyright and licensing as well as selecting from the various resources that are available. Likewise, faculty could work with instructional designers to ensure that the OERs are properly embedded into the learning management system (LMS) environment and are interactive for optimal user experience and meet learning objectives. Therefore, it is imperative that the OASES team partner with the Center for Teaching Excellence for a full-spectrum service to departments and faculty to adopt OERs and embed them in the LMS environment.

Librarians should prioritize offering e-books that are interactive and offer a way to share faculty and student notes. Faculty want to increase opportunities for sharing information with students. Unfortunately, there is not a way to do this in the current e-books. Librarians are working with vendors to communicate these needs and provide greater engaging access for faculty and students and this work should continue.

To focus the University Libraries’ attention on OER adoption, some library staffing and resources should exist devoted to this initiative. This area should have dedicated leadership and coordination, and research librarians with subject specialties and knowledge of copyright and fair use should devote a substantial amount of their FTE to this enterprise.

**Work creatively with donors to support areas and programs for student success.** The shift in redesigning the Libraries will create opportunities for affecting student success in ways that could align well with donors. Library leadership should work with Development to identify a comprehensive and cohesive strategy for friend-raising and donor engagement. Many donors want to give to areas that are meaningful to them and the Libraries will have the ability to share these inspiring stories to make the connections. To illustrate, there may be a former student who could not afford books while at Texas A&M and wants to make sure that some students have the resources they need instead of struggling to access textbooks. Such a donor may be inspired to contribute to an OER project that save students significantly and provides access to course material from day one of the course.

**Effective Use of Space**

The future of Texas A&M University Libraries should ensure that effective use of space is focused on providing equitable access for all students, faculty, researchers, and citizens of Texas to support teaching, learning, scholarship, and creativity. **Support the Libraries** existing plans to shift books with limited usage to offsite areas to continue access to these resources while making the most use of space. Determine the cost and resources needed to make such a shift by using external companies that specialize in this service in the transfer of these items. Librarians have been assessing for nearly a decade to transfer the use of books and other resources available with the
goal to move 30-40% of these items to an offsite location. Librarians estimate this project will result in relocating approximately 1 million print volumes and will take approximately ten years at current staffing levels. Once completed, patrons will be able to request access to these resources and some of these resources may also be digitized if copyright and other factors allow. This initiative should be supported to enhance access to materials and resources and to provide approximately 20,000 square foot of space for additional initiatives that support student success in Evans Library alone. This initiative will also allow for additional space in the Libraries to address current ADA accessibility concerns with many of the existing stack configurations.

**Consolidate back-office staff functions into the 3rd floor of the Annex to allow for space on the 5th Floor for additional partnerships and innovation.** The Joint Library Facility functions should move from the 5th floor to the 3rd. The cost of space needs to be considered in terms of how to use space most effectively. Off campus space is less than a dollar per square foot and the on-campus space is above $4 per square foot.

**Identify high quality, long-term storage for archival materials.** Storage and the location of some valuable items in less-than-ideal locations such as basements need to be addressed. Further, Cushing and some of the other library buildings were not originally designed with environments appropriate for preserving books and materials. When archives are relocated, assess whether digitization should also move to the new location.

**Reallocate the PSEL space to the department for use for student success.** The current PSEL space offers limited hours and access to materials and is staffed by one librarian and one staff person. This space may be most useful for graduate student writing and research support. Resources and materials can be integrated into the main collection and delivered to students and faculty as needed.

**Shift space from ownership to shared space use to support student success by expanding flexible space and use of signage to indicate open access.** Currently, some examples of shared space exist. For example, Medical Sciences Library (MSL) post signs outside at least one room to indicate the space may be used when scheduled activities are not happening. The library also uses electronic calendars outside of some rooms to indicate scheduled usage so others may use the space. In addition to managing space usage, opportunities exist to partner or provide additional or subsequent services. For example, using log on screens in IT labs to promote training on how to use databases or other resources may connect students to information and support of which they may be unaware. Shared space is occurring in some areas, but not all. For example, some spaces have electronic signage to indicate open-access when classes or activities are not in session. This practice should be expanded. As space continues to be more of an issue, dedicated space that is often underutilized or used as storage will not be an option.

**In the long term, build a new space or reallocate existing space on west campus to house the med school, business, and archives.** Include 24 hours access for graduate and med school and other clinical students and high-quality archival spaces.
Conclusion

These recommendations are critical to student success, a key initiative for Texas A&M’s mission, which starts with access to all necessary resources and tools for enhanced learning. These recommendations are designed to benefit students in multiple ways, including the enhancement of knowledge, creativity, and innovation. The students will benefit from resources and services that are collaborative and seamlessly located at the heart of campus. The learning commons will provide a comfortable space and place for students to come together to have a vibrant, centralized location to enhance creativity and collaborative learning environments. These opportunities will accelerate student success by providing access, clarity, and breadth and depth of the resources that students need immediate access for academic success.

Librarians and other learning commons partners can provide expertise to promote student success and enrich the student experience. The experts in the libraries can continue to advance faculty and classroom support through the myriad of resources and tools that are available within these service functions. Further, these professionals can advocate for additional opportunities and resources to advance scholarship and research across campus.

The findings and recommendations offer a solid foundation for the next steps. As the library leadership focuses on an organizational restructure, leadership and change management, strategic planning, and implementation planning for these initiatives, the University Libraries will need additional support to effectively addresses these recommendations, push toward an exciting future, and enhance partnerships to further support student success.