2020-2021 ANNUAL REPORT

SEPTEMBER 2021

WISPALS MISSION

WISPALS Library Consortium advances the teaching and learning missions of its member institutions through sharing information and creating collaborative and financially responsible solutions to common challenges.

WISPALS VALUES

We work toward solutions that are financially responsible and efficient in order to provide the best possible service to our college community.

We educate one another and we are committed to learning together.

We stay on the forefront of librarianship, each developing our professional skills while innovating and experimenting to further our collective and individual missions.

We work to highlight the value of technical college libraries to our institutions and to the wider library community.

WISPALS PURPOSE

The WISPALS Library Consortium provides member libraries shared access to an integrated library system, information resources, electronic databases and other services and technologies at reduced costs. It promotes the exchange of knowledge, skills and best practices for libraries. WISPALS also serves as a liaison between member libraries, and local, state, and national library organizations and vendors.

WISPALS 2020-2021 OFFICERS

Board President - Bryan Albrecht, Gateway Technical College
Executive Committee Chair – Amber Stancher, Mid-State Technical College
Executive Committee Incoming Chair – Hans Baierl, Moraine Park Technical College

WISPALS MEMBERS & EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

Vince Mussehl, Chippewa Valley Technical College

Kathryn Johnston, Fox Valley Technical College

Gary Flynn, Gateway Technical College

Kelly Carpenter, Lakeshore Technical College

Amber Stancher, Mid-State Technical College

Hans Baierl, Moraine Park Technical College

Katie Aldrich, Northcentral Technical College

Kim A. LaPlante, Northeast Wisconsin Technical College

Amy Manion, Waukesha County Technical College

Ellen Range, Western Technical College

Abigail Dillon, Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College

WELCOME MESSAGE FROM WISPALS 2020-2021 CHAIR

Thank you for taking the time to read the 2020-2021 Annual Report. Throughout the year, the WISPALS libraries had to adjust our policies and procedures multiple times due to the ever-evolving COVID-19 pandemic. We continued to focus on keeping our staff, students, and community's health and safety at the forefront. Recommendations from the local health departments varied between each institution, making this a truly unique year of sharing and learning from each other.

While we navigated our way from working remotely and/or in-person during a pandemic, we came together virtually as a consortium to face the challenges of this unprecedented time together. We shared best practices that allowed our students to experience uninterrupted education. Our libraries' ability to offer technology resources to students and embed electronic resources within our learning management systems became vital to the success of our individual colleges more than ever before. Our ability to successfully respond to such a challenging time was possible due to the collaboration efforts and support that the WISPALS consortium provides.

By committing to the WISPALS purpose, the WISPALS libraries will continue to be stronger together. By staying focused on our common goals, staying true to our values, and sharing our areas of expertise with each other, we will be ready and able to take on any challenge that comes our way.

- *Amber Stancher, Mid-State Technical College,* **WISPALS 2020-2021 Chair**

WISPALS STATISTICS

WISPALS libraries serve 806,240 students, faculty and staff.

Between all eleven schools, they have a combined total of 1,329,249 resources available to their users via the shared consortium catalog.

In 2020-2021, 27,131 physical items were checked out to patrons with an additional 24,791 renewals. Checkouts were down considerably compared to previous years due to the closures of most of the libraries because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

2020-2021 HIGHLIGHTS

WISPALS Libraries Continue to Respond and Adapt to COVID-19

The 2020-2021 academic year, which began with colleges providing instruction and service to students primarily virtually, witnessed the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the introduction of the vaccines, and the resumption of in-person classes and service. WISPALS member libraries, in support of their individual campus-wide efforts to balance public health requirements with educational missions, provided a number of services to students and faculty, including:

- Providing essential equipment for remote and flexible learning, such as laptops, hotspots, tablets, webcams, microphones, headsets, and cords
- Adapting services, collections, and programs to better accommodate remote research
- Remaining open when the rest of the college campus physical spaces were closed
- Serving as both a distribution and collection spot on campus for many other departments
- Reconfiguring the library space to provide a safe environment for studying, researching, and classes
- Providing virtual reference service using video conferencing and chat platforms
- Developing videos and online guides for library instruction
- Erasing or reducing student fines and fees for overdue or missing materials
- Quarantining items for the recommended period of time to prevent surface spread
- Continuing to assess the impact of virtual, in-person, and hybrid services in order to improve them

Strategic Initiatives

In August of 2019, the WISPALS Executive Committee met to connect with one another and with non-member technical colleges, to review the previous year's progress, and devise strategic initiatives for the consortium for the coming year. The timeline for that work was anticipated to run through the 2020 calendar year, but that timeline was adjusted due to the COVID pandemic and so initiatives align more closely with the academic year. The initiatives below began in January 2020 and ran through September 2021. Much of the work for these initiatives was guided by WISPALS subcommittees, small groups of members of the WISPALS member community, and project managers.

1. Advocacy, Visibility, and Under Use: Awareness and Tailoring of Library Services – Over the past year, the User Services Committee has worked to develop resources including customizable talking points, partnership development guides, engagement resources, best practices, and a data story for advocacy, visibility, and increasing use of the library by campus departments. These resources will be maintained and updated as necessary.

2. ILS Training and Sharing: This year, WISPALS continued to work on the three following ILS-related initiatives: pilot sharing of cataloging of electronic resources, investigating options for the future of the shared ILS and shared bibliographic records, and developing shared training/resources around technical services functions. The ILS Initiative group finished their work in January of 2021 and concluded that, overall, there are not enough advantages and benefits to sharing bibliographic records within the ILS. In addition, the retraining of staff and students is a hindrance. The group decided to not pursue any form of bibliographic record sharing at this time. In addition, the group recommended that the Technical Services

Committee further develop cataloging processes and best practices including workflows to help with productivity.

3. Shared Electronic Resources and Faculty User Needs Assessment: Building on work done in 2019 in product comparison and strategic cooperative purchasing, a small team of WISPALS Executive Committee representatives is continuing to develop and improve the existing shared process for holistic electronic resource evaluation and comparison and evaluating potential opportunities for cooperative purchases of products that satisfy program needs common among all or many WISPALS members. Additionally, the team has been coordinating quarterly conversations with faculty in specific program areas to understand needs that could be met by library staff or resources. In 2020 and 2021, surveys were sent to faculty in nursing, the trades, communications, and social/behavior sciences to which 180 faculty members responded. Additionally, nine faculty members participated in one of five virtual focus group conversations, allowing library staff to dive deeper into understanding faculty needs and perceptions of the library.

See a [full report](#) of the work completed on these initiatives through August 2020 and [an update](#) prepared for the WISPALS 2021 Annual Meeting, held on June 7th.

Instructional Services Committee

The WISPALS Instructional Services Committee met four times in 2020-2021. Throughout the year, Committee members discussed and shared knowledge about how they were providing services – instructional and otherwise – during the pandemic. The Committee also discussed best practices in virtual outreach and instruction; shared virtual learning and training opportunities with one another; considered ACRL Project Outcome and other assessment developments; conversed around media literacy and strategies for teaching it; and shared their own work on and experiences with library and campus diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives.

Technical Services Committee

The WISPALS Technical Services Committee continues to meet twice per year. The group also utilizes a shared space on Basecamp to share technical services related questions, problems and ideas. The Committee continues to oversee the ongoing authority records update project with Marcive. The Technical Services Committee also continues their work on gathering and documenting training resources around technical services functions.

User Services Committee

This year, the WISPALS User Services Committee was charged with spearheading the Advocacy, Visibility, and Under Use Initiatives. Throughout the year, they worked to develop tools and best practices for advocacy, visibility, and increasing use of the library by campus departments and students. This work will be ongoing. In addition, the group continued to share resources around user services.

ILS Sharing and Training

A committee was formed to assess the sharing of bibliographic records in the shared ILS. The group developed a three-step project plan with goals and activities designed to answer identified questions around the sharing of bibliographic records. Both physical and electronic record examples were created and examined in both Sierra and EBSCO's EDS as several WISPALS libraries utilize that platform. Potential workflows were created to examine changes in workflow and any potential benefits or drawbacks. The group concluded that, overall, there are not enough advantages and benefits to sharing records. In addition, the retraining of staff and students is a hindrance. The group decided to not pursue any form of bibliographic record sharing at this time. In addition, the group recommended that the Technical Services Committee further develop cataloging processes and best practices including workflows to help with productivity.

Cooperative Purchasing

In 2020-2021, WISPALS provided the cooperative purchasing coordination and management for 66 electronic resource subscriptions with nine vendors, totaling $367,165.27 for the year. The consortium continued to advocate for reduced yearly price increases for electronic resources and of the 66 renewing subscriptions, all except one renewed at lower than a 5% increase from the previous year, 60 renewed at or below 3%, and 32 saw either no increase at all or a drop in renewal pricing.

The Strengths of the Member Libraries

Each individual member of WISPALS holds expertise, wisdom, and experience with which they strengthen the consortium as a whole.

Chippewa Valley Technical College (CVTC) Library took a close look at the materials and services offered to customers. Collections were carefully rethought by the library staff, removing legacy materials and replacing with more updated content, often in a digital format. The library began connecting with faculty through WISPALS surveys and focus panels to take a close look at how to improve services and stay more attuned to curriculum and instruction. CVTC Library also began shifting face-to-face instructional sessions into a meaningful online format with formative assessments. Finally, the library continued to examine its customers more holistically and began offering more materials outside the parameters of academic curriculum such as board games, video games, yard games, cooking materials, and more.

Fox Valley Technical College (FVTC) Library conducted an inventory for the first time in many years. The library also adjusted to the retirement of library manager, Jane Roisum, and the promotion of Kathryn Johnston as the new library manager.

Gateway Technical College (GTC) Libraries became part of the Learning Success Division at the college and provided support for campus diversity initiatives by creating LibGuides and being more involved in other student activities. Gateway Libraries focused efforts this past year on supporting online learners. These efforts included implementing LibChat and LibAnswers so students could connect with staff remotely and have access to an FAQ when library staff members were not available live. Most purchases for books were electronic books. The Libraries also assisted in distributing more than 1,000 pieces of equipment to 920 students in need.

Lakeshore Technical College (LTC) Library continues its commitment to affordable education by supporting Open Educational Resources (OER) and Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC) initiatives on campus. To date, LTC has 64 courses running OER/ZTC and 5,761 students have saved $878,110 on textbooks costs. Donna Melanz retired after 35 years at the LTC Library and Ashley McHose was hired as Library Services Lead.

Moraine Park Technical College (MPTC) Library worked with multiple departments to provide access to learning materials and equipment for incarcerated students who do not have access to the internet or physical media. This work focused on securing permissions or licenses for copyrighted materials and cataloging and storing laptops to be relayed to those students by other departments.

Mid-State Technical College (MSTC) Library participated in multiple Libraries Activating Workforce Development Skills (LAWDS) meetings with the local workforce development and other area libraries. This collaboration allows everyone involved to promote and refer community members and students to resources that will help them achieve their goals.

Northcentral Technical College (NTC) Library, as part of the Timberwolf Learning Commons, added innovative services to support students this year, including offsite laptop lending, Starfish appointments, workshop events over Zoom, and mobile reference at our tutoring and cafe locations. In addition, NTC continued to increase

student affordability, and the library successfully aided 15 course material transitions to ZTC. The Timberwolf Learning Commons partnered with the Communications faculty team to roll out campus-wide support in transitioning to APA 7th edition with a resource repository of videos, guides, and tutorials to be viewed within Canvas.

Northeast Wisconsin Technical College (NWTC) Library checked out over 2,600 laptops and 425 mifis during the year, trained students on how to use the equipment, and answered their technology questions in person and remotely. The librarians increased training opportunities for students by creating interactive learning aids and additional Technology 101 videos. The library also improved the accessibility of its online Library Guides and Ask a Librarian FAQs.

Waukesha County Technical College (WCTC) Library joined the WISCAL consortium which greatly expanded the digital resources to patrons, who now have access to streaming audiobooks and even more ebooks. The library also continued to collaborate with other campus departments by allowing them to use the library's Springshare products (LibGuides, LibAnswers, and LibWizard). The library now has six other offices on campus maintaining a LibGuide to communicate and share resources. Lastly, the library sponsored and advised a fellow in the nonpartisan Campus Election Engagement Project and assisted her as she encouraged students to participate in federal, state, and local elections.

Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College (WITC) Learning Resource Center Technicians' efforts focused a great deal on accessibility of resources, in multiple manners. All the Technicians took training on OER and spent many hours making sure faculty lectures were captioned to ADA standards. In collaboration with Human Resources and the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, the Learning Resources Center also created an online Racial Justice Resources guide.

Western Technical College (WTC) Learning Commons team developed and implemented several new points of entry to academic support and library services this year, including a new presence in Blackboard, Western's Learning Management System. Individualized, personalized supports for students and faculty were high priority this year, as was professional development around Open Educational Resources (OER).

BUDGET

Below is a table of actual expenditures for Fiscal Year 2020-2021.

Item	Amount
Project management/staff	$104,999.95
ILS software	$134,422.97
Electronic resources	$366,569.27
Other	$1,472.79
TOTAL	$607,464.98

LOOKING FORWARD

In June of 2021, the WISPALS Executive Committee met to determine its strategic initiatives for the coming year, beginning in September 2021. Through information gathering to inventory each library's immediate goals and each college's strategic plans, a visioning exercise to imagine their libraries as they aspire them to be, and brainstorming activities for how they might achieve those aspirations, the Committee approved work toward the following goals for the coming year.

WISPALS members will collaborate to:

1. advocate for affordable higher education and open educational resources
2. ensure that the member libraries serve students and faculty equitably
3. ensure that member libraries are student-focused in their services and collection

We look forward to the work and the impact we hope the outcomes have on student and faculty success.