



MULLINS LIBRARY NOT STACKING UP

Students struggle to adjust to changing Mullins Library

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Since 85% of David W. Mullins Library's materials were moved to offsite storage in 2018, checkouts have fallen and students are feeling the effects of a transforming library.

Having worked at a library as an undergraduate student and at Dickson Street Bookshop as a graduate student, Samuel Binns, a graduate assistant in the English department and second-year graduate student, has a passion for books and libraries. When he arrived on campus in August 2018, he was shocked to learn that the majority of Mullins's borrowable collection would be moved to an offsite annex.

"As soon as I got here, the news broke out that they would be moving stuff," Binns said. "As somebody who's deeply excited to visit the library just to find random books, it was so disheartening."

Library staff began moving most of the library's 1.2 million books, journals and documents in the Mullins

collection to a climate-controlled high-density annex on the southern end of campus during spring and summer 2018. All books on the third and fourth floors were relocated for routine asbestos removal and renovations, leaving about 200,000 volumes in the building.

As the asbestos removal wraps up, sweeping renovations to the third and fourth floors (phase one of a total overhaul of Mullins) are scheduled to begin this winter, said Kelsey Lovewell, director of public relations for University Libraries. The project will double the number of seats on those floors, and add 24 study rooms and more power outlets.

When the renovations conclude in summer of 2021, many of the books that were removed from the third and fourth floors will return to the library, Lovewell said.

Binns thinks university libraries are vital to college education because they are a place to explore hundreds of thousands of books, he said. Since the changes last year, Binns thinks Mullins has lost what makes it a library.

"I think how libraries



Courtesy of University Relations
Fewer students are checking out books since 85% of the material at David W. Mullins Library was moved to offsite storage.

operate, and I think how libraries should operate, is to allow people to have serendipitous discovery," Binns said. "Because that is such a huge part of the library: wandering through the stacks and finding something that you had no idea existed."

Lovewell said checkouts have been declining for years, which is one of the reasons

books were moved. Mullins checkouts fell nearly 20% (27,754 to 22,231) between the 2018 and 2019 fiscal years, during which time the books were moved, according to Library User Services. The decrease between the 2017 and 2018 fiscal years was 7.5% (30,000 to 27,754) and was 7.9% (32,556 to 30,000) between the 2016 and 2017 fiscal years.

Visits to Mullins fell from 548,163 in the 2017 fall semester to 504,633 in the 2018 fall semester, an 8% decrease. Visits increased 1.5% (from 539,595 to 548,163) between fall 2016 and fall 2017. Meanwhile, university enrollment rose from 27,194 in fall 2016 to

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Maple Street changes face roadblocks

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In an effort to encourage more students to use alternative transportation methods, UA sustainability officials are moving forward with one major project while another falters.

The largest sustainable transit project in the works is a total redesign and reconstruction of Maple Street, said Dane Eifling, bicycle and pedestrian programs coordinator for the UA Office of Sustainability and the city of Fayetteville. Planned elements of the redesign include a protected bicycle lane connecting the Razorback Greenway to Garland Avenue, sidewalk improvements, landscaping, crosswalks and new Razorback Transit bus stops.

Eifling said the plans for the Maple Street project, which is a collaboration between the university, the Walton Family Foundation and the city of Fayetteville, have been mostly completed. However, despite the foundation committing \$2 million to the project, progress is stalled over details the stakeholders have yet to settle, Eifling said.

"There have been some

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Alumna credits campus pantry for bringing her out of food insecurity

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When alumna Eris was a junior, she went several days without food before hearing about the campus food pantry. After receiving food from it for the first time in 2015, she was able to focus on her studies without having to worry about when her next meal was going to be.

While going to school full time, Eris, who does not have a legal last name, was struggling to cover car payments and rent with her part-time job in the Division of Student Affairs. On a good day, she could afford to eat 99-cent oatmeal for breakfast and a frozen pizza before bed, she said.

Like nearly half of students, Eris did not know about the Jane B. Gearhart Full Circle Food Pantry, which provides a three-day supply of groceries and personal care items to anyone with a UA or UAMS ID up to two times per week, until one of her coworkers told her, she said.

Forty-six percent of

students do not know the pantry exists, according to the Food Insecurity Survey conducted by Rodica Lisnic, principal researcher for the Center for Community Engagement.

"They were extremely kind, and they were good at not making you feel shame for going there," Eris said. "I never felt looked down upon."

While 38% of UA students have experienced food insecurity, the survey found that only 2% have used the food pantry.

After Eris went to the pantry for the first time, she received enough food to eat

three meals a day and was able to graduate in 2017.

"When survival is on top of your list of things to be concerned about constantly, you're not focusing on what you're here for, which is to earn your degree and get good grades, and I could finally do that," Eris said.

Eris thinks it is important to spread the word about the pantry because not many students know it exists, she said.

"It's kind of weird because, had I not been in the position I was, I never would have known," Eris said. "It totally should be something you're told about. Using the extra



Heidi Kirk Staff Photographer
Eris takes inventory Nov. 4 at the campus food pantry as part of the weekly duties.

resources here is the only reason I graduated."

As of Oct. 28, pantry volunteers have served 503 people over 3,400 times since August 2018, according to the pantry's data. They currently serve 224 graduate and undergraduate students.

"Based on the numbers, we serve mostly staff with graduate and undergraduate students being second and third most served," said Ariston Gray, data and operations coordinator for the pantry, in an email. "We are trying to work on increasing the number of undergraduate students

we serve and reducing the stigma of food insecurity."

To receive food from the pantry, people can either go to the pantry and fill out an order form in person, or they can fill out an online request form, said Pantry Chair Jon Mahaffey in an email. The order form asks for their university ID number, the number of people in their household needing food and which food items they would like.

People also have the option to fill out an online express request form, which asks for a location where they would like their order dropped off, Mahaffey said.

How much food the pantry has in stock fluctuates, but the amount increases drastically during food drives, he said.

The pantry depends on food drives and donations for food, he said. Two of those drives are the Pack the Pantry drive for Homecoming and the End of the Year Move-out drive, during which students donate any food they did not eat in their residence hall. A total of 10,230 food items have been donated to the pantry as of Nov. 4, and pantry volunteers are expecting more large donations throughout November.



Heidi Kirk Staff Photographer
Rebecca Carroll, a sophomore, portions rice into smaller servings for a family Oct. 28 at the campus food pantry. Carroll said rice is frequently donated in large bags that must be portioned into proper serving sizes.

Krav Maga class focuses on women, sexual assault prevention



A female-taught Krav Maga class has allowed students and local women to learn self-defense.

Student founds jewelry business, sells around 400 earrings



A sophomore designs and creates earrings as a passion project, then sells them online or at pop-up shops at local boutiques.

Students, faculty grow industrial hemp to benefit human health



As part of a plant pathology study, students and faculty are growing hemp that can be used in food, cosmetics, fabrics and therapeutic products.