

Evolving Library Vision

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<https://faulibrarydean.wordpress.com/2020/01/20/evolving-library-vision/>

Welcome, everyone, to a new semester of promise and opportunity!

As the spring 2020 semester at FAU gets underway, the Libraries are embarking on a journey of renewal and exciting change.

To guide us on our path, we recently completed a new round of strategic planning that brought our core values and services into sharper focus. Our [2020-2023 mission and strategic goals](#) reconfirmed our commitment to being leaders, bridge builders, and innovators.

One of our seven strategic goals is to “Collaborate with university and community partners to foster technological innovation in service to the University’s mission.” Libraries have long been early adopters of technology, utilizing it to expand access to library collections and services. This year, we will be testing a number of new approaches to traditional services, including developing sensors to track temperature throughout the Wimberly Library so that students can find a spot that will be comfortable for them in the hours that they spend working in the library. We are also working to develop chatbots to expand access to on-demand services beyond the hours when staff are available to guide students, or when the number of people looking for help exceeds our staffing, or when someone simply prefers to investigate things on their own without having to ask a person for help.

We are also expanding access to new technologies, ensuring that all students, regardless of disciplinary focus, have access to cutting edge tools to help them be successful in their academic and post graduation careers. On January 23, 2020, we hosted our first [Tech Showcase](#) in the Wimberly Library, where the campus community was encouraged to stop by the Wimberly Library lobby to meet our tech experts and see what innovative technology we already have at the library, as well as provide feedback on what is of interest for the future. Staples was also onsite showing off some of the latest laptops, desktops, VR headsets, 3-D printers and more. Our commitment to enhancing the lives of FAU students through access to innovative technology is currently manifested through the [GIS Corner](#) and [the Portal](#).



Virtual reality experimentation in The Portal

The Portal, opened in the summer of 2019, is located on the first floor of the Wimberly Library and makes augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) available to the FAU community. The primary setup includes four workstations equipped with Magic Leap One, HTC Vive Eye Pro and Oculus Quest technology. Hours of operation are currently limited to four hours a day, Monday through Friday, but we are working to expand staffing and hours of operation and to make the service more widely known.

The biggest investment of the Libraries in technology that can change the lives of FAU's students and faculty is evident in the [Gruber Sandbox](#). Opening in mid-March 2020, the Rubin and Cindy Gruber Sandbox will enable students from all disciplines and all levels (high school up through Ph.D.) to discover how artificial intelligence can help them achieve their dreams and enhance their research. Unlike other spaces being developed elsewhere on campus, the Sandbox is not limited to students in a specific College or degree program. The Sandbox, the brainchild of College of Science faculty members Elan Barenholtz and William Hahn, has been planned by them and the Libraries to transcend any single discipline and to make possible continuous collaboration and cross-pollination. The projects undertaken will be student-driven, with the guidance of Drs. Barenholtz and Hahn, and with the financial support of FAU friends Rubin and Cindy Gruber, the Libraries, the University, and other community partners. The Sandbox is foundational to FAU's ability to achieve its vision as a leader and institution of distinction in artificial intelligence.

The Libraries have also made a renewed commitment to play a "leadership role in promoting diversity and inclusion for the Libraries' patrons and staff." This is achieved through continuous programming, such as the coming exhibit for Black History month that will feature multi-media selections of African-American blues greats from the Libraries' [Recorded Sound Archives](#). In April, the Libraries will be hosting its annual [Human Library](#) event, part of an international effort to help people learn about different world views and life experiences and develop greater tolerance and appreciation for those differences. In this event, individuals from different backgrounds are invited to serve as "human books" and share their experiences with students and community members so that participants may learn how to "unjudge someone."



Participants in the 2019 Human Library event

The Libraries will continue to innovate, stretch boundaries, and strive to improve what we do and how we do it in our commitment to “Champion student success through alignment with the University’s research and instructional mission.” In December of 2019, we partnered with the [Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts & Letters](#) and the [Osher Lifelong Learning Institute](#) to host a pre-lecture meet-and-greet reception featuring Jon Meacham, presidential historian and Pulitzer-Prize winning author.



Dr. Howard Weiner, Jon Meacham, Judy Weiner, Dean Michael Horswell, Dean Carol Hixson at the reception in the Spirit of America suite on December 15, 2019

We strive to support research and scholarship through hosting lectures and scholarly presentations, as well as by partnering with other campus units such as the [Division of Research](#). On January 22, 2020, we are hosting the next installment of the Division of Research’s new Research Cafe series. On January 30, 2020, we are sponsoring and hosting [Dr. Adrian O’Connor](#), distinguished associate professor of history from the University of South Florida St. Petersburg, for a presentation highlighting some of the constitutional and institutional measures by which revolutionaries sought to make civil society sustainable, commercial society civil, and political society possible.

The Libraries are *the* place to meet up, explore new approaches, engage in research, and expand your horizons at FAU. Come join us and partner with us.



Students studying on the first floor of the Wimberly Library