ACADEMIC SERVICES

Muir S. Fairchild Research Information Center
Air University, Maxwell Air Force Base

Annual Report 2020
When we look back at 2020 we’ll undoubtedly recall the struggles we all faced as a university community and as individuals. First with the COVID-19 pandemic and then with nationwide protests over continued racial discrimination and during a very contentious election period, our country has faced resonant societal stressors this past year.

As our President and Commander Lt. Gen. James B. Hecker stated in June though, “As individuals, we cannot solve these challenges. But collectively as Airmen here at Air University, our natural diversity and intellectual curiosity puts us in a unique position to affect positive change.”

As we close out the year I look back and feel forthright in saying I am so appreciative of the entire Academic Services team who came together, collectively, to support each other through personal and professional hardships... bolstering us all with a strong sense of resiliency and allowing the mission of serving the entire university to continue without waver.

Though COVID still persists our “doors are open” and we stand ready to help the students, faculty, and staff of Air University access knowledge for the improvement of everyone. Our motto states, “Knowledge Itself is Power” and so I challenge all of us to utilize our combined intellect to create that sense of positive change in the year ahead.

Off we go!

Mehmed Ali, PhD
Director of Academic Services

Please note some photographs in this report were taken pre-COVID
The Co-Directors of the Office of Sponsored Programs, Drs. Margaret Sankey and Kenneth Johnson, continued to support Air University’s research efforts through a variety of methods vis-à-vis the COVID environment. While providing oversight of the University’s Research Task Forces, they bolstered outside sponsorship that covered a wide range of topics such as Resiliency, Russia, Nuclear Deterrence, Intelligence, Surveillance, Cyber, and Reconnaissance. The Office also revamped the AU Research Topics List with updated questions and links to completed research products to facilitate an iterative research process.

In order to facilitate student scholarship, the team connected students to Communities of Interest, Library Research Guides and one another to support peer-collaboration across the eSchool, residence, Air Force Fellows, and other groups. The Office also coordinated projects for the US Space Force including related educational space studies for use across the Department of the Air Force in partnership with leading civilian academic institutions.

AU’s Immersive Learning and Simulations Research Task Force commenced its second year with sponsorship from the AF Agency for Modeling and Simulation. Under the direction of Dr. Andy Clayton, the RTF students investigated virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), haptic devices, leadership-themed simulations, 3D printing and related technologies as well as a myriad of learning theories including experiential learning, social constructivist learning, situated cognition, transactional distance theory, flow theory, deep learning and connectivism. The class integrates the efforts of eight AU agencies, three master’s degree programs, and multiple educational and non-profit partners.
The Office of the Registrar had several significant accomplishments during the year and continues to strive towards improved service for the University.

New SIS

While 2020 was a year of constant adjustment the AU Registrar team pressed on with the implementation of the new Enterprise Student Information System (SIS) which is on track to provide better management of the student academic lifecycle. In partnership with the A6 Directorate the team looks forward to seeing the new unified SIS in operation by the Fall of 2021.

OPME and AU Service Desk

The Registrar Office worked to streamline several processes to simplify the updating of Officer Professional Military Education (OPME) records by rechanneling all requests to the Air University Service Desk. The shift, which has greatly improved real time responses/updates, also allows all levels of requests to be made from any device that has internet access including mobile phones.

In order to improve the performance of the Help Desk, the Registrar began meeting with A6 in July to come up with a plan to add resources to the platform. New initiatives for the Help Desk include the introduction of an automated call distribution system, the migration of the AU Help Desk to the Government Community Cloud, and automated ticket management.

Certificates for DL

The Registrar team restructured the process for providing PME Distance Learning completion certificates and saved approximately $8500 in postage, supplies, and handling. This new process also allows AU's sister-service and civilian agency students to receive completion certificates more quickly for use in updating their official records.

The Air University Help Desk site is: https://auservicedesk.af.edu
Despite the challenges of COVID and short staffing, AU Press was able to meet its publication goals of six books and ten papers during the year. The press supported the US Air Force Academy with the production of the *Harmon Memorial Lectures in Military History 1988–2017* which offers ideal PME course readings from top historians. *Behind the Light Switch: Toward a Theory of Air Mobility* by Derek Salmi proved to be the highest demanded book garnering requests from leadership Air Force-wide. The Press also supported the editorial review of the Curtis E. LeMay Center’s Joint All-Domain Operations Doctrine and other miscellaneous AU documents.

**Outreach and Web Initiatives**

Annually, AUP is presented with projects that are not foreseen at the beginning of the year. In producing *Sharing the Journey* the team of Dr. Stephanie Rollins, Tim Thomas, and Megan Hoehn rose to the challenge. Despite working remotely, the Press was able to quickly edit and produce the Air Force Chief of Staff-directed primer on lead military spouses in record time.

The Press expanded its outreach efforts and web content throughout 2020. One prominent event was participation in the 2020 AFROTC Commander’s Symposium. AUP offered lectures on how to obtain press support and generated a curated list of recommended reading for AFROTC curriculum. Additionally, AU Press established a dedicated website moderator to increase the posting of content and generate interest in AUP products.
The University’s journals published over 210 articles and reviews during 2020. Air and Space Power Journal collaborated with HAF/A2/6 and the 16th AF to publish its first special issue in over five years focusing on Information Warfare. Strategic Studies Quarterly continued to be spotlighted at the highest levels of leadership, having multiple articles highlighted in the SAF/PA Leadership Weekly Reads. The Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs expanded its online offerings by introducing the “Indo-Pacific Perspectives” series and compiled its first special edition focused on the region’s Quad Plus initiative. This online edition contained a full three times the content of an average journal. Finally, USAF Journal of the Americas produced a highly regarded issue on COVID-19 that included content to be incorporated into Air War College curriculum. Additionally, JOTA furthered AU’s international engagement by solidifying a joint publishing effort with AWC and the Brazilian Air Force University.

All of the Air University Press Journals and other publications can be accessed here: https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/AUPress/

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PUBLICATION DOWNLOADS</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th><strong>increase</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1,003,448</td>
<td>1,479,635</td>
<td><strong>47%</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the past year, Air University Library adjusted operations to meet new challenges posed by the global COVID-19 pandemic. The library pivoted to offer contactless service to enhance safety for both customers and staff. The team increased the number of online resources, added virtual chat, provided materials via curbside pickup, managed an increase in room usage, and continued providing other services to our Air University community. In addition to transitioning services, the team utilized M365 to transfer processes to virtual environments. This year AUL also started migrating library systems software to a current generation platform.

Through the generosity of Robert Arnold, the grandson of General Henry “Hap” Arnold, and his spouse Kathleen, AUL’s Archives Section has begun to preserve a one-of-a-kind collection of books and ephemera from General Arnold’s personal collection. Included in the donation are a 6 volume set of Bill Bruce books written by the general and the original map where he plotted out plans for the post-World War II Strategic Air Force. Another recent bequest is that of Colonel Felix M. Hardison, the captain of a B-17 bomber which flew in the Pacific during the Second World War. The unique materials consist of many original photographs, military publications, technical manuals, and other rare documents.
In March, right before the COVID pandemic hit, Air University Library hosted a panel of presenters to launch the Women’s History Month exhibit “Female Pioneers: Those Who Did, So We Knew We Could.” The event included centenarian World War II veteran Romay Davis, Rita Pitcock-Gilchrist - one of the first five WAFs to serve in Viet Nam, Sharron (Frontiero) Cohen whose gender discrimination case was successfully decided at the United States Supreme Court, Christine Prewitt - one of the first female Air Force pilots, and Global War on Terrorism vets Major AnnaBelle Hill, Senior Master Sergeant Tiffany Jackson-Foster and Master Sergeant Jessica Soto. The exhibit can be accessed at: https://fairchild-mil.libguides.com/WomenInTheAirForce/Exhibit

In September, with supporting funds from the AU Commander, Ex Libris Group was awarded a contract to provide AU an updated Integrated Library System. The new cloud-based system will handle circulation, acquisitions, cataloging and other functions and when the ILS is fully functional in the Spring of 2021, AUL’s digital repository will be fully accessible.
INTEGRATION
Due to COVID-19, AU Library shifted to several virtual operations to continue reaching patrons by adding thousands of new eBooks and launching an interactive reference chat program.

36% 
INCREASE IN eBook USE

INSTRUCTION

445
Contactless Curbside Pickups

6,716
REFERENCE CHAT

82
LIBRARY TOURS/CLASSES

1,884
ATTENDEES

RESOURCES
Increased resources to patrons during COVID

NOW AVAILABLE
105,449 eBooks
502,725 Database Uses

502,725 Database Uses

105,449 eBooks

NOW AVAILABLE

502,725 Database Uses

105,449 eBooks

INTEGRATION

INSTRUCTION

RESOURCES
The TLC had another banner year providing a host of academic resources, expert guidance, and cutting-edge technologies and facilities to increase the ability of AU faculty to teach and students to learn. The TLC led or hosted over 450 events serving more than 7,000 attendees!

The TLC team made great strides in 2020 towards the completion of the new Teaching Essentials Course designed for the professional development of the Air University faculty. The pandemic greatly altered the original plans for a face-to-face course. However, the TLC’s curriculum developers masterfully shifted to teaching many of the planned lessons online aiding AU’s options for virtual learning.

From April to October, the Center developed and taught over 25 separate lessons to 450+ participants covering a range of topics such as the Basics of Online Teaching, Experiential Learning, Effective Feedback, and Theories of Motivation. Most of the sessions were recorded and are available via Microsoft Teams.
In 2020, the **TLC Writing Lab** held 341 tutoring appointments with AU students in support of their writing. The majority of students – almost 80% – were from Air Command and Staff College but included users from Air War College, Squadron Officer School, School of Advanced Air and Space Studies, and the International Officer School. These appointments were led by the TLC’s Lead Writing Specialists, Michael Labosky and Megan Varney, and 9 volunteer faculty tutors: Lt Col Eric Visger, Dr. Evelyn Watkins-Bean, Dr. Victor Mbodouma, and Mr. David Villareal from IOS; Dr. Sean Braniff, Dr. Al Mauroni, and Dr. Brian McNeil from AWC; Dr. Chad Dacus from Cyber College; and Dr. Heather Venable from ACSC all supported by the TLC’s Beth Harris who set up an online appointment system and facilitated all sessions in Microsoft Teams.

**Canvas Support**

The Canvas Learning Management System assistance element supported 9 AU and AF institutions, developed 6 training modules providing assistance to members of the AWC, AF Fellows, ACSC, Cyber College, Chaplains Corps, Civil Air Patrol, AF CLC, and HQ/AF Flight Standards Agency.

**Learn Tech Tours**

The TLC team conducted 10 Learn Tech Tour sessions in 2020 on the following topics:

- Polling software and devices
- Classroom Interactive Digital Display System (CIDDS)
- Canvas and Adobe Connect
- Video call options
- Utilizing Office 365 with OWA, OneDrive, and Teams
- Microsoft OneNote Essentials
- Captivate 2019
- Creating engaging content in the Canvas LMS
- Surface hub connection options
- M365 PowerPoint for Educators

Learn Tech Tours will continue in 2021 on the second and fourth Thursdays of every month.
As COVID hit, the entire Academic Services team created innovative ways to continue safely offering services to Air University. As spaces across AU moved to half capacity, AUL and TLC converted over several rooms used for other purposes to provide increased instructional spaces to the schools. The TLC provided key training on virtual instruction platforms to assist faculty transitioning to online learning including building out courses in Canvas while AUL increased its copyright reviews and trainings to assist faculty as they integrated curriculum materials into an online platform.

Faculty Development Series
In response to COVID-19, Academic Services and Academic Affairs initiated an online faculty development series to offer a number of presentations focusing on academic topics as well as to provide a sense of community with faculty members who were new to teleworking.

The presentations, which ran from April through September, included faculty from Academic Affairs, Squadron Officer School, Auburn University as well as professionals from the TLC, Library and Air University Press. Subjects included the following:

- Researching using Google Scholar
- Copyright issues
- Podcasting
- Academic Freedom and Academic Rank
- Human Subjects Research
- 508 Accessibility Regulations
- Online Teaching

Academic Services collaborated with the organization Montgomery Fighting COVID - a group of AU students, staff, and local civilians who volunteered to provide PPE for front line workers. The Innovation Lab’s 3D printer was used to help print face shields which were distributed all around Central Alabama.
Academic Services improved its efforts at ensuring a respectful and discrimination-free workplace while also continuing, as we have for several years, to provide academic presentations which celebrate diversity throughout the Air Force. In August, a Diversity and Inclusion Committee, with representation from all work groups, was created to plan training and coordinate events which promote equity. The Committee, chaired by Ataya Wallace, led the team in setting up candid conversations about unconscious bias with small groups of employees and also liaises with the AU D&I Council to share information and ideas.

Several diversity-focused events were held during the year including the opening of the Women’s History exhibit in March, a presentation in September entitled, “Making the Slave Connection” by Frazine Taylor the President of the Alabama Historical Association, and a November lecture, “What You Think You Know About American Indians” given by Eloise Josey the Executive Director of the Alabama Indian Affairs Commission.

Special Collections librarian Lexi Aldridge provided key research to pinpoint the exact location on base where famed civil rights activist Rosa Parks worked. Ms. Aldridge also served on the committee that created the new monument in her honor which was dedicated in December by Air Force Secretary Barbara Barrett.
Academic Services executed its first complete year as an organization with full funding and budget responsibilities transferring over during 2020. Air University Press, Air University Teaching and Learning Center, and the Registrar’s Office increased the annual budget for the Fairchild Research Information Center by 55%. The highlights of the year were our many Unfunded Requests that received funding from AU and/or AETC and the challenging – and swift – budget changes brought on by COVID-19.

**FY20 BUDGET**

$3,345,258

55%

INCREASE in budget responsibility

**UNFUNDEDEDS**

- INTEGRATED LIBRARY SYSTEM
- AIR UNIVERSITY PRESS OFFICE REDESIGN
- TLC SERVICES SUPPORT CONTRACT
- AIR UNIVERSITY LIBRARY COCKPIT REDESIGN
- eBook PURCHASES
- LAPTOPS for VIRTUAL REALITY PROGRAMS
- VIRTUAL REALITY EQUIPMENT & SOFTWARE

$1,713,560

**Educational Professional and Support Services (EPASS)**

Academic Services supported AU through the EPASS Program - a multiple award blanket purchase agreement vehicle which expedites the contract award timeline. In FY 20, EPASS coordinated almost $4 million in projects for the Holm Center, the International Officer School, and the Eaker Center’s Master Resiliency Course which is offered across the entire AF.
The entire team would like to offer the most heartfelt farewells to several colleagues who left us in 2020:


... and also give a rousing Air University welcome to our new colleagues! - Adrian Tatum - Kimberly Leifer - Carolyn Howard - Jeffery Simpson - Gail White - Lisa Longenecker - Megan Varney - O’Dell McGuire - Stephanie Licko - Rachel Mitchell - Ashleigh Schleinkofer - Megan Hennessey - Ashley Underwood - Sasha Loftin - Lindsey Spears - Timothy Thomas and Beatrice Nichols
Knowledge Itself is POWER