



A Message from Geoffrey

This is my first annual report as Vice-Provost & Chief Librarian. I joined Western Libraries in July 2024 and am honoured to be at the head of a community of skilled librarians, archivists and staff. Together we animate and advance the university's mission in teaching and learning, research, and community engagement. I am taking the next several months to learn about Western Libraries and its staff and will be holding a series of engagement events with my colleagues. I also look forward to creating strong links with the deans and other university leaders, as well with the members of our student advisory council.

This report describes some of the amazing people who belong to the Libraries' team, as well as initiatives, activities and events that have occurred during the last year. While this report looks back on our achievements, Western Libraries is also focused on the future. Work continues on Phase 2 of the Weldon Revitalization and just before this report goes to press, we will recognize the five recipients of Western Libraries undergraduate research awards. These awards are given to students who demonstrate strong, thoughtful and creative use of library or archival sources and they are just one example of the ways in which we support student success and research excellence. You can read more about this program and last year's winners in this report.

Much of the work that goes on in academic libraries is invisible. We pride ourselves on a seamless experience for our users and we seek to eliminate barriers or delays to collections, information and services. That sometimes means that our work and expertise is not well understood by our communities. My hope is that this report helps you learn more about the skill and commitment that we bring to our work.



My message must close with a tribute to my predecessor, Catherine Steeves. Catherine achieved much during her two terms including implementing the organizational renewal initiative, launching our current strategic plan, *Forward Together*, and the envisioning and completion of the first phase of the Weldon revitalization project that has transformed, physically and literally, one of the largest academic library buildings in Canada. She has an immense legacy and I am honoured to follow her.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "G. Little".

Geoffrey Robert Little
Vice-Provost & Chief Librarian

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Contributors:

Articles written by, or adapted from, Sara Poulin, Jennifer Robinson, Tanis Schumilas, Western News. Photographs by Juan Cuellar Rubio, Christopher Kindratsky, Rayanne Tipert. Design by Juan Cuellar Rubio.

Meet Geoffrey Robert Little

“Libraries are a place to access collections and expertise. But they’re also a place where people can experience quiet time or meet friends or work in groups. I think that’s a real testament to their importance and enduring value,” Little said.

Tell us a little about yourself.

I grew up in Guelph, Ontario, and my first job, aside from delivering newspapers, was shelving books at the public library. Except for three years in the Ontario Public Service, I’ve worked in libraries since I was about sixteen years old. My studies and career have taken me from Guelph to Toronto to Birmingham, England, back to Toronto, to New Haven, Connecticut, to Montreal and now to London. I have three siblings and (at the moment) two nieces and two nephews. My partner, August Klintberg, and I share our lives with a handsome five-year-old Irish terrier named Fox.

What drew you to the role of vice-provost & chief librarian at Western University?

In its mission statement, Western Libraries calls itself an academic commons, which to me speaks to openness, equality and an invitation to participate. That was incredibly attractive. I had worked with President Shepard during his tenure at Concordia and knew him to be a dynamic and thoughtful leader who understands the central role of the university library. The photos of the Weldon Revitalization were also a big draw. Who wouldn’t want to work in such a beautiful space?

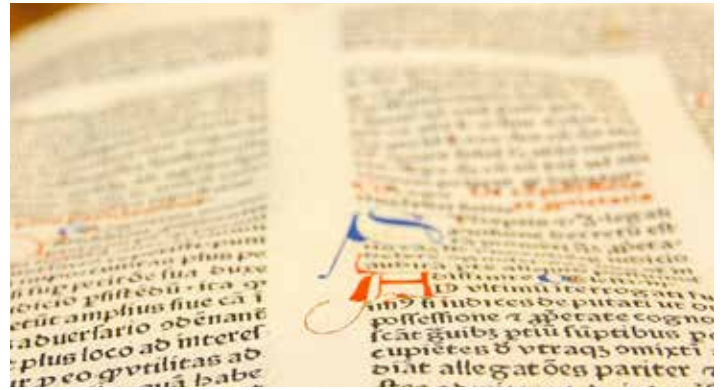


What opportunities and challenges do you see ahead for Western Libraries?

Western’s leadership has been clear that it wants to increase the amount of research funding coming into the university. That will have implications for Western Libraries. Services like research data management, GIS support, publishing and dissemination resources, and digital preservation are no longer ‘nice to have,’ but essential, in addition to work we’re doing in teaching and learning and collections stewardship. Western Libraries is already a leader in many of these areas, but the demands will only grow. We need to plan carefully to ensure that our services, and the experts who deliver them, are properly supported and resourced.

What are you most excited about for your first term as vice-provost & chief librarian?

In the short term, I am excited to learn about Western Libraries as well as Western University. Longer term, completing the Weldon revitalization program is high on my list. I also want to learn more about our archival and rare book collections and how they are being leveraged to enrich the student experience as well as generate new scholarship. Growing links with the local community, including



Indigenous communities in southern Ontario, is another exciting opportunity. Finally, I am looking forward to working with the deans and vice-provosts on issues and projects connected to Western’s academic planning and prioritization.

What are you most proud of in your career so far?

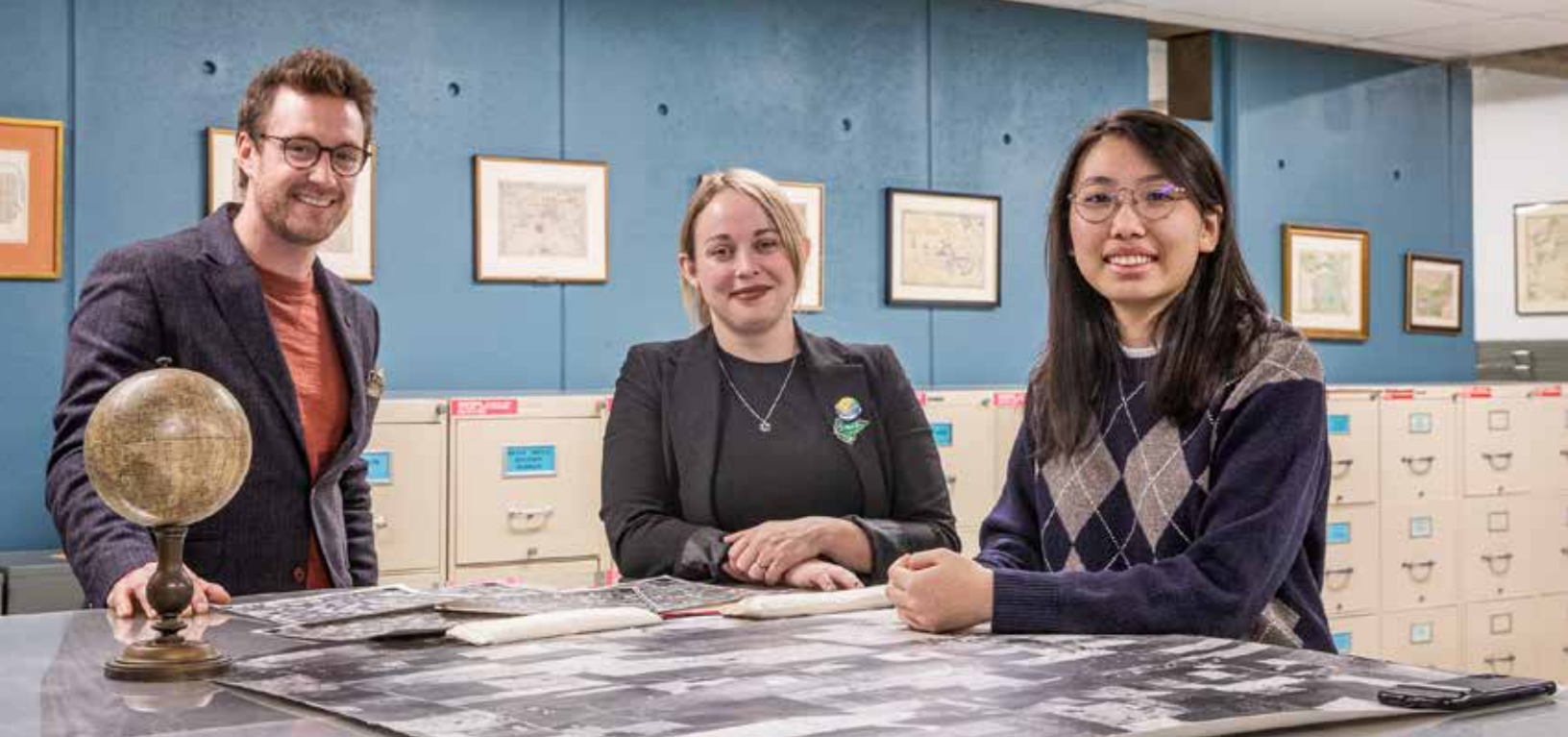
I am one of the co-founders of Concordia University Press, a non-profit open access scholarly publisher launched in 2016. I was also the press’s founding director until I left for Western. It was exciting to create a new publishing house from scratch and to establish its editorial and marketing programs. I am very proud of what we accomplished and the books and authors that we published.

What do you like to do when you’re not working?

With moving and starting a new job I feel like I haven’t had much free time. I’ve always been a swimmer, so I’ve been taking advantage of the rec centre pool. I also like to read (usually before bed) and this fall I have been working my way through Anthony Trollope’s *Chronicles of Barsetshire* series as well as the novels of Beryl Bainbridge. August and I have Hyland Cinema memberships, and we’ve enjoyed watching classic films on the big screen. We’re also looking forward to being closer to theatre in Stratford and Niagara.



« A candid moment on the roof of the Webster Library at Concordia University in April 2024



⋈ Map librarian Zack MacDonald, GIS specialist Liz Sutherland and student library assistant Eunice Chu (L to R).

Air Photo App Takes Flight

[An app](#) making thousands of historical photos – captured from the skies – accessible to the public with just a few clicks will offer a unique glimpse into southwestern Ontario’s past.

The uses are nearly endless: from history buffs to curious citizens, the application developed by Western Libraries opens an entire new world of local knowledge. “For people who aren’t professionals in history, these photos are especially cool,” said Eunice Chu, a student library assistant at the Map and Data Centre in The D.B. Weldon Library.

Fourth-year student Chu, who specializes in geographic information science, built the application in six months.

“Anyone who has a computer or a phone can access the materials. It makes it very convenient for people who don’t do professional research – anyone who wants to understand the differences between the historical photos and the present day can use the app,” Chu said.

The images represent one of the largest air photo collections in Canada. There are more than 10,000 available through the app and roughly 60,000 in Western Libraries’ [Map and Data Centre](#).

Many come from the National Air Photo Library – government photos from planes flown to collect data from above.

“People started flying because that was the only way to get data from top down. Satellite resolution really wasn’t that great until very recently. To see houses and concessions, you needed to fly an airplane to get air photos,” said Liz Sutherland, Western Libraries GIS specialist.

Today, those photos represent a valuable archive of local history.

Western collection used globally

Those top-down images include a wealth of data, including the organization that sponsored the flight, when the photo was taken, and any other details

attached to the shot. Some are even geo-referenced, meaning they're attached to real-world coordinates to allow for mapping and further analysis.

Professionals are using the app and its photos to illustrate and analyze agricultural changes, erosion, or research ahead of new construction projects. The Upper Thames River Conservation Authority recently used the app to quickly locate past images of the Sifton Bog.

The easy-to-use app with an expanded collection – covering a large swath of the southwestern Ontario region – is expected to be used by historians, building consultants and planners, academic researchers and interested community members.

The app allows users to search photos and narrow the results using filters. It's much easier, and cheaper, than requesting scanned images from the Map and Data Centre, which was time-consuming for both library users and staff.



Making GIS fun

One of the most compelling features of the app is its ability to break down geographic information systems, or GIS, as an easy-to-understand concept.

The app was developed using [ArcGIS Dashboards](#), a platform faculty, students and staff at Western can use to create their own applications. It's the same system that gives life to [Story Maps](#), which provide highly visual and engaging representations of research in numerous fields.

Western Libraries pays for a subscription and offers live and virtual training, including demonstrations and workshops.

Map librarian Zack MacDonald calls it powerful.

It's easy to experiment with analysis, even for an amateur, thanks to a measurement tool that shows the distance between features in a photo.

Treasure trove of data

The library is eager to educate the Western community about the opportunities of the software with its training tools.

The air photo app is the perfect example.

"People are engaging and learning a little bit about GIS, even if they don't realize. I like being able to introduce people to it without overwhelming them with a ton of definitions and science," Sutherland said.

"It highlights the usefulness of GIS. You're engaging with geography and spatial data in a way that's really easy: you just open the app, you load a photo, you take a look at it, and you're engaging with GIS. I love that."



Recognition for Undergraduate Research

Five undergraduate students are the first to win a [Western Libraries Undergraduate Research Award \(WLURA\)](#) for their outstanding research.

Award recipients, Sarah Al-Saoud, Katarina Jovanovic, Richard Martinez Loyola, Caitlin E. Mungall, and Amber Yixuan Wu, come from a wide range of disciplines across Western. Their research projects cover topics such as neurodevelopmental disorders, children's literature, pictorial encoding, polycystic ovary syndrome and even the origins of life.

The WLURAs are a new initiative by Western Libraries to highlight the diversity of research outputs by undergraduate students. Applications are due each year on April 30.

"There is a tendency to think that only professors and perhaps graduate students 'do research.' But in our university context, undergraduates are engaged in various types of research as well, and some of it is highly sophisticated," said Jason Dyck, current chair of the WLURA adjudication committee.

As a teaching and learning librarian, Dyck works with faculty like Shelley McKellar in history to integrate research skills into classroom learning by designing and delivering information literacy instruction related to a course assignment, such as a research essay. On her experience working with Dyck, McKellar says: "I love this faculty-librarian

collaboration; wonderful for all of us, students will gain skills, write better essays, and faculty marking will be more enjoyable!"

Student reflections in award application packages note the importance of support received in the classroom from librarians like Dyck to guide their research. They also cite the significance of help from services such as chat with a librarian, where students chat in real-time with library staff to receive research direction and advice, such as what databases to use, and how to identify effective search terms.



Winners receive a certificate and a cheque for \$1,000. Their projects are available for viewing on Western's institutional repository [Scholarship@Western](#).

"I'm delighted to see my work published and searchable now on Google Scholar!" said WLURA winner and medical biophysics and biochemistry student Amber Yixuan Wu.



⌘ Caitlin, Katarina, Amber, Sarah, Richard (L to R)

Sarah Al-Saoud

Project Title

[A Transdiagnostic Examination of Cognitive Heterogeneity in Children and Adolescents with Neurodevelopmental Disorders](#)

Course

Psychology 4891E (Honours Thesis)

Instructor

Loretta Norton

Katarina Jovanovic

Project Title

[False Recognition: Revisiting the Account for Pictorial Encoding](#)

Course

Psychology 1100E (Method in General Psychology)

Instructor

Stephen Van Hedger

Richard Martinez Loyola

Project Title

[Quetzalcoatl in Children's Mythology](#)

Course

Spanish 3531F (Myths, Legends, and Oral Traditions)

Instructor

Victoria Wolff

Caitlin E. Mungall

Project Title

[Social Supports for Adolescent and Young Adult Polycystic Ovary Syndrome \(PCOS\) Patients: A Scoping Review](#)

Course

Health Sciences 3910G (Fundamentals of Academic Communication in the Health Sciences)

Instructor

Shauna Burke

Amber Yixuan Wu

Project Title

[On the Origins of Life — Modelling the Initial Stages of Complex Coacervate Droplet Formation](#)

Course

Medical Biophysics 4970E (Project in Medical Biophysics)

Instructor

Styliani Consta

Library Services Spotlight

Interlibrary Loans

You sign in to the library catalogue, request a book or scanned article, and next thing you know, your email dings: your request is ready. It's a seamless process completed at Western Libraries dozens of times a day. But what about the books that Western Libraries doesn't have on the shelf? How do you get this research material? That is where the interlibrary loans team comes in.

Interlibrary loans, the process of sharing library materials across libraries on a local, national and international level, is supported by a team of 17 user services library staff, made up of library assistants and student library assistants. Under the leadership of user services manager Sara Poulin, and coordinator, Jacquelyn Watton, the team ensures researchers across Western's campus and beyond get access to essential materials through various resource sharing agreements.

The interlibrary loans team filled nearly 15,000 requests in the 2023-2024 academic year for Western researchers. This included over 10,000 print books that were sent through the mail and processed at campus libraries for faculty, students and staff to pick up from the hold shelf. Further, over 16,000 books and digital scans were supplied to researchers as far away as New Zealand and as close to home as the London Public Library.

In the years preceding Western Libraries joining the Ontario Council of University Libraries' Collaborative Futures initiative, interlibrary loan usage was on a downward trend. In 2018-2019, interlibrary loans filled less than 10,000 requests, and now activity is more than double this number.

Collaborative Futures, a formal partnership across 20 of Ontario's university libraries that allows Western researchers to seamlessly borrow materials from across the province, has pushed the growth of interlibrary loans an average of 23-27% each year since it began. To support this increase in demand, the interlibrary loans service has been enhanced for Western researchers, including development of a more accessible and easy-to-use request process and introduction of a rapid digitization service with an average turnaround time of less than 24 hours. As a result, it is easier than ever before for researchers to request material from our library partners both provincially and all over the world.

Faculty, students and staff share that using this new and improved interlibrary loans service is "so much smoother" and they are grateful for the "stress off [their] shoulders" when we assist with this critical part of their research process. User services manager Poulin explains why she thinks this work is so vital to researchers on campus:



“I think of the student, who like me, couldn’t travel for their research to use collections we don’t have here at Western. Thankfully, interlibrary loans sourced books from all over the United States, England and even Australia for me. I’m so happy to know our work can make a difference like that for researchers across campus.”

The growth of interlibrary loans over the last five years is a success story not just for Western Libraries but for all our library partners. Knowing that research collections can be quickly and efficiently shared helps each library maximize acquisition budget dollars, which is especially important in a time of budget constraints across

the post-secondary sector. Through this simple act of collaboration, researchers across the world have access to the material they need to inform groundbreaking discoveries and help address the most pressing challenges of today and tomorrow.



Sara Poulin

Meet Sara Poulin, user services manager at the Allyn & Betty Taylor Library. Poulin leads user services staff at the second largest library on campus, supporting faculty, students and staff in the faculties of Science, Engineering, and Medicine. She is also the manager of key Western Libraries’ services, including interlibrary loans and course readings.

Since starting in her role one year ago, Poulin has led her team through many changes including the transition to Western’s new Online Western Learning (OWL) platform, Brightspace, which integrates with the course readings service, and a transition away from RACER (Rapid Access to Collections by Electronic Requesting) interlibrary loans system. The need for continuous evolution of these and other library services is directly tied to the ever-changing

needs of our Western community, according to Poulin. She is excited to have opportunities to help user services staff and Western Libraries support our users however we can.

“My favourite time of the year is the start of a new semester,” she says. “I get to enjoy so many things I love about my job all at once. I meet new students coming into Taylor, support an influx of researcher requests in interlibrary loans, and help instructors prepare their course materials for the upcoming academic year. It’s busy but it’s worth it. I get to help our campus community be successful all while working alongside great colleagues.”

By the Numbers

Collections and use

- **5,843,399** total items, digital and physical book, journals and other materials.
- **342,462** active serial subscriptions, digital and physical journal, newspaper and magazine subscriptions.
- **804,927** other material, scores, audio, video, maps, special collections, theses and dissertations.
- **4,322,608** e-journal views.
- **2,180,382** database searches.
- **632,999** e-book views.
- **65,330** multimedia streams.
- **1,119,150** catalogue searches.
- **51,429** physical items checked out.

Research support and instruction

- **319** instruction sessions and workshops for **12,178** faculty, students and staff.
- **11,512** questions answered by chat and email.
- **1,679** in-depth consultations.

Website

- **1,013,747** unique visits to the library website.



Interlibrary Loans

- **14,928** requests fulfilled by partner libraries for Western researchers.
- **16,364** requests fulfilled for partner libraries.



Course Readings

- **328,203** uses of digital course readings material.
- **22,461** items available through course readings.



This is Us



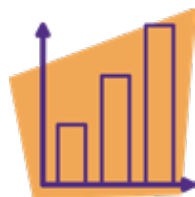
Archives and Special Collections

We acquire, preserve and provide access to special collections and archives, including rare and unique materials in all formats, to support the teaching and research missions of the university. We also engage with and welcome use of the archives and special collections by members of the broader community.



Collections Management, Discovery and Access

We are committed to providing seamless and convenient access to information to support research, scholarship and teaching. We work with users to select and acquire materials to meet their changing needs and ensure thoughtful management and preservation of resources for future scholars.



Research and Scholarly Communications

We collaborate with researchers across campus to advance the creation, management, dissemination and preservation of research and scholarship. We assist with open access publishing, GIS and statistical data, data management, researcher identifiers, research impact and copyright.



Teaching and Learning

We collaborate with faculty on curriculum design and create and deliver a variety of information literacy learning experiences. Our instruction on research strategies, misinformation and disinformation, and knowledge justice, among other topics, empowers students to become successful, information literate graduates able to achieve their full potential as global citizens and leaders.



User Experience

We support evidence-based decisions about the library, keeping user perspectives and observed behaviours at the forefront when it comes to the design and development of library spaces and services.



User Services

We design and deliver a suite of virtual and in-person front-line library services that support the teaching, learning and research goals of the Western community including information and public service, document delivery, collections maintenance and outreach and events services.

All Western Libraries units are supported by administration and operations and library information technology services. These teams provide critical support for staffing, human resources, facilities management, records services, communications and IT services. Information technology support includes staff computing, public website development, library service platform support, public printing, application development and domain management.

We are your information experts, when and where you need us. Western Libraries' teams take your work to the next level.

Community in the Commons

In the early stages of planning the Weldon revitalization project, conversations with users focused on the kinds of activities Western Libraries could support through a renovation. Faculty, students and staff regularly mentioned the need for a large gathering space to host a range of campus programs and events. This feedback inspired the creation of the community room, one of the busiest spaces in the new learning commons on the main floor of The D.B. Weldon Library.

From lecture style presentations to interactive workshops, academic conferences to student club meetings, poster sessions and even therapy dogs, the community room has hosted a wide variety of events since opening its doors in September 2022. One ongoing program hosted in the community room is the peer assisted learning (PAL) study hub run by learning development and success, which sets up shop in the community room two days a week.

Rich Nahhas, student learning specialist, is very pleased with how the space supports this program: “I wish the PAL Centre could be in the community room more often – it just makes sense for students to be helping other students study in the library!”

Nahhas notes that the amenities offered by the room; such as whiteboards, moveable tables and chairs, access to power for personal devices and technology like digital screens, all help make the space comfortable and productive for student volunteers leading the program and students using the space to learn. The visibility of the community room, which features large windows to the outside and interior of Weldon is also an advantage.

“The screens and tech allow us to have a rolling slideshow advertising exactly for which courses help is available,” says Nahhas. “You can see students stop dead in their tracks outside of the community room, and sometimes even outside of the library, to take stock and come in. This has even worked to our advantage in presentations, as students walking by have seen the slides we’re discussing and stop to read them or come in based on the information.”

The community room is overseen by user services staff, led by Tanis Schumilas, acting user services manager, Weldon, who is thrilled by how campus has embraced use of the space: “The community room has quickly become a cornerstone for campus events. We’ve been



amazed by the level of engagement from Western with over 450 events so far. The user services team has worked hard to create a welcoming and versatile space, and it's been rewarding to see it play such a vital role in supporting both academic and social activities. It truly shows what a collaborative effort between library staff and campus partners can achieve."

Western Libraries hosts library programs in the community room such as We Got You Day, where students are offered de-stressor activities like bracelet making, colouring and Lego-building, as well as access to campus supports like student wellness, in the lead up to the final exam period. During exams the community room becomes a popular silent study space, adding 120 additional study seats to what is already available across Western Libraries.

As spaces like the community room, finished during phase 1 of Weldon's multi-million-dollar award-winning renovation, become active hubs for

community engagement, more changes are coming through phase 2. This includes a purpose-built silent study space with 90 seats on the main floor of the learning commons that will be available throughout the academic year. Improvements to teaching spaces and new workspaces for the centre for teaching and learning are also a part of phase 2 and will be available on the second floor by the end of 2024. Improvements to ground floor spaces will continue into January 2025.



Simon Court

Meet Simon Court, user services library assistant. Court's duties include coordinating the Weldon community room, a multi-purpose space for hosting campus community events. He administers bookings, supports the room's technology, and works with faculty, students and staff from across Western to host a variety of functions. Over the past year, Court has overseen a logistical transformation of the space, from instituting a room-use policy and booking request form, to leading other user services staff who help facilitate use of the community room and other library spaces. Court views the community room as the perfect way to strengthen the library as a campus hub and foster a sense of community at Western.

Reconciliation Through Art

Context Warning: this story deals with topics that may be distressing to readers.

Mixed among the books in libraries across London and Middlesex County, visitors might discover a piece of artwork meant to prompt reflection and education. These books, covered in Indigenous fabrics, have the names of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and children imprinted on the spine in gold lettering, with invitations for visitors to follow a QR code to learn more.

The project, initiated by national non-profit The Canadian Library, is being embraced by a number of library organizations across the city, including Western Libraries, in their efforts toward truth, reconciliation and decolonization and as a way to honour and build awareness of the thousands of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and children. [The Canadian Library's Micro Gallery Project](#) is a community-engaged installation that includes over 6,000 hard-cover recycled books in more than 300 locations across Canada, including libraries, restaurants, retail spaces like IKEA, police departments and non-profit organizations.



“Recognizing that reconciliation is an ongoing and shared commitment which requires all of us to be collectively responsible, we collaborated with local partners here in London to create spaces throughout the city to draw attention to the missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and children from across this region,” said Katya Pereyaslavskaya, user experience librarian at Western.

At Western Libraries, the books have been brought together in a prominent display in Weldon alongside stories from The Canadian Library website.

Mary Lou Smoke is an Indigenous elder from the Anishinaabe, Lakota and Mi'kmaq Nations. It has been more than two decades since her sister was





murdered. Her sister's name, Debbie Ann Sloss-Clarke, is one of the many embossed on the books. "The missing and murdered Indigenous women are sisters, mothers, aunts, grandmothers and the best friends of many," said Smoke. "It's important to always remember them – their lives were taken away before they had a chance to share their special gifts in this beautiful life that we each have been blessed with. They must not be forgotten."

The local initiative in London and Middlesex County includes a collaboration between eight libraries, each hosting their own micro galleries. The locations include Weldon, London Public Library's Central Library, the former Beryl Ivey Library at Brescia University College, Huron University College Library, Cardinal Carter Library at King's University College, the FIMS Graduate Library, Fanshawe College's Learning Library Commons and the Middlesex County Library's Coldstream Branch.

"London is unique in the breadth of this collaboration with so many partners. They are going to be able to share with so many people," said Shanta Sundarason, the founder of The Canadian Library. "It's incredible to see them all come together in this way." All of the locations have been pinned on an [interactive map](#) developed with the help of the geographic information systems team at Western Libraries. Those inspired to create their own micro gallery can also add their location to the map using the form on the site.

All of the books from across Canada will eventually be brought together in one permanent installation.

"You can't walk past one of these books or a shelf full of them without stopping to look," said Sundarason. "First and foremost, we wanted these art installations to encourage people to stop and take notice and ask questions. We have found that many people are going on to visit the website to read the stories and to learn more, so we feel we are achieving even more than what we set out to do."



Micro Gallery

Honouring missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and children.

A Historical Legacy

Western Libraries recently received its largest donation to date. A \$2 million gift from the estate of Halina and James Russell (Rus) Robinson will give students and scholars access to rich resources in the emerging fields of military and veterans history.

The gift builds on a textbook and materials acquisition fund started by Rus in 1979, which Halina continued to support after his death in 2010 and until she died in 2021. The donation came as a “complete surprise” to Elizabeth Mantz, who maintained regular contact with both Rus and Halina in her role as collections and content strategies librarian.

“I’m sure this was something they would have discussed and agreed upon as their legacy, but I had no idea they were planning to leave a donation of this kind,” Mantz said. “They were such a remarkable couple, very much committed to each other and similar in their gentle, unassuming ways.”

✧ Halina and James Russell (Rus) Robinson

Making Western ‘a magnet for young researchers’

The bulk of the Robinsons’ endowment will fund materials in history and social science, with a special focus on military history.

The collection will include full-text access to two premier history databases, [America: History and Life](#) and [Historical Abstracts](#), which offer comprehensive information on American, Canadian and world history.

Jonathan Vance, Distinguished University Professor and J.B. Smallman Chair in the department of history, said the signature collection created through Rus and Halina’s generosity will set Western apart.

“It gives students at all levels unparalleled access to the most important literature in military history, making Western a magnet for young researchers interested in the field,” Vance said.





⌘ Collections and content strategies librarian Elizabeth Mantz and Distinguished University Professor Jonathan Vance

“Every year, more and more digital databases are being marketed, but at considerable cost. This donation allows us to take advantage of the newest research resources as they become available, and boost Western’s profile, enabling us to take another step in becoming a leading research institution in North America for military history.”

Western’s first PhD graduate in chemistry

For decades Rus made annual gifts to Western Libraries, inspired by his love of history and learning.

Rus’ early donations allowed for the purchase of books on the history of radar, military applications and air force history, subjects reflective of his life and interests. Rus grew up in Norwich, Ontario, and after attending the Ontario Agriculture College in Guelph, he joined the Royal Canadian Air Force in 1941, training as a radio technician.

During the Second World War, he travelled to England, France and Belgium, and attained the rank of Flight Lieutenant before he was severely injured in Belgium in November 1944. When he was well enough, he returned home to Canada and began his graduate studies at Western.

It was at Western that Halina caught Rus’ eye from across the cafeteria in the Natural Sciences Centre. Romance blossomed and shortly after Rus became Western’s first PhD graduate in chemistry, he and Halina married. Rus stayed on at Western, teaching chemistry and working for Agriculture Canada until 1985. He authored more than 40 papers during that time.

A woman ahead of her time

Halina, the daughter of a Polish military officer, also survived the Second World War. When the war broke out, she and her mother fled to Warsaw. After being arrested during the



⌘ Upon her retirement, Halina Robinson rediscovered her passion for art.

Warsaw Uprising of 1944, Halina and her mother were transported to Auschwitz-Birkenau, and from there deported to Bergen-Belsen – a Nazi concentration camp where approximately 50,000 imprisoned people died.

Despite grave illnesses brought on by the deplorable conditions at Auschwitz and later at Bergen-Belsen, the pair survived.

When Bergen-Belsen was liberated in 1945, Halina and her mother were sent as displaced persons to Sweden, where Halina studied to become a chemical engineer. After graduating with high marks in 1950 from the Stockholms Tekniska Institut, Halina joined the famed Nobel-Karolinska

Institute to work in the lab of pioneering cancer researchers Drs. George and Eva Klein.

When Halina immigrated to Canada in 1951, she was intent on resuming her engineering career, but in 1951, London, like most of North America, was not yet accepting of female engineers.

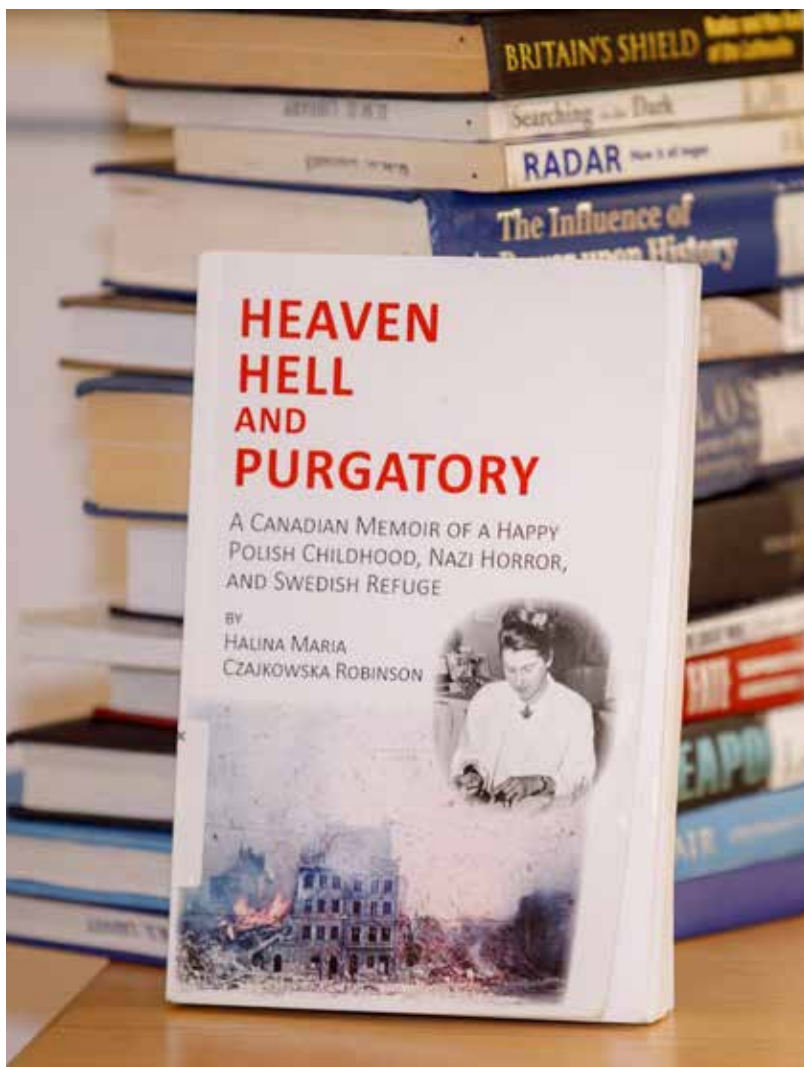
Halina eventually landed a role as a laboratory technologist in the lab of former Western Faculty of Medicine dean James Bertram (J.B.) Collip. There, through her desire to maintain the skills she learned in Sweden, she made a groundbreaking – but unheralded observation – that led to the discovery of the anti-cancer drug Vinblastine.

Upon her retirement, Halina returned to creating art, a passion she was forced to forgo as a child, when her life was overtaken by war.

Besides volunteering at Museum London and taking courses in art history at Western, Halina also took the time to write her memoir, [*Heaven, Hell and Purgatory*](#), released in 2020.

Mantz remembers Halina as a “very positive person” and both she and Rus as dedicated and humble donors to Western, with a focus on giving students the materials they need to gain their education.

“This wonderful gift continues their legacy of doing remarkable things for people they’ve never met.” Mantz said. “It speaks to the lives they lived, and the power they had within.”



⌘ In 2020, Halina Robinson released her memoir *Heaven Hell and Purgatory*



Reflections on Experiential Learning



Yeliz Baloglu Cengay

During my co-op with research and scholarly communication I participated in a range of projects fostering skills in teamwork, independence and technical proficiency. My primary role focused on support for research data management and data services. I worked on projects such as the London Census Data Collection, the creation of online training modules for Borealis and digitization initiatives like the Milton at Western exhibit. I had the opportunity to co-lead data workshops, moderate online sessions and assist with NVivo consultations.

I also contributed to developing the open textbook *Research Data Management in the Canadian Context*. These experiences improved my data collection and analysis skills and enhanced my understanding of digital preservation, open publishing and scholarly communication.

As I transition into the next phase of my career, my co-op experience has profoundly influenced my course choices and solidified my career goals within data librarianship and digital scholarship. I am deeply grateful to my supervisors and the entire research and scholarly communication team for their unwavering support, guidance and the invaluable opportunities they provided throughout this journey.



Emily Kirk

During my co-op with archives and special collections, I had the opportunity to work on two exciting projects to preserve born digital and digitized content. My first project was the preservation and digitization of audio-visual records, where I developed skills to determine preservation risks and to handle delicate audio-visual records. My second project was preserving Western's electronic theses and dissertations in Scholarship@Western using Scholar's Portal's Permafrost service, giving me experience working with large amounts of metadata. Both these projects will facilitate researcher access to important content into the future.

My supervisors kindly shared their expertise and encouraged me to pursue professional development opportunities to further support my learning. I look forward to applying the skills and perspectives I have gained through my co-op toward my future academic and professional career!



Suzy Lee

I had the opportunity to work with the user experience (UX) team on a series of projects to help improve the user-friendliness of the Western Libraries website. One of these projects involved creating a new page template for library location pages to help users find consistent information across all sites. All my projects helped me hone specialized skills needed to conduct UX research, such as leading user testing sessions and taking session findings and turning them into actionable changes. It was gratifying to see my changes implemented on the website, and to know that I am helping make small steps towards improving the online experience.

The guidance and support of my supervisors helped me grow my confidence and solidify my career interests towards academic librarianship. I am excited to utilize the power of iterative design to improve other libraries going forward!

Western Libraries understands the importance of experiential learning and we are committed to providing meaningful opportunities for students to develop their skills and strengthen their employability. We are grateful for the fresh ideas and modern skills our students bring to the table and for the many meaningful contributions they make to our organization.

Contributions to Research

At Western Libraries, we don't just support researchers, we are researchers. Our librarians, archivists and staff regularly produce and contribute to research and scholarship. Here's a [list](#) of some of the important work our team accomplished in 2023.



Kristin Hoffmann

Meet Kristin Hoffmann, research and scholarly communication librarian. Hoffmann currently supports the library's publishing program of 37 scholarly and student-run journals and helps researchers navigate the landscape of open access publishing.

As well as supporting other researchers, Hoffmann is a researcher herself, publishing extensively on the librarians' role as researchers. Hoffmann is seen as a leader in this field of study, and in related work to support librarians' and archivists' research. She has been invited to speak and give workshops at institutions across Canada about research support initiatives.

"My most recent project focused on Canadian academic librarians and archivists who are doing

research in subject areas other than librarianship or archival practice. Nearly one-third of us have done research in other subject areas. I wanted to bring attention to the range of research that librarians and archivists do, because our research is important for our professional roles and for the research life of the university." Hoffmann plans to continue her research with an exploration of individual librarians' and archivists' research trajectories.

Awards

Cassady, Samuel, Jacqueline (Jax) Cato, Liz Mantz, David McCord, et al. 2023. "Sustainability in Library Collection Development: Western Libraries Green Audit Project." SSHRC Explore Grant.

Dyck, Jason. 2023. "Novenas: Print, Piety, and Patria in Spanish America, 1519–1821." Reese Fellowship in American Bibliography and the History of the Book in the Americas. Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

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Xie, Shiyi. 2023. "Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Initiatives and Canadian Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM) Academic Librarianship: Current Status and Practices." Sheila Suen Lai Research Grant Award, Chinese American Librarians Association

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Campbell, Heather and Dan Sich. 2023. "[Library Curriculum as Epistemic Justice: Decolonizing Library Instruction Programs](#)." *Canadian Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 9.

Campbell, Heather. 2023. "[Leading From Between: Finding Meaning as a Third Space Librarian](#)." In *Thriving as a Mid-Career Librarian: Identity, Advocacy, and Pathways*, edited by Brandon West and Elizabeth Galoozis. Chicago: ACRL, 311-325.

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Dyck, Jason. 2023. "[Aztec Antichrist: Performing the Apocalypse in Early Colonial Mexico](#)." *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 103(4): 718-720.

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Belton, Tom, Amanda Jamieson, Amanda Oliver, and Anne Quirk. May 2023. "Cultivating Healthy Communities: Assessing Impact at Western University's Archives and Special Collections." Archives Association of Ontario, Cobourg, Ontario.

Belton, Tom, Amanda Jamieson, Amanda Oliver, and Anne Quirk. October 2023. "Research Library Impact Framework (RLIF) initiative." Canadian Library Assessment Workshop, London, Ontario.

Campbell Heather, Kim Carson, Bobby Glushko, Christy Sich, and Dan Sich. August 2023. "Embracing Vulnerability: Interrogating Colonialism as a Team." Digital Pedagogies Institute, Virtual.

Campbell, Heather, Dan Sich, Lea Sansom, and Kim Carson. February 2023. "Decolonizing Library Instruction: Getting Started." Ontario Library Association Super Conference, Toronto, Ontario.

Campbell, Heather. May 2023. "We Have What We Need: A Practical Guide for Decolonizing Our Work at Western." Spring Perspectives on Teaching Conference, Western University, London, Ontario.

Campbell, Heather and Dan Sich. February 2023. "Academic Library Curriculum as Knowledge Justice." Ontario Library Association Super Conference, Toronto, Ontario.

Carlisle-Johnston, Emily and Courtney Waugh. June 1-2, 2023. "'The Hidden Trade-off': Learning to Spot Openwashing in the Wild." CAPAL 23, Toronto, Ontario.

Cassady, Samuel, Jacqueline (Jax) Cato, Liz Mantz, David McCord, et al. February 2023. "Western Libraries Green Audit Project." Ontario Library Association Superconference, Toronto, Ontario.

Churchill-Baird, Noah, Emily Carlisle-Johnston, and Kristin Hoffmann. May 2023. "Going Wayback: Digitally Preserving a Defunct Student Journal." Library Publishing Forum, Online.

Dyck, Jason. January 6, 2023. "Writing on the Frontier: Juan de Albizuri and the Canon of Jesuit Mission Historiography." The Catholic Church, State, Labor, and Identity Struggles in Latin America, The Conference of Latin American History, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Hendriks, Shawn, et al. November 8, 2023. "Adapting Your Library's OA Strategy For The Future." Charleston Library Conference, Charleston, South Carolina.

Hill, Elizabeth and Kristi Thompson. June 1, 2023. "RDM goes OER: Community-Sourcing a Canadian Open Educational Resource on Research Data Management." IASSIST conference, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Hoffmann, Kristin. June 1-2, 2023. "A Survey of Librarians, Archivists, and Research not Related to Librarianship or Archival Studies." CAPAL 23, Toronto, Ontario.

Hoffmann, Kristin and Selinda Adelle Berg. May 12, 2023. "A Kaleidoscope of Reflections on Librarians as Researchers." Library Research Support Committee inaugural event, Brock University, St. Catherines, Ontario.

Hoffmann, Kristin, Emily Carlisle-Johnston, and Noah Churchill-Baird. May 2023. "Let's Chat! How Do You Support Student Journals to be Sustainable and Ongoing?" Library Publishing Forum, Online.

Hoffmann, Kristin, Leanne Olson, Jesse Carliner, and Aneta Kwak. June 1-2, 2023. "Learning Together: Online Research and Writing Communities for Academic Librarians." CAPAL 23, Toronto, Ontario.

Janzen, Lyndsey. November 14, 2023. "Where are We From Again? An Amateur Adventure into GIS, Family History at the Limits of Google." GIS Days. Western University, London, Ontario.

Lawlis, Lisa and Anne Quirk. July 2023. "Finding Aids and the London Free Press Collection: A Preliminary Analysis." Society of American Archivists Research Forum, Online.

MacDonald, Zack. July 2, 2023. "Foundations for Linked Data in Historical Building Information Models and Immersive Historical Environments." International Medieval Congress, Leeds, United Kingdom.

MacDonald, Zack and Liz Sutherland. June 15, 2023. "GPS and the Jungle: Building Capacity for Participatory Mapping in Post-War El Salvador." Carto, University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta.

MacDonald, Zack and Andrew Moore. May 12, 2023. "Shaping the Ground under their Feet: Toward Automated Approaches to Reconstructing Medieval Environments for Historical Research, Educational Games, and Immersive Simulations." International Congress on Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo, Michigan.

Marshall, Elizabeth. May 10, 2023. "Engaging Outside the Library – Supporting Students and Departments." Academic Business Library Directors Annual Meeting, Evanston, Illinois.

McMillan, Brian, and Hannah Pinhorn. May 19, 2023. "Reconsidering Music Library Space Post-COVID." CAML Annual Conference, Laval University, Quebec City, Quebec.

McMillan, Brian. March 2023. "Celebrating Mahler: The Gustav Mahler-Alfred Rosé Collection." Exhibit organized in conjunction with the UWO Symphony performance of Mahler's 4th Symphony, Don Wright Faculty of Music, Western University, London, Ontario.

McKeown, Ashley, V. Logan Kennedy, and **Heather Campbell**. May 2023. "Supporting Baccalaureate Students in Identifying and Integrating Knowledge Justice Sources Into Their Nursing Practice." Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing Education Conference, St John's, Newfoundland.

Paterson, Joanne. October 14, 2023. "[A Gentle Introduction to the Holdings of Western Archives](#)." London and Middlesex County Branch of the Ontario Genealogical Society, London, Ontario.

Paterson, Joanne. June 12, 2023. "[Visualizing family history data](#)." Dazzling Data: Tools and Strategies for Presenting Data. OLITA Digital Odyssey.

Thompson, Kristi. May 2023. "Understanding Data Anonymization." The IASSIST Conference, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

VanderSchans, Arielle & Courtney Waugh. October 27, 2023. "Scholarship@Western -- Share Your Paper." Canadian DS Librarians Community of Practice Annual Unconference. Online.

Waugh, Courtney, Emily Carlisle-Johnston. March 15-18, 2023. "Open or Openwashing? Findings from a Content Analysis of Publisher Websites." Association of College and Research Libraries, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Waugh, Courtney, Shawn Hendriks, Emily Carlisle-Johnston, Samuel Cassady, and Noah Churchill-Baird. March 5-9, 2023. "Assessing OA Membership Offers: Retrospective Analysis, Reflection, and Reframing." Electronic Resources and Libraries. Online.

Xie, Shiyi and Grace Liu. June 25, 2023. "Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Implications for Canadian STEM Academic Librarianship." American Library Association Annual Conference and Exhibition, Chicago, Illinois.

Xie, Shiyi and Grace Liu. June 24, 2023. "Finding a New Normal: Library Policies and Practices." American Library Association Annual Conference and Exhibition, Chicago, Illinois.

Xie, Shiyi. January 31, 2023. "What Impacts Library Teaching? Meeting the Challenges." Chinese American Librarians Association (CALA) Canada Chapter 2023 Annual Program, Toronto, Ontario.



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