

FY 23 / 24



SRSU Library and Archives

Biennial Report for
Fiscal Years
2023 and 2024



ARCHIVES OF THE BIG BEND
SUL ROSS STATE UNIVERSITY

SR | **LIBRARY**
ALPINE • EAGLE PASS • DEL RIO • UVALDE



SRSU Library and Archives

Biennial Report



This report covers fiscal years 2023 and 2024 (September 2022 through August 2024). Time has not felt the same since 2020, and we've continued to move and grow exponentially.

At the time of this writing, August 2024, the Library and Archives is one FTE away from being fully staffed.

Strategic Themes: Our Focus

Strategic goals to future-proof the Library and Archives include:

- **identifying clear collections strategies to drive decision-making about resource and service format, delivery, and access;**
- **evolving to meet changing user needs and research habits; and**
- **clearly planning for the use of our space footprint in Alpine, in the Archives, and in Eagle Pass.**

Working with these long-term goals in mind amplifies our vision to be recognized as dynamic, vibrant, and regionally important within and beyond the Texas State University System.



Methods

All Library and Archives staff track monthly progress and metrics related to their role. 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), our individual database and serials subscriptions, our interlibrary service management system (OCLC Tipasa), our access and authentication software (OCLC EZproxy), our SaaS platform (SpringShare), our digital collections management software (CONTENTdm and Preservica), and our BWML gate counter.

Report Summary

Over FY23 and FY24, we reorganized twice under the Division of Academic Affairs, saw the creation of the Eagle Pass Library in August 2023 (a process that started in January 2023); and hired to fill four vacant positions.

Even with an expanded staff, the evolving complexity of libraries and archives requires more training and more attention to detail as we increase our service area, improve existing services, and introduce new services, resources, and staff spaces, requiring extensive staff time.

To simplify processes we continue to work toward regular and transparent communication; a cohesive, updated internal policy and procedure manual (now in its second year!); and an updated and navigable shared drive in SharePoint. We have also contributed to updating information about our Department in the Faculty and Student Handbooks as requested. We now host many public-facing policies on our website and we maintain an Internal Staff Calendar using Microsoft Outlook to keep each other informed.

In FY23 and FY24, SRSU Library and Archives staff displayed their drive, their professional ethics, and their sense of humor. Thank you, thank you, to everyone who shows up every day to continue to improve the Library and Archives for SRSU.



Did you know...

Physical books processed into our general and circulating collections are stamped **Sul Ross Library**? In FY23 and FY24, we have grown and evolved – including reorganizing our staff under the Division of Academic Affairs, breathing new life into the Archives of the Big Bend, and opening Library Services for RGC in Eagle Pass. We will always be **Sul Ross Library**, but we're also so much more. We are:

- Alpine's Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library (BWML),
- the Archives of the Big Bend housed in BWML,
- Library Services for Eagle Pass in D-129, and
- library.sulross.edu, the SRSU Library and Archives' online presence.

In June 2023, we re-branded as SRSU Library and Archives for Alpine, Eagle Pass, Del Rio, and Uvalde. Special thanks to **Bobby Greeson** and University Communications for the new brandmark!



Our Purpose and Shared Vision

The SRSU Library and Archives exists to connect the students, faculty, staff, and broader communities of Sul Ross State University with information and services to facilitate creative exploration, intellectual growth, and scholarly pursuits in support of the library and archives missions, and the university's, mission, vision, and strategic plan (Faculty Handbook, 3.01).

SRSU Library Mission Statement

The mission of the SRSU Library in Alpine and Eagle Pass is to provide the learning resources and services necessary to support the educational, research, and information needs of the University, our communities, and our broader regions. The primary resources of the SRSU Library are its collections and its staff.

Archives of the Big Bend Mission Statement

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.

Centering Student Success and Research Support for All

All Library and Archives staff contribute to student success, retention, and research support. We focus on growing and promoting virtual and self-help reference and research assistance using librarian-created and maintained [Research Guides](#), [Niche Academy Tutorials](#), and answering questions and setting up consultations via [email](#). Librarians **Betsy Helesic Evans** and **Mike Fernandez** taught 26 information literacy sessions in FY23 and another 24 in FY24.

In FY23 and 24, the Archives of the Big Bend welcomed 202 visitors from 15 states outside of Texas as well as one Native Nation, and three foreign countries. A major focus for Head of Archives **Victoria Contreras** remains getting SRSU-affiliated researchers in the door. In early September 2023 Contreras hosted the first Research Roundup. FY23 saw 21.3% usage by SRSU affiliates and 18.3% in FY24 compared to the 15% usage baseline assessed before Contreras' arrival. This usage does not account for all walk-ins or guests.

In early FY23, the Provost's Office started a tradition of hosting a reception and display in the Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library to honor faculty for their contributions to the academy during the previous year. The annual awards have grown, and each year a display of faculty scholarship and artistic endeavors has grown with it. Our beta Institutional Repository, the [SRSU Faculty Publications Digital Collection](#), powered by OCLC ContentDM makes certain content available online. The collection currently provides access to 12 documents. It had 92 page views in FY23 and 108 page views in FY24.

Niche Academy Sessions

| FY23 | FY24 | FY21 (first year available) |
|-------|-------|--------------------------------|
| 1,161 | 1,283 | 855 |

Info Lit Sessions Taught

| FY23 | FY24 | FY21 |
|------|------|------|
| 26 | 24 | 24 |

Staff Service to SRSU

In FY23 and FY24 Library and Archives staff participated in the following Committees, Councils, and Teams:

- Access and Excellence Committee
- Awards Committee
- Faculty Assembly
- Instructional Technology Advisory Council
- Library and Research Technologies Council
- Online Distance Education Committee
- Online Education Working Group
- Staff Council

AT-A-GLANCE

SRSU Library and Archives

QuickSearch Sessions

| FY23 | FY24 | FY19 |
|--------|--------|--------|
| 16,138 | 19,844 | 11,256 |

Research Guide Views

| FY23 | FY24 | FY19 |
|-------|-------|-------|
| 2,878 | 3,953 | 1,163 |

Electronic Resource Views

| FY23 | FY24 | FY19 |
|--------|--------|--------|
| 19,789 | 23,658 | 21,592 |

Title V DHSI Grant Project

In February 2024 we welcomed **Michelle Lacey** as the Project Director for the Title V DHSI grant project, "Digital Transformation and Modernization in Far West Texas." This five-year grant project involves departments of the University across all instruction sites. We're excited to be a part of this collaboration. Read elsewhere in the report to learn about goals of the grant being put into action across our spaces and places.

Getting the word out:

- The monthly **LIBRARY LOWDOWN** is quick and easy, library and archives news you can use.
- The Library and Archives newsletter **Cover to Cover** is published three times a year to share accomplishments and goals, and updates.
- The **Systems Status Dashboard** shares systems-related updates and information about outages.



Developing a Library for RGC

In late 2022, after the Texas State University System announced a \$33.1 million investment in new and improved educational facilities in the Middle Rio Grande Region, it became apparent that we should invest our energies in promoting, enhancing, and improving library services to students, faculty, and staff of Del Rio, Uvalde, and Eagle Pass.

With feedback from a working group established to implement this transition, the Library and Archives reorganized to promote **Mike Fernandez** to Head of RGC Library Services based in Eagle Pass and to establish a new Eagle Pass Library Assistant position. As part of the reorganization, the job duties of Alpine-based Library and Archives staff were analyzed and updated to make sense of enhancing and improving services to Del Rio, Uvalde, and Eagle Pass.

As the Eagle Pass campus continues to grow, with the establishment of the Rio Grande College of Business, we are happy that Library Services are growing with it. We hired Library Assistant Gabriela Casarez in December 2023. Fernandez and Casarez have built a welcoming space, reached out to their growing communities, and are taking every opportunity to connect with students in Eagle Pass and beyond.

Heading into FY25, the first physical books are on the shelves in Eagle Pass Building D-129. Senior Operations Supervisor **Cindy Slocumb** and Library Assistant **Al Gomez** are helping Fernandez and Casarez develop relevant workflow and policy to make this expansion of services smooth and easy and to build a similar culture and service offering in Eagle Pass that they nurture in Alpine.



Direct Mail

After **Mike Fernandez** received a 2021 Innovation Grant to pilot Direct Mail, Library Assistant in Serials and ILL **Taylor Moore** worked with him to improve upon it with custom graphics. The Direct Mail program has grown in popularity, providing access to more physical library materials to a broader population of SRSU students, faculty, and staff. Fernandez presented on the success of the program at the NWILL Conference in early Fall 2024. After launching Direct Mail at the tail end of FY23, Fernandez and Moore have collectively circulated 50 books via Direct Mail in FY24.

AT-A-GLANCE

Library Services for Eagle Pass - D-129

Engaging with Students



- Attended 6 events in FY23 and FY24 including Sul Ross Fest (Eagle Pass)
- 12 transactions in FY23 (after launching in August 2023) and 91 transitions in FY24
- During summer 2024, became pick-up location for Sully Shelf textbook program to drive traffic into their space

Building out our Space



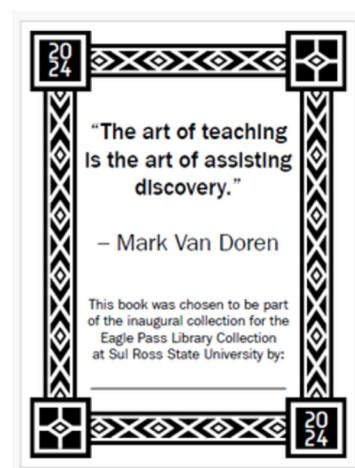
- Engaging in Conversations Chats with Department Chairs to build faculty-driven physical collections
- Designing a Title V DHSI DTM grant-funded book drop with **Michelle Lacey** and the University Communications Office for the new building being established in Eagle Pass for FY25



A Bookplate for Eagle Pass

In May 2024, Library Assistant **Adam Watson** cataloged and processed the first set of books ordered for the physical collection at the Eagle Pass Library.

Thanks to a fun idea hatched with Chair of Natural and Behavioral Sciences at Rio Grande College Dr. Wesley Wynne, Library Assistant **Taylor Moore** designed a bookplate (at right) to acknowledge the faculty members recommending titles as we grow a library in Eagle Pass over the next few years.



Breathing new life into the Archives of the Big Bend

We left off the last biennial report having reported the arrival of **Victoria Contreras** to the Archives of the Big Bend. In September 2023, during a budget-neutral reorganization, Contreras was named Head of Archives to better reflect the operations of the Library and Archives within the Division of Academic Affairs. Contreras continues to make progress in assessing existing holdings and building relationships across the University, our local communities, and the broader preservation community.

In December 2023, the Archives announced three notable acquisitions: the Fort Davis National Historic Site's entire microfilm collection, the John Gage Ketzle Collection, and the Don Burgess Collection. Holdings have grown (14 donations/transfers in FY23 and 25 donations/transfers in FY24) but unrestricted growth is not the ultimate goal for the repository. In line with the Library and Archives' strategies to develop clear plans



Photograph 007 "Surveyors" by John Gage Ketzle (n.d.)

for our space footprints, clear collections strategies, and well-developed plans to meet changing user needs, the Archives of the Big Bend seeks to expand and modernize space to house existing and future collections safely and sustainably. In December 2023, the Archives was the recipient of funding from the Texas Historical Records Advisory Board and the National Historical Publications and Records Commission to receive a preservation assessment report by consultant Rebecca Elder of Cultural Heritage Preservation.

Part-time Library Assistant in Digital Imaging **Al Gomez** has developed much skill as he continues to work with Contreras on digitization efforts. Since finishing the commencement programs and University yearbooks, Alpine's The Brand and RGC's El Paisano, Gomez has transitioned to the long-term project of digitizing the Sage literary magazine. Total views for the yearbooks was 2,107 in FY23 and 3395 in FY24. Access to yearbooks are commonly requested and a great place for researchers to begin seeking information about their alumni relatives, so we are happy that this collection was prioritized for digitization.

Contreras received two grants in FY23 and FY24 related to digitization efforts: In June 2023, Contreras was awarded the Preservica Plus Starter Grant,

gaining the opportunity to focus on digital preservation through the Preservica platform with two years of funding for the Starter Plus account. Then, in July 2024, Contreras received funding from the Texas State Library and Archives Commission's TexTreasures grants (FY25) to fully digitize the Harry Warren Collection (1835-1932) to optimum preservation and accessibility standards. The digital output of this collection will be freely available online through the Archives' public digital collections and through patron reproduction requests. This program is funded (in part) by a grant from the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services and Texas State Library and Archives Commission (Grant # LS-256843-OLS-24).* (2025)



Looking forward

Funding and staffing remain concerns for repositories everywhere, and that is no different for the Archives of the Big Bend. During Contreras' tenure, the Archives has regularly employed one student assistant position, offering SRSU students the chance to gain valuable experience working with primary documents. After much consideration, the Library and Archives chose to reposition a vacant Library Assistant position within the Archives of the Big Bend to better support Archival research requests and Reading Room access. Hiring for that position will take place in early FY25.



TEXAS STATE LIBRARY
AND
ARCHIVES COMMISSION



Systems and Access Updates

- Launched a redesign of our website in Fall 2023 ([version 3.5](#)) with improved access to various research portals
- Implemented SirsiDynix Enterprise ([Physical Catalog/Archives Search](#))
- Redesigned and updated [Research Guides](#) for all academic subject areas.
- Implemented updated user interfaces for [QuickSearch](#), our EBSCO Discovery Service, and [Databases A-Z](#), our curated list of database availability powered by SpringShare, Inc.

Archives of the Big Bend

Visitation

- In FY23 and 24, the Archives of the Big Bend welcomed 202 visitors from 15 states outside of Texas, one Native Nation, and three foreign countries.

Percent of SRSU-Made Requests

| FY23 | FY24 | FY22 |
|-------|-------|------|
| 21.3% | 18.4% | 15% |

Views of Digitized Yearbooks

| FY23 | FY24 | FY22 |
|-------|-------|-------|
| 2,107 | 3,395 | 1,946 |



"Game of Rachuera at Rodeo Ranch Chihuahua" by Don Burgess (1990)

Community Outreach

- Head of Archives **Victoria Contreras** also runs outreach events such as Nerd Nite Big Bend and Alpine's chapter of Silent Book Club
- Contreras regularly consults with other campus repositories and community groups such as Alpine Historical Association, Inc.



Developing collections across format, platform, and location

In Fall 2023 and Spring 2024 we renewed a commitment to incorporating faculty feedback into collection development related to our serials collections. Head of Archives **Victoria Contreras**, Head of RGC Library Services **Mike Fernandez**, and Director **Betsy Helesic Evans** worked together to update the Collection Development and Maintenance Strategy, developed a calendar for communicating with Department Chairs, and met with 7 out of 13 Department Chairs in Spring 2024.

We have continued our TSUS component membership in the Texas Coalition of Libraries for United Action (TCLUA) throughout this reporting period. Usage for Elsevier ScienceDirect titles increased noticeably in the first few months of increased content access and has stayed strong over the past two years. We are exploring more opport-

unities to cost-share resources in this way and look forward to plans for TCLUA to grow into an advocating voice for Texas libraries beyond negotiating solely with Elsevier. In the meantime, staff are participating in regular discussions about Open Access facilitated by University of Texas Library staff alongside other TCLUA members.

We continue to work toward a vision of growing the unique and regional aspects of the Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library's physical collections while planting the seeds of a relevant and dynamic physical collection for Eagle Pass Building D-129.

#SRSUstacks

Along with her regular interlibrary loan and serials-related duties, Library Assistant **Taylor Moore** has completed projects to better and beautify the Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library's print collections since her arrival. Periodicals are more accessible and more creatively displayed because of Moore's hard work. Analysis from this project will inform space-related projects in the BWML in FY25 and FY26.



AT-A-GLANCE

Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library

Visitation (Gate Count)

| FY23 | FY24 | FY19 |
|--------|--------|--------|
| 19,033 | 18,138 | 24,729 |

Space Utilization

- Alpine's Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library houses the Lobo Den Tutoring and Advising Center, an OIT Computer Lab, the Archives of the Big Bend, and the Title V DHSI Digital Transformation and Modernization grant office
- Work has started on the transition of the BWML Classroom space to a grant-funded Faculty Development Center
- In the past two years, staff have increased the number of Study Rooms and their available technology and privacy

Physical Items Borrowed

| FY23 | FY24 | FY19 |
|-------|-------|-------|
| 5,109 | 4,126 | 4,822 |

Study Room Usage

| FY23 | FY24 | FY19 |
|-------|-------|-------|
| 2,142 | 1,917 | 1,240 |

Heart of the Library

In Alpine the Front Desk remains the heart of the Library and Archives. When students have something to say, Cindy Slocumb and Al Gomez listen. During Spring and Summer 2024, students requested increased privacy in the BWML Study Rooms. Slocumb quickly worked with local business PrintCo to design additional window coverings and had them installed prior to Fall 2024 classes.



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library.sulross.edu