

BRYAN WILDENTHAL MEMORIAL LIBRARY
ARCHIVES OF THE BIG BEND

BIENNIAL REPORT FY21 - FY22

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PURPOSE, VISION, & MISSION

Our Purpose

In support of the Sul Ross State University Mission, the Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library and Archives of the Big Bend provide collections and services needed to conduct research and to effectively and efficiently teach, as well as instruction and assistance in information retrieval, information literacy, and scholarly communication; and provide the required physical place for students and faculty to collaborate and exchange ideas.

Who works at the SRSU Library and Archives of the Big Bend?

excerpt from Cover to Cover, Fall 2021

- **Librarians and Archivists** hold terminal degrees. SRSU Librarians and Archivists provide oversight and expertise in specialized areas including content acquisitions and management, systems administration, preservation, research services, and information literacy education and outreach.
- **Library Assistants** are paraprofessional staff. SRSU Library Assistants deal with the highly detailed and technical aspects of making information available and accessible to library patrons from a variety of backgrounds—both in the physical and digital sense.
- **Operations and Circulation Staff** at SRSU Library provide frontline service and keep the building functioning, including facilities and purchasing.
- **Student Assistants** make up the majority of our Circulation department. These employees are well-trained, well-rounded, and keep the library operating smoothly throughout the entire information lifecycle for students, faculty, staff, community, and visitors.

PURPOSE, VISION, & MISSION

Shared Vision

The SRSU Library and Archives of the Big Bend is a strategic institutional asset in the creative exploration, intellectual growth, and scholarly pursuits of the students, faculty, and staff at Sul Ross State University and the community of the Big Bend and US-Mexico border regions of Texas.

SRSU Library Mission

The mission of Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library is to provide the learning resources and services necessary to support the educational, research, and information needs of the University, our communities, and the Big Bend region. The primary resources of the library are its collections and its staff.

Archives of the Big Bend Mission

The mission of the Archives of the Big Bend is to collect, preserve, arrange, and make available for research purposes the recorded history and culture of the unique and diverse Big Bend region of far West Texas.

SERVICE TO THE UNIVERSITY

Library and Archives Staff participated in the following Committees, Councils, and Teams in FY21 and FY22:

- Access and Excellence Committee (Evans)
- Awards Committee (Contreras)
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee (Davis)
- Faculty Assembly general membership (Contreras, Evans, Davis, Fernandez, Sandlin, Yetwin)
- Instructional Technology Advisory Council (Fernandez)
- Library and Research Technologies Council (Evans)
- Online Distance Education Committee (Fernandez)
- Staff Council (Urias)
- Strategic Planning Committee (Evans)
- Sustainability Council (Evans)

SUMMARY AND METHODS

Summary

The period of time covered in this report, FY21 and FY22 (September 2020 through August 2022), has felt like eons in terms of the pandemic timescale and in terms of the pace of change we have continued to see at Sul Ross State University and here in the Library and Archives.

As was the case at the close of FY20, we continue to work smarter, not harder, in an effort to continue to improve and increase access to the resources, services, and spaces of the SRSU Library and Archives of the Big Bend. Over the course of Spring and Summer 2021, all staff identified areas for improvement through group activities and discussion. Future areas of focus include increased communication among our small staff; increased dynamism of the physical collection and use of building space; and disaster planning.

Methods

All Library and Archives staff track monthly progress as well as metrics related to the roles they serve. Statistics are recorded by fiscal year (September to August) and inform spending, decision-making, and strategic planning alongside other means, including qualitative and anecdotal tracking. All usage statistics tracked comply with the American Library Association's Library [Bill of Rights](#) and the Society of American Archivists' [Core Values Statement and Code of Ethics](#). Both documents implore users' rights to privacy and confidentiality in research.

Numerical data is collected from our Integrated Library System (SirsiDynix Symphony), our discovery service (EBSCO QuickSearch (rebranded from All Library Search in May 2021)), our individual database and serials subscriptions, our interlibrary loan management system (OCLC Tipasa), our WordPress website using Google Analytics, our access and authentication software (EZproxy), our SaaS platform (SpringShare), our digital collections management software (CONTENTdm), our gate counter, and our social media channels, including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

For the purposes of this biennial report, data was collected between September 1, 2020 and August 31, 2022, and compared to similarly collected data from previous fiscal years, though some specific methodologies in data collection have changed. Specifics are noted throughout this report where applicable.

SRSU LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES OF THE BIG BEND: FY21-22 SNAPSHOT



The Online Public Access Catalog's Discovery Layer, EBSCO Discovery Service, was rebranded from All Library Search to **QuickSearch** in Summer 2021 as part of the website redesign. *The name QuickSearch more appropriately defines this tool, an aggregator of our physical catalog, eResource holdings, open access sources, and more.*



Use of our **Alpine Textbook and Reserves Collection** continues to grow. Use of Textbooks and Reserves drive students to the library and saves them money.

206
TEXTBOOKS
BORROWED IN FY22
source: SirsiDynix Symphony

176
TEXTBOOKS
BORROWED IN FY21

7.1K
NEW USERS ON
LIBRARY.SULROSS.EDU IN FY22
source: Google Analytics

Ask questions
get answers
from anywhere
within 24 hours
via email
yes, email

srsulibrary@sulross.edu

Email a Librarian to ask a research question, report an access issue, set up a consultation, or be referred to the Archives. We're here to help.



4,644
Views of the SRSU
yearbook, *The Brand*,
on Digital Collections
in FY21-22
source: OCLC CONTENTdm

19,328
LIBRARY
VISITS IN
FY22
source: gate counter in WML building

19,428
LIBRARY
VISITS IN
FY21

18,820
LIBRARY VISITS IN
FY17*
*ESTIMATE BASED ON PREVIOUS
COLLECTION METHODS

STUDENT SUCCESS AND SUPPORT IN RESEARCH

Area in Review

Everyone in the Library and Archives contributes to student success, retention, and support in research.

From January to June 2022, former Student Success Librarian **Joslyn Sandlin** reinvigorated the ideals of Student Success in the Library with her position focused solely on education and outreach. During the Spring 2022 semester, Sandlin developed relationships with faculty and got the Library and Archives back into the classroom physically and online. Though her tenure with SRSU was short, she built successful relationships and reminded the Library and Archives that we could have fun as we opened back up following the major shutdown of the pandemic.

35

**TOTAL LIBRARY INSTRUCTION
PROGRAM SESSIONS TAUGHT IN FY22**

source: SpringShare LibCal and Outlook

24

**TOTAL LIBRARY INSTRUCTION
PROGRAM SESSIONS TAUGHT IN FY21**

To accommodate a changing world and changing priorities in higher education, we've pivoted to promoting as much virtual and passive reference and research assistance as possible using Librarian-created Research Guides and answering questions, and setting up consultations via email (srsulibrary@sulross.edu).

We continue to promote that growth with the re-launch of the Librarian Chat Service in the Summer of 2022. *Look for the "Ask Us" tab on any page of our website, and ask us (get it?) how to embed the button on a Blackboard course.* Education and Outreach opportunities and the Library Instruction Program are now split between the Head of Systems and Access (Fernandez), the Head of Archives (Contreras), and the Director (Evans).

Ask Us

2,124

**VIEWS OF 75
LIBRARIAN-CREATED
RESEARCH GUIDES IN
FY22**

source: SpringShare LibGuides

2,510

**VIEWS OF 75
LIBRARIAN-CREATED
RESEARCH GUIDES IN
FY21**

=18%↑

FROM FY21 TO FY22

STUDENT SUCCESS AND SUPPORT IN RESEARCH

Victoria Contreras started the LIBRARY LOWDOWN newsletter in the Summer of 2022 and translates it to Spanish each month. Anecdotally, it has had great engagement with our communities.

With Library Assistant **Edwin Urias**, Sandlin launched "The Long Overdue" podcast in partnership with Robert Greeson in University Communications. Urias continues to interview library fans.



638

CURRENT FOLLOWERS ON FACEBOOK

source: Facebook



841

CURRENT FOLLOWERS ON INSTAGRAM

source: Instagram

We're seeing more and more of our community back in the building (and asking questions!) after the closures faced in FY20, along with the additional traffic spurred by having the Lobo Den Advising and Tutoring Center housed on the first floor.

1,860

TOTAL RECORDED INTERACTIONS AT THE CIRCULATION DESK IN FY22

source: SpringShare LibAnswers

1,699

TOTAL RECORDED INTERACTIONS AT THE CIRCULATION DESK IN FY21

=9% ↑

FROM FY21 TO FY22

SYSTEMS AND TECHNOLOGY

Area in Review

Since **Mike Fernandez** joined the team in early 2020 as Systems Librarian, the Library and Archives systems have improved greatly. He has spearheaded a number of systems improvements, including acquiring Niche Academy with an Innovation Grant in early 2020; leading focus groups to inform our website redesign and rebranding of the EBSCO Discovery Service to QuickSearch from Fall 2020 to Summer 2021; advocating and executing a plan for the acquisition of modernized microfilm machines in FY21; modernizing the SirsiDynix Physical Library catalog in Summer 2021, and in Summer 2022 implementing the ThirdIron LibKey suite of products to make online periodicals more attractive and accessible.

Additionally, the InterLibrary Loan and ScanIt Department (ScanIt being the 2022 rebranded Document Delivery service) headed by Fernandez and rounded out by Library Assistant **Edwin Urias** has seen continued upticks in service (including a 43% increase in items borrowed from other libraries between FY21 and FY22), and was recognized and inducted into OCLC's Express Digital Delivery Program in August 2022. Fernandez' 2021 Innovation Grant funding from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness has afforded him opportunities to work toward direct mailing of physical items to students and faculty at a distance, a greatly anticipated service.



516

**TOTAL NUMBER OF ITEMS
BORROWED THROUGH ILL
PROGRAM IN FY22**

source: OCLC Tipasa

360

**TOTAL NUMBER OF ITEMS
BORROWED THROUGH ILL
PROGRAM IN FY21**

=43% ↑

FROM FY21 TO FY22

A new version of our website, library.sulross.edu, was launched in May 2021 to match the new version of the University's website. We have since adopted the website's style in our official communications—such as in this report, our *Cover to Cover* newsletter, and wayfinding signage in the Wildenthal Memorial Library building.

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT, MAINTENANCE, AND STRATEGY

Area in Review

In early 2021 former Collection Development and Serials Librarian **Elizabeth Davis** was working toward wrangling the general and special collections of the Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library in Alpine. Although we lost Davis to other opportunities in February 2022, we are upholding her vision to grow the special and regional aspects of the physical collection while continuing to grow our virtual library, transitioning more periodical titles online to increase access and discoverability. Library Assistants **Adam Watson** and **Edwin Urias** carry much of this charge, all while on the search for a new Head of Technical Services and Collection Development (Librarian).

Continuing the changes brought on by the pandemic and elsewhere, we have embraced a shift of focus toward electronic collection development and discoverability, especially as the University begins to develop deeper and more meaningful support of online and distance education. Head of Systems and Access **Mike Fernandez** led the full staff through “Database Digs” in 2022, a summer-long, deep dive into our online electronic resources. This investment has returned a greater understanding and use of online electronic resources across our staff.

772

**PRINT BOOKS ADDED TO
COLLECTIONS IN FY22**

source: SirsiDynix Symphony

911

**PRINT BOOKS ADDED TO
COLLECTIONS IN FY21**

=15%↓

FROM FY21 TO FY22

172

**PAID OR OA DATABASE
SUBSCRIPTIONS IN
DATABASES A-Z IN FY22**

source: SpringShare LibGuides

151

**PAID OR OA DATABASE
SUBSCRIPTIONS IN
DATABASES A-Z IN FY21**

=13%↑

FROM FY21 TO FY22

In late 2020 former librarian Davis started a campaign to recognize faculty publications in our collection. This project has since grown organically with the birth of the Outstanding Scholar Award and accompanying display in the Wildenthal Memorial Library in Alpine and online on digitalcollections.sulross.edu in the Summer and Fall 2022.



ARCHIVES OF THE BIG BEND, SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, AND DIGITAL COLLECTIONS

Area in Review

Before retiring in August 2021, former Senior Archivist **Melleta Bell** completed work on a project with designer David Bell to rebrand the Archives with fresh logos and branding.

Following the retirement of Bell and Digital Imaging Specialist **Michael Howard**, the Archives of the Big Bend effectively closed to the public in Fall 2021. Part-Time Library Assistant in Digital Imaging **Al Gomez** picked up where Howard left off and is a continued asset to the digitization projects of the Archives of the Big Bend. Gomez successfully digitized all SRSU yearbooks (*The Brand*) and has since been working to digitize SRSU Commencement Programs (Alpine and RGC) for publication on digitalcollections.sulross.edu.



Bell was honored by the Texas Historical Records Advisory Board (THRAB) as the 2021 recipient of the Advocacy in Archives Award, having devoted her career to connecting the Archives to local history.

In December 2021 a Hiring Committee was formed to search for a new Archivist. **Victoria Contreras** was hired as Archivist in May 2022 and became Head of Archives (Archivist) in September 2022 following our reorganization. From May to August, Contreras has made great headway in assessing existing archival holdings, forging relationships with University and Community members, and giving researchers access to the Archives. In late August 2022, Contreras attended the Society of American Archivists Annual Conference in Boston, Massachusetts.



CIRCULATION AND OPERATIONS

Area in Review

Arguably the most central and important area of the Wildenthal Memorial Library in Alpine is the Front Desk. There, Library Operations Supervisor **Cindy Slocumb** and Part-Time Library Assistant in Circulation (Night and Weekend Manager) **Al Gomez** lead the charge of customer service and troubleshooting; borrowing and circulation; and hiring, training, and evaluating Library Student Assistants in Circulation, among other things.

Slocumb and Gomez oversee the public services and daily functions of the Library and Archives, innovating and adjusting services and access to resources as necessary. As students returned to campus in Fall 2020, an increase in the use of study rooms led Slocumb and Gomez to create more study rooms from empty offices. Since then, Study Room checkouts have increased by over 100% from FY21 totals.

The Front Desk serves as a front door for the Alpine campus and as a welcoming place for the regional community. Slocumb and Gomez oversee community-focused programs including the Library's Community Borrower program and TSLAC's TexShare Card program, and regularly interface with representatives from area public libraries, who use our building as a transit hub for InterLibrary Loan services.

1,622
STUDY ROOM CHECKOUTS IN FY22 (9 STUDY ROOMS BY END OF FY)

772
STUDY ROOM CHECKOUTS IN FY21 (6 STUDY ROOMS)

COMPARE TO...
1,151
STUDY ROOM CHECKOUTS IN FY17

source: SirsiDynix Symphony

not counting the

58 WACOM TABLETS
20 WIFI HOTSPOTS
41 CALCULATORS

also borrowed in FY22

2,219
PHYSICAL BOOKS BORROWED IN FY22

source: SirsiDynix Symphony

2,285
PHYSICAL BOOKS BORROWED IN FY21

3,221
PHYSICAL BOOKS BORROWED IN FY17

As well, the Front Desk is home to the increasingly popular Textbooks and Reserves collections, managed by Slocumb and Gomez. The SRSU Library continues to grow its "library of things" collection, checking out TI-83 Graphing Calculators, various technical cords, and WACOM tablets. Funded by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness between 2020 and 2022, Slocumb also manages the circulation of WiFi hotspots for the Alpine campus.

ADMINISTRATION AND PERSONNEL

Area in Review

After the Division of Educational and Cultural Resources was created in Summer 2020, continued reorganization toward the end of FY20 and into FY21 led to changes that have left our team smaller today than it has been in institutional memory. Following the [June 2021 Academic Planning Committee \(APC\) report](#)'s recommendation for a reduction of Library FTEs, and the retirement of Senior Archivist Melleta Bell in September 2021, the Library and Archives reorganized as one Department in the Division of Educational and Cultural Resources.

Since then, each member of our smaller and smaller staff has continuously taken on more work to make up for changes, vacancies, and reorganization as the functions of libraries and archives require increasingly technical work in their modernization.

To simplify processes, we continue to work toward regular and transparent communication; a cohesive, updated policy and procedure manual; as well as an updated and navigable shared drive in SharePoint. We funneled relevant work to shared internal email distribution lists to keep everyone in the loop on daily functions, and we now maintain an Internal Staff Calendar using Outlook.

Org Chart as of Fall 2022

Director of Library and Archives, Betsy Evans	Head of Technical Services and Collection Development, Librarian, VACANT	Library Assistant in Cataloging, Adam Watson	<i>One (1) Student Assistant in Technical Service, Alissah</i>
		1/2 Library Assistant in Serials, Edwin Urias	
	Head of Systems and Access, Librarian, Mike (Miguel) Fernandez	1/2 Library Assistant in InterLibrary Loan, Edwin Urias	
	Head of Archives, Archivist, Victoria Contreras	1/2 Library Assistant in Digital Imaging, Al Gomez	<i>One (1) Student Assistant in Archives, Madeline</i>
	Library Operations Supervisor, Cindy Slocumb	1/2 Library Assistant in Circulation (Night Manager), Al Gomez	<i>Five (5) Student Assistants in Circulation, Vanessa T., Vanessa S., Leslie, Buddy, Morgan</i>

ADMINISTRATION AND PERSONNEL

With the Lobo Den, we piloted the interim closure of the Wildenthal Memorial Library building to match the academic calendar starting in Fall 2021. Interim closures have allowed our staff breathing room to take on larger projects as well as gain necessary downtime between semesters.

Participation in the Division of Educational and Cultural Resources under Dean **April Aultman Becker** led to an increased sense of mission for the Library and Archives in terms of our relationships to other cultural institutions on the Alpine campus, specifically the Museum of the Big Bend and the Center for Big Bend Studies.

Our professional staff of librarians has fluctuated in the past two years, forcing us to embrace the fact that a small academic library needs its employees to wear many hats in support of our mission and vision. It has been difficult to recruit and retain degreed and specialized librarians to SRSU for the past several years. Reasons for this include uncertainty brought on by the pandemic and our inability to compensate staff at fair market value. We're excited to have undergone a budget-neutral reorganization just prior to FY23 to be able to recruit and retain a Head of Technical Services and Collection Development (Librarian), while also retaining our existing staff, re-focused on our mission and vision under the broader areas of Systems and Access (Fernandez), Operations (Slocumb), and Archives (Contreras).



BUDGET AND PURCHASING

Area in Review

Purchasing and Acquisition processes in the Library and Archives have changed hands several times in the past two years, seated in Library Technical Services under former Library Assistants **Angel Rodriguez** and **Oscar Jimenez**; then Division Administration under **Kayla Waggoner** and **April Aultman Becker**; and now back in Library Administration managed by **Cindy Slocumb** and **Betsy Evans**.

New and changing personnel, policies, and procedures in the Budget and Finance Offices at SRSU and SHSU have meant learning and re-learning how to spend money in the Library and Archives, and we are looking forward to embracing further stabilization in these areas.

Decision-making related to library resource acquisition is driven by usage statistics and conversations with academic departments. For example, in FY21, the SRSU Library acquired Digital Theatre+ after long-term conversations with Fine Arts Faculty about their needs.

We have made continued cuts to our duplicated print and electronic holdings each year and purchased fewer physical books for the collection to make up for annual increases in resource costs. No matter budgets, content prices have continued to rise. EBSCO, one of our largest content providers, charts an average 18% rise in their journal costs for academic libraries since 2018 ([source: EBSCO](#)). Decisions to focus purchasing on electronic resources align with strategies to increase and improve access to digital content for our increasingly online constituency.

As funds have remained stagnant or been cut over the course of several years, we have explored alternative ways to continue to offer high-quality and useful content to students, staff, faculty, and community while also meeting our other budgetary (operational) needs.

For example, in late FY22, the SRSU Title III STEM Lobotrack Grant made it possible for us to exponentially expand access to JSTOR content, a one-time purchase that will offer perpetual expanded access to Arts & Sciences titles. Former Dean Aultman Becker joined the Texas Library Coalition for United Action resulting in several years of negotiation with Elsevier ScienceDirect saving the Library money while increasing access to key science journal titles ([source: ARL.org](#)). Usage for Elsevier ScienceDirect titles increased noticeably in the first few months of increased content access.

Student Assistants Graduated, FY21-22

- Victoria Romo, Fall 2020
- Edwin Urias, Fall 2020
- Jennifer Aragon, Spring 2021
- Beatriz Vallez, Fall 2021
- Aylin Pereyra, Fall 2021
- Kendall Lopez, Spring 2022



Upon graduation, Library and Archives Student Assistants are honored with a bookplate in the title of their choosing.

FACILITIES

Area in Review

The Wildenthal Memorial Library building in Alpine keeps us on our toes and in our mittens (most of the time). In Spring 2021, we sustained a water leak from an air conditioner compressor on the third floor of the building, luckily found by former Library Assistant **Rebecca Taylor**. No parts of any collection were harmed in the flood, but damage to the walls was replaced, and continued light leaking in a supply closet led to the need for mold remediation of archival supplies through the Summer and Fall of 2021.



For almost the duration of the time period covered by this report, there were construction fences around the Wildenthal Memorial Library building as part of Campus Access Projects. The fences were removed in early FY23: A welcome change!

In August 2021, the Library purchased additional recycled plastic picnic tables (pictured left in January 2022) to replace aged and broken concrete tables to coincide with the Campus Access Plan projects' completion.

LOOKING FORWARD

In the past two years, Library and Archives staff have valued flexibility even more. We continue to honor our missions and visions while taking care of ourselves. We lead from where we are, and we go the distance to support students, faculty, and staff online and in person.

Launching into FY23, Mike Fernandez is working toward updating the QuickSearch User Interface as an educated early adopter; continuing to modernize and simplify our online public access catalogs (OPACs), and planning for the future of our integrated library system (ILS) needs.

Victoria Contreras becomes more familiar with the Archives' holdings with each passing day and visiting researcher. We eagerly anticipate the second annual Research Roundup in Fall 2023 as well as the completion of Al Gomez's digitization of SRSU Commencement Programs, mostly because we want to know what will be digitized next!

We continue the search for a unicorn in the Technical Services area of the Library. Even with our re-organization to offer a higher starting salary for the position of Head of Technical Services and Collection Development (Librarian), we know that finding someone with the qualifications we seek will take time and luck. In the meantime, Library Assistant in Cataloging Adam Watson is stepping up to fill holes in items needing original cataloging, and Edwin Urias is assisting greatly with the information lifecycle in our building, from acquisition to preservation to assessment for weeding.

In Circulation and Operations, Cindy Slocumb and Al Gomez continue to work smarter, not harder. Their attention to detail and focus on student success truly make the Library and Archives the heart of the campus. We love having the Lobo Den and their fabulous staff in our building and look forward to what the future holds.

At the end of the day, all of us are happy to be asked a question by students, staff, faculty, or the community. If we don't know the answer, we are certainly the folks who will help you find it.

—Betsy Evans, Director