**Extract from 2011/12 Williams College Libraries Annual Report**

**SUMMARY**

2011/12 was a year of significant accomplishment for the Williams College Libraries. Several important and long-anticipated initiatives were undertaken in support of our strategic priorities. Assessment, records management, scholarly communication, including establishment of an institutional repository, new collection formats, new approaches to library instruction, and managing ebook content were special initiatives this year. All of these efforts occurred against the backdrop of the start of construction of new Sawyer Library.

The libraries remain popular places in which to read, study, research, and relax. Over 533,000 people used Sawyer and Schow libraries in 2011/12, an increase of 4% compared to last year. Reference inquiries increased slightly or held steady in all categories. Collection use declined in most categories as did borrowing from other libraries. The Library Shelving Facility continued to add collections and retrievals grew to reflect that fact. Williams remained a superior library partner, lending 2.2 items for each one we borrowed.

The strategic goal of providing excellent, evolving services will be better informed by the completion of the LibQual user satisfaction survey in the spring. There was a good distribution of participation among students from four years and faculty from each division. Analysis of results including the many written comments will be a major focus next year.

Several important initiatives advanced in support of managing the campus’s intellectual property. The President’s Senior Staff received our proposal to establish a campus records policy and charged a group chaired by the College Archivist to develop such a document. With the assistance of an advisory group of administrators and faculty, the group developed a statement of principles for managing college records. Senior Staff endorsed the document in July 2012. On a parallel track, the Records Manager/Digital Resources Archivist began aiding some twenty administrative departments in developing records retention and disposition schedules. The library is also a participant in the review of an Enterprise Content Management (ECM) system that is an important component of records management. Thanks to Mellon funding, an institutional repository was established. The recently named “Unbound: the Williams Digital Commons” was created in conjunction with Discovery Garden utilizing Islandora software and based on Fedora and Drupal. The library worked closely with OIT on all of these initiatives, an emerging pattern of collaboration that will soon benefit from sharing space in new Sawyer Library.

New materials in all formats were added to the collection and excellent bibliographic control ensured sound access to these items. The number of physical collections cataloged increased. A second ebooks package was added this year and a major project was undertaken to utilize software to keep track of the various versions of ebooks to simplify search and retrieval. A long desired pilot for streamed video of feature films on reserve was completed and will lead to a continued service. The additional funds for collections led to a number of important print and digital purchases.

Connections with faculty and to the curriculum remain basic elements of our approach to library instruction. Librarians have and will continue to pursue and more closely document regular conversations with departments as part of the effort to integrate information literacy into the curriculum of the major.

Interest in the progress in the new Sawyer Library building project was obvious among library staff and the entire campus community. The noise of excavation and ledge removal was a necessary step prior to the start of pier and foundation construction. Placement of scaffolding around three sides of Stetson and the rising of forms above construction fencing to the east of Stetson signaled that construction was underway in earnest. An updated website designed by Communications also provided information about the project.

Details on our accomplishments and challenges for the year are provided in the narrative sections that follow. The accomplishments of the library staff in 2011/12 are quite remarkable. We can all be proud of our efforts and feel confident about being able to continue providing outstanding services and collections as part of and in support of the College’s mission.

**FUTURE ISSUES**

The comprehensive strategic planning work that the library did in the spring of 2010 continues to guide our short term planning and goals. The four high level priorities identified were designed to “ensure the vital place of the libraries in the changing information world.”

Collections will continue to be a focus which is appropriate since they are an important element of our work. We will add the Springer ebook package to the existing offerings from *Ebook Library* and *ebrary* which have proven popular with many students and faculty*.* One concern about ebooks is the difficulty in creating and retaining notes and other personalizing modified content. For that reason, we will continue to look for improved software as part of evolving ebook packages. JSTOR and Project Muse will be joining the ranks of ebook providers and their efforts will be closely monitored. The modest steaming video pilot project of feature films for course reserves was successful and will be continued. Attention will also be given to providing access to journal articles. The Big Deal approach limits our options for dropping individual titles but can provide good value for the dollar by greatly expanding access to hundreds of additional journals. The question of whether all of our packages merit continuation will be carefully reviewed.

The results of the LibQual survey will be studied to determine how services can be better aligned to address user needs.

Efforts will continue to develop the records management and institutional repository initiatives. The library will continue to work with OIT to extend the technological underpinnings of the repository, and to prioritize and ingest new collections. In the area of records management, archives staff will be working especially closely with those administrative offices that are slated to be included in the ECM this year.

No list of future priorities would be complete without mention of new Sawyer Library. Construction has been underway for nearly one year and significant progress has occurred in Stetson and the addition. During the year, important decision will be made about furniture selection and interior design while an RFP for the complex collection moves will be developed and issued. Efforts will also continue to keep the campus and greater Williams community up to date on construction through the project website and webcam.