

# UNDERGRAD EXPERIENCE

**OUR GOAL: TO IDENTIFY HOW THE LIBRARY CAN  
SUPPORT, EDUCATE, AND CONNECT WITH  
UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS.**

The Undergraduate Experience Summer Work Team met regularly to discuss how the library could better engage with the undergraduate experience.

We conducted an environmental scan by learning as much as we could about the undergraduate experience Vanderbilt provides. We also surveyed library staff and met with key Vanderbilt administrators who focus on undergraduate life.

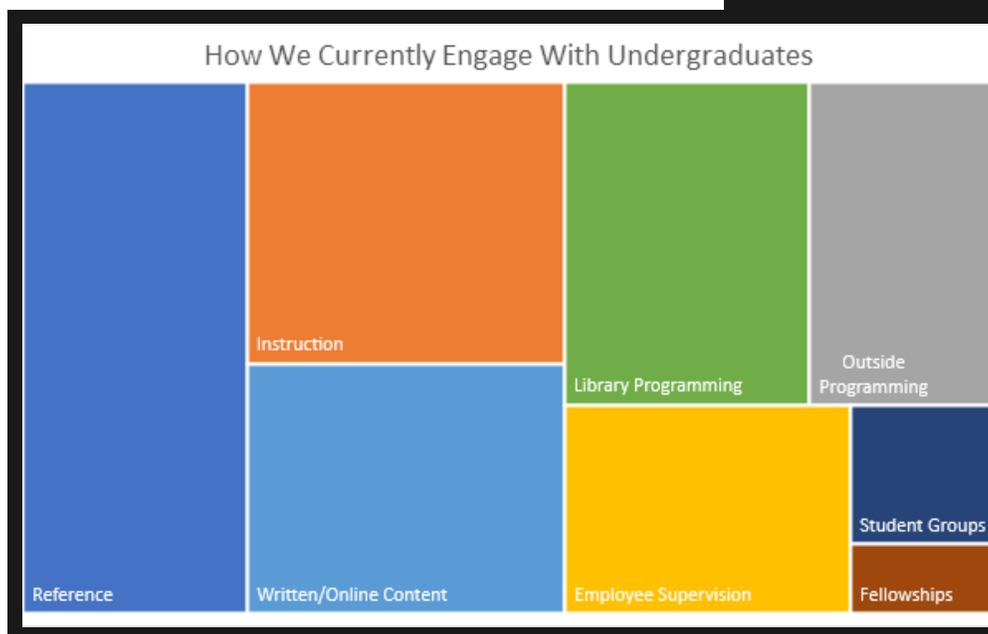
In addition, we continued to work with students directly: we participated in the international student orientation; took part in the Campus Connector program; and supported student group programming.



# OUTCOMES

The team created the following:

- A mind map illustrating the different elements of the undergraduate experience and how the library can be involved;
- A summary of the library staff survey results;
- A summary of the team recommendations for how the library can improve our undergraduate engagement.



# NEXT STEPS

The team has developed several recommendations, which have been grouped into three categories:

- Academic Partnerships;
- Engagement within the Curriculum; and
- Residential Life.

Details are provided in the addendum.

# MEET THE TEAM



**YUH-FEN  
BENDA**



**MARIAH  
FORD**



**LESLIE  
FOUTCH**



**JUDY  
JOHNSON**



**JASON  
SCHULTZ**

# RECOMMENDATIONS

The Undergraduate Experience Summer Work Team has devised a list of recommendations that were generated from team meetings, an environmental scan and interviews with key Vanderbilt administrators who focus on undergraduate life.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS HAVE BEEN GROUPED INTO  
THREE CATEGORIES:  
ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIPS,  
ENGAGEMENT WITHIN THE CURRICULUM,  
AND RESIDENTIAL LIFE.

## Academic Partnerships

- **Formulate** a plan to strengthen connections with VU Academic Affairs, Career Services, Immersion, and other units by identifying specific librarians who will reach out to these departments to see how the library can support their mission.
- **Develop** a library component for the Vanderbilt Visions program. This idea could be intertwined with the Library Success Teams initiative by showcasing first-year experience librarians, and how they can assist students.
- **Coordinate** with the Office of Equity, Diversity & Inclusion to craft initiatives that support the undergraduate experience. The IDEA committee could facilitate efforts with library staff and administration.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## Engagement within the Curriculum

- **Develop** four teams of librarians who will serve each of the undergraduate years. The purpose of the **Library Success (1.0, 2.0, 3.0, 4.0) Teams** is to bolster the presence of the libraries within the undergraduate curriculum by staffing librarians who are familiar with the expectations and needs of each year. Various aspects of this program will be modeled from the new Campus Connector initiative.
- **Create** an online module that all incoming Vanderbilt students will take which will expose them to the libraries. The data from this module could be used to benchmark student information literacy levels.
- **Recruit** a First-Year Experience Librarian to facilitate library programming for students residing at the Commons. All programming would be supported by subject librarians and library staff.
- **Evaluate** the Personal Librarian and Campus Connectors program after academic year 2020-2021 for second through fourth-year students. The purpose is to see how these endeavors can work together to support students beyond their first year.
- **Establish** a team of librarians to host open Zoom office hours for peak student times and during finals. .

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## Residential Life

- **Develop** a pilot program for the Residential Colleges with the goal of having a librarian(s) serve as a librarian liaison to each residence hall at Vanderbilt. This model has currently been discussed at the E. Bronson Ingram College.
- **Establish** a rotating schedule of librarians who would attend the residence-hall house dinners. This would be a wonderful opportunity to enhance the role of those librarians who work with first-year students.



# SURVEY RESULTS

*In order to better understand how the library currently engages with undergraduate student population, the Undergraduate Experience Summer Work Team surveyed the library staff. We also asked staff for their recommendations and insight. Here is a summary of the results.*



An anchor icon indicates an idea that was suggested by one or more survey respondents.

## DIRECT ENGAGEMENT WITH UNDERGRADUATES



**INSTRUCTION:** Vanderbilt librarians guest lecture in “undergraduate classes that have research components.” These include classes such as HOD social entrepreneurship classes, 1111 classes in the librarian’s subject area, music history classes, and classes that involve rare materials (e.g., medieval literature). Sometimes the lectures are brief; sometimes they last the whole class period. Often students schedule follow-up meetings with the librarian after their initial session.

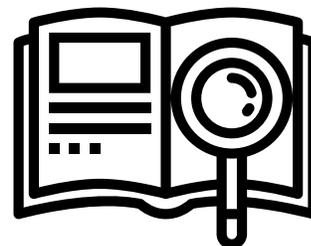


One survey respondent suggested that all freshman be required to take a pass/fail library course (that was mostly online). Even if a pass/fail course wasn’t possible, survey respondents stressed the importance of undergrads getting a solid foundation in information literacy.

# SURVEY RESULTS

## DIRECT ENGAGEMENT WITH UNDERGRADUATES

**RESEARCH ASSISTANCE:** Librarians also meet with undergraduates to provide individual research guidance. These consults are especially common for undergraduates pursuing independent study or senior thesis projects. Sometimes the consults are less formal: undergraduates “wander into” librarians’ offices.



### HOW WE CURRENTLY ENGAGE WITH UNDERGRADUATES

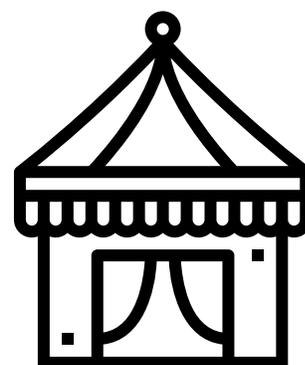


- Reference
- Instruction
- Outside Programming
- Employee Supervision
- Written/Online Content
- Library Programming
- Student Groups
- Fellowships

# SURVEY RESULTS

## DIRECT ENGAGEMENT WITH UNDERGRADUATES

**LIBRARY PROGRAMMING:** Library programs run the gamut, from the Welcome Back Breakfast to the Bard's Birthday Bash to stress buster events and ice cream socials. Library staff also teach workshops on a variety of subjects; and they program smaller events featuring the collections. The Exhibits Program works with students (undergraduate and graduate) on library displays and exhibits. This programming is not directed specifically to undergraduates, but they do attend.



**GREATER UNIVERSITY PROGRAMMING:** Survey respondents also noted that the library assists with university programming and student-group events: they make an effort to participate in large-scale university programs. Several librarians are faculty VUceptors and some others are Campus Connectors. Library staff also help with Immersion, by volunteering with the fairs and summer research group and helping students with their projects. The library also posts its fellowships for immersion credit.



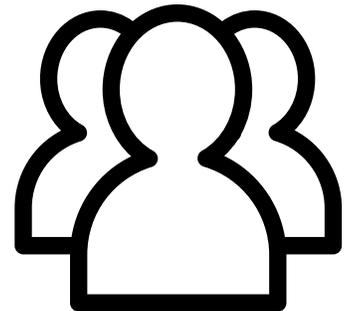
At least one survey participant noted that library involvement with Immersion could be improved by greater access to the project database. It was also noted that the library could promote itself for Immersion projects even more –there are many possibilities of original research within the special collections.

# SURVEY RESULTS

## DIRECT ENGAGEMENT WITH UNDERGRADUATES

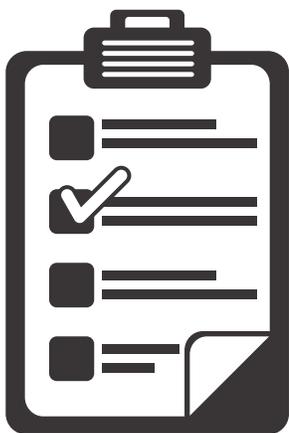
### STUDENT CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS:

Library staff also work directly with undergraduate clubs, such as the VU Amateur Radio Club's weekly electronic construction workshops (outside of their work hours!).



One survey respondent recommended that library staff could work with clubs more, as a club advisor.

**STUDENT WORKERS:** In addition to interacting with undergraduates in their student capacity, library staff supervise student workers. A few participants mentioned their involvement with a specific group of students that they supervise: the Buchanan Fellows. Supervision of student workers and fellows extends beyond the time they work for the library: staff mentor their students beyond their time working for the library and provide letters of recommendation, etc.



**STUDENT FEEDBACK:** The library also interacts with undergraduate students by asking for their feedback, and working with them to make the library even better. At least one survey respondent mentioned working with undergraduate students via the advisory council.

# SURVEY RESULTS

## DIRECT ENGAGEMENT WITH UNDERGRADUATES

### WRITTEN AND ONLINE MATERIALS:

The library interacts with students via the information on the library webpage and the sections on the libraries in the student handbooks. Survey respondents also mentioned composing LibGuides for specific classes and user populations.



One survey respondent noted that the library could promote itself more to undergraduates as a great place to study, since that is a primary concern of students.

**COLLECTIONS AND CIRCULATION:** In classic library fashion, the library helps the undergraduate acquire books (and all the other materials and resources they are able to check out and access via the library). Survey participants mentioned helping undergraduates with their circulation needs and via collection development. They also process their interlibrary loan requests.



One suggested idea for increasing the service in this area was providing delivery services for undergraduate students on par with the faculty services –especially during this COVID time.

# SURVEY RESULTS

## WHO WE WORK WITH

Most library staff work with the undergraduate population in general, although several noted that they had increased interaction with students in particular majors (e.g., music, engineering, computer science).

Some survey respondents noted particular interaction with international students.



One survey respondent recommended developing library positions devoted (either entirely or partially) to first years and upperclassmen. These positions would work mostly with the students from those years.

The libraries are always working with other libraries and departments throughout the university. The following are some partnerships and programs that survey respondents mentioned:

- Buchanan Fellowship program
- Exhibits program
- The Art department using the library for student exhibitions
- Library on Location events
- Dean's Fellow program
- Programs hosted by African-American student organizations
- Presentations at the Student Center for Social Justice and Identity
- Ingram Scholars
- The Law Library – Peabody – HOD civics-education-and-research-training partnership
- The Writing Studio
- Campus Connectors Program
- VUCept
- The Office of Immersion
- The Office of Active Citizenship
- Vanderbilt Student Government
- Partnerships with Blair School (e.g., Blair Hot Topics Committee, Blair Career Committee, Blair Copy Center office supplies)

One respondent suggested that the library could increase outreach with the Career Center and Global Education Office. Other suggestions for programs and partnerships included pop-ups in dorms, study nights, and other events that met the students where they were. Taking that even further, one respondent recommended a residence-hall library program

