

As I approach my one-year anniversary of joining the Colby College Libraries, it is the perfect time to reflect on a remarkable academic year. Colby College continues to grow as an institution, and our libraries are no exception. We were not immune to the broader, systemic challenges currently facing higher education across the country. However, with each hurdle, members of the team responded with creativity and resilience.

In the fall semester, we navigated the disruptive national trend of "swatting" incidents while the spring presented extensive planning regarding heightened law enforcement activity within Maine. Throughout these complex situations, library staff worked tirelessly to balance our commitment to open intellectual spaces with the needs of campus safety. With thoughtful changes around library access, our spaces continue to be dynamic sites for research and inquiry.

We are all grappling with the rapid rise of Artificial Intelligence, raising critical questions about its impact on the environment, cognition, and the future of work. The Colby College Libraries served as an instrumental partner in a national cohort with [Ithaka S+R to study AI literacy](#) on campus, a multi-year project that launched in August 2025. Demonstrating exceptional leadership, several librarians co-created a Critical AI Literacy module with campus partners. This module will be required for all incoming students, ensuring they possess the vital skills to critique, evaluate, and ethically utilize new technologies.

Like our peers across higher education, we have had to navigate inflation, tariffs, and dramatic price increases within scholarly publishing. This past year, the library team focused on finding practical ways to contain costs without negatively impacting research and scholarship. By implementing [alternative methods of full-text fulfillment](#), we successfully protected our core mission and ensured Colby continues to have uninterrupted access to world-class research and support.

While these broader trends required us to adapt, our annual report demonstrates that this was also a year of spectacular success. There's a clear theme in every milestone: meaningful connections between the libraries and our campus colleagues. The engagement across campus has resulted in productive partnerships today, while planting the seeds for further fruitful collaborations in the future.

Thank you for your engagement, your expertise, and your continued partnership. My first year at Colby has been the most rewarding of my career thus far and I look forward to many more.

With gratitude,

L Slingluff, Michael and Eugenia Wormser Director of Libraries

Colby College Libraries Annual Report

The Colby College Libraries 2025-2026 Academic Year was marked by forward-thinking initiatives, space transformations, and rewarding collaborations.

Sustainable Collections & Digital Innovation

- **Article Galaxy Scholar Implementation:** To combat rising vendor costs and maximize budget flexibility, the Libraries strategically transitioned away from traditional "Big Deal" journal packages to an agile, on-demand access model. Integrated with a new, streamlined linking, this initiative has improved the researcher experience by providing access to more titles than before and with seamless, rapid access.
- **Expanded Digital Infrastructure:** The Libraries expanded Colby's digital scholarship footprint by launching phase I of [Historical Colby](#), an interactive timeline and map of the original downtown campus. Implementation of *Colby Dataverse* provides researchers with a fully supported option for storage and preservation of data sets; facilitating grant requirement compliance, and increasing visibility and accessibility of Colby research.

Spatial Revitalization & Enhanced Access

- **Bixler Art and Music Library:** Support from facilities allowed for the creation of a dedicated student and faculty art gallery within the specialized library. Additionally the space transformation increases visibility of arts periodicals, improves student study space, and better showcases the distinctive circulating zine collection housed in Bixler.
- **Davis Electronic Classroom (Miller):** A comprehensive renovation created an intentional space to support interactive library instruction, enabling subject liaisons to deliver advanced, hands-on information literacy sessions to all Colby students.
- **Wormser Room (Miller):** Upgrades created an optimized environment for workshops and improved event space. The addition of display screens opened up new modalities for teaching and exhibits. These improvements culminated with the addition of high-performance scanners in both Special Collections and Archives and Bixler Library to accelerate research.

Vibrant Arts & Community Collaborations

- **Exhibition & Creative Spaces:** The Libraries installed moveable gallery walls in Miller Library in addition to the new gallery in Bixler. These spaces celebrate community scholarship and creative work across the curriculum. Banned Books week was celebrated with the first annual community art contest, the submissions to be displayed on the second floor of Miller Library.

- **Community Outreach:** Reflecting a commitment to regional cultural engagement and celebration of print culture, the Libraries coordinated and hosted the fifth annual *Elm City Small Press Fest*, a vibrant event that unites local artists, zine-makers, and independent publishers.

Strategic Direction & Organizational Clarity

- **Setting Strategic Directions:** To better align internal structures with institutional goals, the Libraries underwent a purposeful reorganization. This process included the collaborative creation of a new mission, guiding principles, and goal-setting framework designed to drive long-term strategic clarity and agility.

Academic Excellence: AI Literacy & Leadership

- **AI Education Initiatives:** Positioned at the forefront of emerging technologies, the Libraries participated in the national *Ithaka S+R* cohort on AI literacy. This expertise was translated into foundational AI literacy modules for all incoming first-year students beginning in Fall 2026.

Personnel Changes & Leadership Transition

In July, the Libraries embarked on a new chapter with the departure of **previous Director Kevin Smith** and the arrival of **incoming Director L Slingluff**.

The Libraries also celebrated the remarkable careers of **Karen Gillum** (Humanities Librarian) and **Brenda Sevigny-Killen** (Acquisitions & Processing Manager), as they stepped into well-deserved retirements. Concurrently, the campus community extended a warm welcome to several new colleagues joining the team: **Kimlie Heng** (Evening and Weekend Coordinator), **Meghan Gallagher** (Resource Sharing Coordinator), **Samantha Garlock** (Collections & Engagement Librarian), and **Sarah Sahn** (Collections Strategies Librarian).

We had several internal transitions with **Bevan Fogdall** moving from an Archives Fellow position to serving as the Collections Coordinator. **Eileen Richards** moved from Library Systems Administrator to now serving as the Acquisitions & Processing Manager. Effective July 1, 2026, **Darylyne Provost Cyr** will serve as an Associate Director and Head of the newly formed Communications and Strategic Initiatives, and **Bonnie Paige** will be the inaugural Chair of Research and Academic Engagement.

What's Next? Colby College Libraries 2026-2027 Goals

- Intentionally activate library spaces with collaborative and sustainable programming, displays, and exhibits.
- Build a culture of assessment to inform decision-making, increase transparency, and aid in demonstrating the value the libraries provide to Colby and the state of Maine.
- Support a healthy and collaborative workplace where conflict is addressed and resolved constructively, utilizing direct communication and self-reflection.

Fast Facts



COLBY COLLEGE
LIBRARIES

Resource Sharing

As a partner in the Colby, Bates, and Bowdoin (CBB) Consortium, state, and national library networks, we extend our collection's reach far beyond campus. This year, we lent **6,804** items externally, and borrowed **2,492** items.

Digital Footprint

The library website welcomed **18,852** unique visitors across **63,799** total visits. Patrons downloaded **21,267** e-book chapters and **159,405** academic articles, with JSTOR alone accounting for **51,137** downloads.

Teaching and Learning

With significant curricular connection and robust academic support, library liaisons delivered **181** library and archival research classes to **2,914** students. They also provided research consultations to **368** students and **223** faculty, answered **442** research queries, and hosted **47** archival research visits.

People

Driven by **30** dedicated library professionals and **57** student employees, our team provides the essential expertise to support research and critical inquiry.

Student Savings

Our Open Educational Resources (OER) initiative saved **262** students over **\$48,000** in a single semester. With the Expanded Course Reserve program, we purchased **144** high-demand items, resulting in **1,302** checkouts across **623** course materials.

Places

Across our 2 library branches, we provided **205** hours of weekly access, powering **5,203** personalized service interactions and over **26,500** checkouts for the academic year.

Expanding Collections

We added **2,456** print books to our circulating collection, while expanding our permanent archives with **26** special collections and **46** rare books.

Outreach & Exhibits

The libraries hosted over **60** community events and **21** unique displays—ranging from historical exhibits in Special Collections and Archives to themed book displays. Event highlights featured a diverse mix of community-building programs, including poetry readings, panels on intellectual freedom, Small Press Fest, and our ever-popular 'Study Paws' de-stress sessions.

