Through Information Literacy, Western New England University Students Are Ready To Set SAIL

Despite rain, heat, sleet, and huge amounts of snow, students and faculty of Western New England University attended 301 D’Amour Library information literacy instruction sessions in the 2014-2015 academic year. Thanks to the SAILS test taken by many of our students in the Spring 2015 semester, we can now officially say that all of the effort and all of those classes made a meaningful difference in their information literacy skills!

According to the results of the Standardized Assessment of Information Literacy Skills (SAILS), Western New England students overall performed better than other U.S. Masters-granting institutions on all assessed information literacy skill sets. Of the eight sets of skills, students performed their best in “Using Finding Tool Features” which includes such outcomes as “Describes search functionality common to most databases regardless of differences in the search interface (e.g. Boolean logic capability, field structure, keyword searching, relevancy rankings)” (Project SAILS 50).

Our first-year students especially succeeded, performing significantly better across all information literacy skills sets than peers at other schools. Of all Western New England University academic levels, first-years consistently performed the strongest in relation to peers at Masters-granting institutions. Given that all Western New England University students participate in four information literacy sessions in their first year through the First Year Seminar and English programs, these results are not too surprising. Upper-level students continued to perform better than or about the same as those from other similar institutions, but they did not do so at the same notable rate as first-year students.

Analyzing the SAILS results, D’Amour librarians see an opportunity to build on the strong base of first-year students’ information literacy skills through further collaboration with faculty. Such instructional partnerships beyond the first year can serve to extend student information literacy understanding to more refined and discipline-specific concepts. By further supporting the information literacy of upper-level students, D’Amour librarians can better prepare them to meet the challenges of a changing information landscape. Engaging in the core understandings of research within the context of their field of study can empower students to maintain the information literacy gains acquired in their first year and continue to build on them in their careers post-graduation.

In today’s information age, deliberate, critical thinking about information is essential. Western New England University students are off to a good start!

 Discipline-specific SAILS results are also available. D’Amour librarians will be contacting each College to discuss the detailed SAILS results pertinent to their academic disciplines.

-Mary Jane Sobinski-Smith


Archives Go Digital

What’s new in the Archives?
Not much, if we’re talking about archival material. The Western New England University Archives holds the historic records of the University, so by its very nature, the material is not new. But what is new is our digital presence. Forget dusty shelves of inaccessible boxes behind a locked door. We are on a journey to bring valuable material from the archives out of the boxes and on to computer, phone, and tablet screens across the globe.

Digitization is well underway in the Archives, which means items previously available only on campus can now be seen from the comfort of your own home. Our most complete collection currently available online is the Western New England Student newspapers. With the oldest issue dating back to 1935, when the paper was titled The Nor’easter, these papers provide an amazing glimpse into the University’s past.

Cartoon taken from Nov. 1957 issue of The Westerner. One of the many gems waiting to be found in the Archives digital collections!

(cont. on p.4)
Upcoming Events
Feb 11: Productivity Apps*
Feb 18: Managing Citations with Mendeley*
Feb 18: Athenaeum Lecture
Meri Clark, Associate Professor of History: Medellin on the Move beyond Narcos†
Feb 23: New York Times*
Feb 25: Research Crash Course*
Mar 3: Using the Archives*
Mar 3: Athenaeum Lecture
Heather Salazar, Associate Professor of Philosophy: How Yogis and Western Philosophers View the Body & Mind†
Mar 10: Preventing Plagiarism*
* 12:30-1:30 p.m., D'Amour 215 (OLe)
† 4:00-5:00 p.m., D'Amour 319

From the Director's Desk

At one point during the fall semester my desk had only one open working space that measured about 6 inches by 6 inches. My desk is normally messier because I still like paper, but this was far messier than usual. And as I walked around the Library, I noticed that most of my colleagues’ desks were in much the same state. Our desks were reflections of our very busy summer and fall semester, of many changes to D’Amour Library, and of some exciting projects we’ve been working on. In this newsletter you will read about some of the projects that kept us so busy during the second half of 2015.

The construction of the Jennings Music Listening Room on the main level of the Library occurred over the summer and involved the efforts of many people. On any given day, one might have seen construction workers, Paul Boucher from Facilities who managed all aspects of the work splendidly, Arlene Rock from Administrative Services who worked so hard with us to get the appropriate shelving for the collection, or Lindsay Roberts and me on our hands and knees plotting out the placement of that shelving. And let’s not forget that someone had to catalog or list all the LPs and compact discs, tasks done most ably by Damian Biagi, Jen Bolmarcich, and our fabulous student assistants. The new room brings a wonderful music collection to the University as well as a quiet/group study area for the students.

Vicky Ludwig continued the weeding of the print reference collection that led to the opening of more study space on the main level.

Mary Jane Sobinski-Smith and Eugenia Liu worked on new LibGuides to assist students with their research while analyzing the results of the SAILS information literacy assessment that was administered last year. Those of you who participated in the assessment will be interested in Mary Jane’s article in this newsletter. You didn’t know how skilled you were, did you?!

While these projects were underway, Lindsay implemented a new Full Text Finder for everyone to use to locate digital copies of journal articles; all of the staff helped with the implementation of a new staff interface to the Library’s online integrated library system; and still others helped out at the Circulation and Reference desks or by putting together the new mobile whiteboards available for use within the building.

There were the searches to hire a new archivist to take the place of Rosemary O’Donoghue who retired after many productive years, to find an interim replacement for Josh Becker, our information literacy librarian who moved his career to another university in July, as well as a replacement for Terrilyn Calloway, our very capable evening circulation supervisor who sadly decided eight years of late nights were enough. In this newsletter you’ll meet our new staff, Tracey Kry, Liz McGlynn, and Heather Nosack, if you haven’t already had the opportunity and pleasure of doing so in person.

And during the semester there were workshops and Athenaeums, more LibGuides and instruction, and stress relief activities and decorations to keep everyone from the piles that continued to build on their desks.

Winter break gave some folks time to open larger work spaces on their desks, but the great energy that drove us in 2015 has not subsided. More workshops, lectures, and performances are planned for the spring semester. We look forward to seeing you @ the Library! - Priscilla Perkins

Access The New York Times Anywhere

Do you like to keep up with news as it happens? D’Amour Library and the Law Library invite you to take advantage of our New York Times GroupPass for up-to-the-minute news access!

Visit www.nytimes.com/GroupPass ON CAMPUS, and use your University email address to register. After your account is set up, you can access The Times anywhere! For additional information, please see the New York Times link under the “For Faculty” and “For Students” pages of the D’Amour Library website. Our friends at The New York Times want you to make the most of this valuable resource. In addition to regular Times access and features, there are over 48,000 “Times Topics” pages that include video, articles, archival information, and more. Stop by D’Amour for a “tour” of all the access highlights.

The Times also offers exciting new educator features. Bring The Times into the classroom and encourage a lifetime of news reading and global thinking. We can help set faculty up with a special educator login that includes enhanced features for classroom use.

-Vicky Ludwig
Introducing the Jennings Music Listening Room

Stepping foot into our library these days, you can tell right away that D’Amour is anything but the stereotypical silent, authoritative library of the past. Libraries today are known increasingly as places of collaboration and creation, an image that is strongly reflected in our newest addition to the library, the Jennings Music Listening Room. This new space contains a collection of music owned by David J. Jennings and generously donated to the Library by his sister Lydia Adams. Mr. Jennings’ dear friend, Pauline Della Ventura, facilitated the donation through Dr. Anthony Caprio.

The collection contains an array of operas, classical works, and Broadway musical soundtracks that can be used for coursework or enjoyed by the casual listener. We have works on both CDs and—wait for it—LPs! Though many of our patrons may have never seen an album on vinyl before, they have the ability to listen to one via our two headphone-enabled record players. Students, staff, and faculty alike are excited about this “new” technology.

Looking back, making the collection a reality was no easy feat. It involved the teamwork of several University partners, including Advancement, Administrative Services, and D’Amour Library. Tasked with packing the collection and bringing it to Springfield were some of Mr. Jennings’ friends as well as Library Director Priscilla Perkins and Director of Administrative Services Arlene Rock. On one of the coldest days of January 2014, the team packed and loaded the 63 feet of LPs and 226 feet of CDs, which had taken up most of a library study room until this past summer when cataloger Damian Biagi began the monumental task of creating records for the LPs to be loaded into WILDPAC.

During the same time period, evening circulation supervisor Jennifer Bolmarcich and Library student assistants began documenting the collection. Their list of over 2,500 CDs accounted for only a small portion of its contents! With the arrival of the shelving in September it was time to organize and shelve it all—a task more complicated than it would seem at first, especially when it turned out that our collection of LPs outnumbered our initial shelving capacity. (Not the worst problem to have!) Our circulation staff and student workers proved themselves again invaluable in this process, spending hours sorting and ordering the collection.

It took months of hard work to get the room up and running, but it’s worth it now to see students curled up in an easy chair, headphones on, enjoying the music coming through a record player. We welcome all members of the campus community to come look through the Jennings collection and to listen to some of the masterpieces it contains. Let us know what you think of it!

-Priscilla Perkins and Liz McGlynn

[Diagram and text about library utilization and productivity tools]
D'Amour Welcomes New Staff Members

Tracey Kry, our Archives and Emerging Technologies Librarian, is new to the position, but not to D’Amour Library. She worked as the Circulation Associate from 2007-2008 and is thrilled to be back! After leaving in 2008, Tracey worked as a librarian with the Walt Disney Company in Florida, then as an assistant curator at the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester. She majored in history at Mount Holyoke College, and received her MLS from Simmons College. Talk to Tracey at theresa.kry@wne.edu or 782-1514 if you have questions about the Archives, the history of Western New England, or have a great suggestion for a new technology tool to share!

Liz McGlynn is our new Information Literacy Librarian and the editor of Newsline. She comes most recently from Chapel Hill, North Carolina, where she received her MSLS at UNC and worked as a research, design, and instruction assistant at the Undergraduate Library. She double-majored in English and psychology at the College of William & Mary, a fact that is reflected today through her affinities for writing, learning about learning, and old buildings. She teaches classes on information literacy, leads workshops through the Do More at D’Amour series, and helps students with research. Get in touch with Liz at elizabeth.mcglynn@wne.edu or 782-1537.

The Library is pleased to welcome and introduce Heather Nosack as the new Evening Circulation Supervisor. Heather’s hobbies include reading, creative writing, knitting, crocheting, painting with her daughter, and binge-watching a variety of television shows. She moved to Western Massachusetts from Northern Vermont after being accepted as an Ada Comstock Scholar at Smith College, where she studied the stories, artifacts, and language of Ancient Rome, and earned her B.A. in Classical Studies. Heather oversees the student employees at the Circulation Desk, handles course reserves, and assists patrons. If you need anything on Monday, Wednesday, Friday, or Saturday, contact Heather at heather.nosack@wne.edu or 782-1510.

Do you have an idea for improving the Library?

Let us know what you think through our anonymous suggestion box at the Circulation Desk or online form on the D’Amour Library homepage!

Notable New Books at D'Amour

Lafayette in the Somewhat United States by Sarah Vowell. Vowell’s inimitable brand of history brings us a story we rarely hear. History at its humorous and irreverent best.

The Invention of Nature: Alexander Von Humboldt’s New World by Andrea Wulf. A nonfiction “Book of the Year” on many lists, this is the forgotten story of the visionary German naturalist. A thrilling and exuberant portrayal.

Pacific: Silicon Chips, Coral Reefs and Atom Bombs...by Simon Winchester. Sail the Pacific with a terrific historian and storyteller. Another “Best of the Year” book.

Reclaiming Conversation: The Power of Talk in a Digital Age by Sherry Turkle. Affirms the power and importance of personal conversation in an increasingly digital age.

A House of My Own by Sandra Cisneros. A richly illustrated, poignant montage of memoir and non-fiction pieces comprising a beautiful look at Cisneros’s life.

The Year of Lear: Shakespeare in 1606 by James Shapiro. The history of a tumultuous time and the work of the greatest playwright. An impressive and exultant read for literature and history buffs.

(cont. from Archives, p.1)

Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners in 2014, the papers were scanned at the Boston Public Library, and are open and accessible to anyone with an Internet connection. Full text searching, transcriptions, and the option to view and download the original pages are all available. You can find them on archive.org, or follow the link on the Archives’ homepage.

Thanks to a generous grant from the Alumni Association, the Archives is equipped with state of the art scanning equipment to continue scanning archival material in house as well. This digital material, including photographs, brochures, slides, and yearbooks (to name but a few formats) is used for everything from online exhibitions highlighting special aspects of the University’s history to D’Amour Library’s #wnebt Throwback Thursday Instagram photos. The digitization process is also serving as a means of preservation, providing surrogate copies of materials so that originals require less handling.

Looking for more information about the University Archives? You can visit our new homepage, linked from the D’Amour Library homepage, to learn about our hours, location, and collections. It’s also the place where you’ll find links to all of the exciting digital content that is being added.

You can contact the archivist at any time to request to see material, make an appointment, or just drop by to visit! -Tracey Kry

Masthead from 1935 dedication edition of The Nor’Easter, the school’s first student newspaper

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