Making an Impact

Catching up with FMU Librarian Tammy Ivins '07

In 2003 I was an anxious new frosh at Davidson College. Four years later, I graduated with a BA and no idea what I wanted to do with my life (or, possibly, too many ideas). During my final two years at Davidson I worked in the E.H. Little Library under the direction of Interlibrary Loan Coordinator Joe Gutkanst, so I had an inkling that perhaps this career path wasn’t inconceivable.

Upon graduation, I was fortunate to be selected as a library fellow, working with College Archivist Jan Blodgett. As a fellow, I worked full-time alongside the library staff, and it did not take me long to ask “how can I do what you do?” After all, it seemed like a dream job to help people all day. On the advice of my coworkers, I entered the UNC Chapel Hill School of Information & Library Science in 2009. After completing the program I began working as a reference librarian in Rogers Library at Francis Marion University (FMU), a small, public liberal arts school in Florence, S.C. I currently serve as the head of reference, managing the five-person department.

Our reference services are fairly traditional, with librarians staffing the reference desk, but in the past two years we have rolled out several new initiatives to improve our reference services. First, we have begun training student workers to assist at the desk between 5 and 10 p.m., allowing the librarian to be more productive and work on other projects. We have formalized a roving program in which reference librarians with iPads regularly circle the library and approach students who may need assistance. We have also staggered the regular hours of our reference team in order to have research assistance available to students at 8 a.m. when our library opens and when students are often desperately attempting to finish projects. Finally, we have started tracking reference questions answered in our offices. Due to the layout of the reference librarian offices (scattered around the library’s stacks), students often find us in our offices when they need help. Additionally, faculty members often seek assistance by calling or emailing us in our offices, rather than stopping by the reference desk. By tracking the reference interactions that we have outside of the reference desk and formal roving, the reference team can better understand the information-seeking behavior of our population. All of these new initiatives for our reference services have the same goal—to improve the research services available to our patrons, and to, in turn, support FMU’s academic mission.

Similarly, our department’s instruction program is a mix of traditional methods and new initiatives. Most of our classes are still single instruction sessions scheduled at the request of a faculty member and with highly customized learning outcomes. This semester the reference team is implementing several new projects to assess, measure and improve our instruction. First, we are holding en masse research workshops for freshman orientation classes rather than visiting each class individually. This new approach will not only be more efficient for our reference librarians, but it also fits neatly into the existing freshman course structure. Second, without having to change our current customized instruction model, faculty satisfaction with our instruction, including impact on the quality of student research, is being assessed via brief post-instruction surveys. Finally, we started systematically tracking the content of each of our customized instruction sessions according to ALA-ACRL’s “Objectives for Information Literacy Instruction,” which by the end of the academic year should provide a clear and comprehensive picture of how all of our reference librarians are approaching the instruction needs of students.

Each member of the reference team has additional special responsibilities in the library. One serves as the college archivist, while another is our government documents librarian. Last year I served as our interlibrary loan librarian, but that responsibility was moved to the Circulation Department. At the same time that I was conducting training for that transition, the
E.H. Little Library Now Open 24/7

What if students loved the library so much they never wanted to leave? What would you do? That was our dilemma last year as our own observations and two student proposals made us take a fresh look at library hours.

What we did was find a way to keep E. H. Little Library open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Our initial idea was to keep just the main floor open all night, but conversations with David Holtouser, director of facilities management, soon convinced us that wasn’t possible. Access to fire exits on the lower level is required, and the open main stairway could not be closed off without invoking expensive changes required by building codes. Another constraint was staffing. Night Circulation Supervisor Jason Radcliffe and student workers staff the library until 1 a.m., Sunday through Thursday, but we don’t have enough people to cover the entire night and resources weren’t available for additional staff. So we began to consider other possibilities. For instance, could we sufficiently trust the Honor Code to allow students to use the building all night without any staff presence?

We needed to get administrative approval for this change. Campus Police lent their support, as they felt students would be safer in the more visible main floor area than in the old 24-hour room. They promised to make more frequent walk-throughs if we went 24/7. We budgeted for card swipes on the doors, so only Davidson-affiliated users could get in after 11 p.m. (9 p.m. on Friday and Saturday). The break-through occurred partway through the discussion—the Alvare College Union has been operating this way for 15 years without incident. We ordered a self-checkout station so users could get books any time, day or night. With the help of Chief of Campus Police Todd Sigler, we created flyers with safety tips and the overnight police officer’s cell phone number. SGA President Zi Yang ’16 sent an email to all students and attached our safety flyer.

Everything was in place by the first day of classes on August 25. The next morning, we checked with Campus Police and our night supervisor and learned that everything had gone just fine. Several people had predicted that use would be very light until midterm, but our door counter has revealed about 70 people leaving the building between 1 and 8 a.m. every day!

During breaks when classes are not in session, the building will not be accessible outside posted business hours (typically 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.). This is at the request of Campus Police, who note that there is safety in numbers, numbers which are not present during breaks. Students think this is a pretty good tradeoff, however, and they’re voting for the 24-hour library with their presence.

And what happened to the former 24-hour room? It turns out the room is almost the perfect size and shape for a classroom, so it got made over this summer into one of the most high-tech classrooms on campus. It uses the innovative X configuration, pioneered and studied by Steelcase and shown to promote learning better than traditional classrooms. The classroom houses 32 dual-boot Macs, three large screens and several marker boards. There is no front to the room; a professor can teach from any of several vantage points. Early reports from faculty are that the configuration takes a little getting used to but the level of student engagement is a plus. Visit http://vimeo.com/104504582 for a tour of the classroom.

Making an Impact continued from page 1

Reference Department gained responsibility for our library website, so in December 2013 and January 2014 I redesigned the library website. I’m very proud of the new site, so please visit fmuseum.edu/rogerslibrary to check it out. Though still a work in progress, this new page is more accessible to students using screen readers, organized and labeled more clearly, and stable (no more broken links). When our fourth reference librarian joined us last month, I appointed her our first official “Web Presence Librarian.” She has taken on primary responsibility for both our site and social media, which I began in my first year at FMU. The transfer of those responsibilities has given me more time to start tackling new projects like our instruction program. Of course, our small reference team also keeps busy with responsibilities such as outreach to and liaising with academic departments, collection development, e-resource management and participation in faculty shared governance.

Every day at work I am influenced by my time at Davidson College. Through study abroad opportunities, a diverse student body and a multicultural faculty and staff, Davidson exposed me to a wide range of cultures and lifestyles. These experiences have served me well in my professional career. Whether it is by coaching my staff on how to address a patron when the patron’s preferred gender is not clear, ensuring that we have travel guides and language resources available for exchange students or making sure that our website is ADA accessible, the memory of people I met at Davidson motivates me to constantly seek ways to be more inclusive. Similarly, the liberal arts curriculum has been invaluable to me as a librarian, helping me both assist students from any major with research questions and collaborate with faculty from any department. I look forward to the upcoming years at Francis Marion University, and how I can continue doing what Davidson College alumni do best—making an impact.
Honoring a Treasured Colleague While Preserving a Campus Treasure

Wendy Roberts, a treasured member of our community, recently retired after serving as the administrative assistant to four Davidson College presidents. Nearly everyone on campus had the pleasure of knowing Roberts and witnessing her dedication, humor and good nature.

Our appreciation of Wendy is one reason why the library was so thrilled when the Board of Trustees approached us with a suggestion for honoring her. They wanted to raise money to enable us to send some items in the Rare Book Room out for conservation. Given Wendy’s emphasis on always putting students first, the board members asked us to identify items for restoration that would be important to our pedagogical efforts. Naturally, the library loved this idea. The Special Collections and Archives teams are always looking for opportunities to conserve items that require a little tender loving care, so being able acquire the funds to do so while also honoring Wendy seemed perfect.

Preservation is critical in Special Collections since we encourage students to not only observe our treasures, but also to establish a connection to them and their history by handling them as well. Over the last few years we have been able to have popular works like the “Saturnalia” and “Bartram’s Travel’s” conserved so that a new generation of Davidson students may learn from them. While there aren’t hard and fast criteria regarding which works we conserve first, we try to prioritize things that have significant value to the curriculum, will continue to deteriorate if not conserved and are exceptionally rare.

As we considered items for this project to honor Wendy, we thought about one set of volumes that seemed perfect—the 16 volume set entitled “The Works of William Shakespeare,” printed in London between 1853 and 1865, and often referred to as “The Halliwell Shakespeare.” These volumes were a gift from Charles B. Sanders, Davidson Class of 1922. Sanders knew of the scholarly value of the volumes and had a rare book dealer search for a set. In March 1961, the dealer located a set and Sanders purchased the volumes for Davidson’s Rare Book Room. In a letter to Sanders acknowledging the gift, Chalmers Davidson, then professor of history and director of the Davidson College Library wrote:

“As I wrote President Martin this morning, I think this is the most valuable single acquisition of our library since we acquired the French Encyclopédie back before 1860.”

Sanders and Davidson were correct. Through the years many students have benefited from access to these works but, as a result, they were also showing the effects of age and use. With the agreement of the board these volumes were sent to Etherington Conservation Services in late May for restoration. They have recently been returned to Davidson and now look terrific.

We wish Wendy the best in the next phase of her life, and we thank the board for finding a means to honor her while also continuing to take every opportunity to positively impact education at Davidson. If you are in the area please feel free to stop by the Special Collections and view the Halliwell Shakespeare and other treasures in our collection.

Welcome New Employee James Sponsel

James Sponsel joined us this summer as our new information literacy librarian. He majored in philosophy at St. Olaf College and recently received his MLIS from the Simmons Graduate School of Library and Information Science. He has experience working at a liberal arts college library; last spring, he was the reference and instruction intern at Carleton College, where he designed and delivered instruction sessions and developed online modules and tutorials. Last summer, he interned at the Mayo Clinic libraries and assisted in evaluating surveys to assess library value and impact.

In addition to starting at the library in June, James got married in August. The wedding was in his home state of Minnesota and he and his wife are now settling into life in Davidson. You might run into them at the Davidson Farmer’s Market on Saturday mornings.

In the rest of his spare time, James enjoys reading philosophy, particularly Kierkegaard, Camus and Nietzsche, and watching films about time travel and/or those with non-conventional plots. Looking for a recommendation? His recent favorite was “Upstream Color.” He also enjoys water skiing and cycling. We haven’t yet seen him on water skis, but he does bike into work most mornings.

As an information literacy librarian, James will teach information literacy classes and provide in-person and virtual reference services. He is especially interested in intellectual property and assessment. He is excited to be working at a liberal arts college library, where he feels most at home, and we are thrilled to welcome him to Davidson!
Each year, we are so grateful for the generosity of people who contribute in many different ways to the library. The following lists encapsulate some of the ways people honor loved ones, friends, esteemed scholars and others through their contributions. You’ll find contributions to existing endowed funds, book and archival donations, and funds given by the Alumni Office to memorialize former students. To all who have honored us this year with gifts, we extend our most heartfelt thanks. Your gifts greatly enhance our collection and the educational experience of Davidson students.

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Livingston Miller Fund
The J. Joseph Miller ’50 Fund
The George L. Milne Fund
The Alexander S. Sandy Moffett ’37 Fund
The William Andrew Moffett ’54 Fund
The William Lauder Morgan ’20 Fund
The Harvey L. Morrison ’33 Fund
The Matthew Edward Morrow Fund
The William Fredrick Mullis ‘33 Fund
The Myers Park Presbyterian Church Fund
The Rolfe Neill Fund
The C. Louise Nelson Fund
The Randy F. Nelson Fund
The Samuel William Newell Jr. ’39 Fund
The Samuel William Newell Sr. Fund
The Jane Harris & Jill Morrison Nierenberg
Fund
The Mary Winston Crockett Norfleet Fund
The William Alton Norris Jr. ’72 Fund
Mr. Greg Anderson ’72
Ms. Miryam Bujanda
Mr. Walter D. Harris
Mr. Charles L. Heiner ’72

Mr. Thomas C. Holcomb ’72
Dr. William Willis Powell 1972
The Richard E. Offutt Jr., D.D.S. ’76 Fund
The Paddison-Cunningham Fund
The Coach Charles W. Parker ’38 Fund
The Kenneth F. Parks ’73 Fund
The Leland Madison Park ’63 Fund
Dr. George Wilkinson Poe ’74
The Rebecca Leland & Arthur Harris Park
Fund
The Ernest F. Patterson Sr. Fund
The William Clayton Patton, M.D. ’58 Fund
The Robert Rudolph Perz, M.D. ’79 Fund
The Edward William Phifer Jr., M.D. ’32
Fund
The Thomas Bryan Phillips ’80 Fund
The James Faulkner Pinkney ’27 Fund
The Fradonia Brown Porter Fund
The Elizabeth Bradley Purcell Fund
The James S. Purcell Jr. Fund
The Charles Edward Ratliff Sr. Fund
The William McClintock Reid Jr. ’34 Fund
The William T. Reilly III ’80 Fund
Mr. Harold A. Lloyd ’81
The Martha Byrd Roberts Fund
The V. O. Roberson Jr. Fund
The William Cumming Rose 1907 Fund
The Helen B. & Norman C. Ross Fund
The Sue Fields Ross, Ph.D. Fund
Mrs. Barbara Ashley Griffith ’81
The James Henry Rostan ’67 Fund
Mr. James Henry Rostan ’67
The John Peter Rostan III ’66 Fund
The Ralph Colvert Sadler, M.D. 1908 Fund
R.C. Sadler Foundation
The Margaret Salter Fund
The Joan M. Scanding Fund
The John D. Scanding Fund
The Lewis Bevins Schenck ’21 Fund
Dr. Herman S. Caldwell Jr. ’67
The Neal Anderson Scott ’40 Fund
The Starkey Sharp V ’78 Fund
The Harry Lee Shaw Jr. ’26 Fund
Mrs. Jocelyn T. Shaw
The J. Alexander Shaw, M.D. ’18 Fund
The Della Shore Fund
The James P. Sifford Jr. ’50 Fund
The Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity Fund
The Fredric Homer Smith Jr. Fund
The John Raymond Snyder Fund
The Samuel Reid Spencer Jr. ’40 Fund
Mrs. Margaret S. Benjamin
Mrs. Anne Gammon Moffett
Mrs. Lindley Moffett Small
Ms. Betty Timberlake in loving memory
of Dr. Samuel Spencer

The Richard A. Stoops ’68 Fund
The James G. Swisher Fund
The Melton Hill Tankersley ‘59 Fund
The Farish Carter Chip Tate V ’65 Fund
The Archibald B. Taylor 1911 & Margaret
Taylor Williams Fund
The Amelia Paul Thomas Fund
The Thomas G. Thurston II, M.D. ’37 Fund
The Isabelle White Trexler Fund
Trexler Foundation
The William Waugh Turner 1899 Fund
The Clepsydra Foundation
The Robert Fredrick ’69 & Ruth Anne
Maxwell Vagt Fund
Mr. James Hamilton ’60
The Mary Jane Mcgee Vernon Fund
The William Wallace Wade Fund
The Hallam Walker Fund
Dr. George Wilkinson Poe ’74
The Carolyn A. & Wayne M. Watson Fund
The K.D. Weeks Sr. ’35 & K.D. Weeks Jr. ’69
Fund
The Lacy Donnell Wharton Jr. ’27 Fund
The L.D. & Lilian Benton Wharton Fund
The Mary Tilley Wharton Fund
The Robert Clark Whittington, Ph.D. ’66 Fund
The Charles Nelson Williamson, M.D. ’64
Fund
The Rev. Edward Lee Willingham III ’48
Fund
The Jack Williams Jr. ’34 Fund
The Robert C. Williams Fund
The Walter L. ’46 & Carolyn Cooner Withers
Fund
The A. Allen Wolf Fund
Mrs. Alston Osgood Wolf
The Jack Womeldorf ’61 Fund
Jack Womeldorf ’61
The Robert Davidson Woodward Jr. Fund
Dr. and Mrs. Scott Gregory
Dr. and Mrs. John Woodward
McNeil ’87
Dr. J. Lawrence McNeill Jr. ’60
The Rev. Mary Katherine G.
Robinson ’93
The Lauren W. Yoder Fund
Dr. George Wilkinson Poe ’74
The John T. Zaharov Jr. ’70 Fund
The T. C. Price Zimmermann Fund
The Anne Kathren Zirkle ’94 Fund
The Rosemary Levy Zumwalt Fund