University Libraries

University Libraries includes the main library in Natchitoches, the College of Nursing Library in Shreveport, and a satellite campus library in Leesville. The Natchitoches campus library (Watson Library), is a three-story facility opened in 1972. It is accessible to persons with disabilities.

The first floor of Watson Library houses the Circulation and Reserves area, a computer lab, photocopiers, government documents, the reference room, the Library Instruction Lab, unified workstations and computers with research assistant software, and reference stacks. The second floor houses an open stacks/reading area, a recently established Student/Faculty Reading Room, and the interlibrary loan area. On the third floor is the Louisiana Room, which incorporates the Cammie G. Henry Research Center and University archives. The third floor also includes serials media and the media center, and the University Libraries administrative office. Group-study rooms are located on the second floor, and the second and third floors each house a seminar room. Because of the University’s growth and development of its electronic formats for materials, University Libraries has been expanded and renovated based on ACRL standards.

Hours of operation at each library facility are designed to meet student needs. When the University is in session, Watson Library is open 56 hours per week; service hours are extended during peak library-use periods, such as final examinations. Between semesters, it is open weekdays from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Some holiday hours are also maintained and are announced through various services, including the University’s Messenger e-mail service and the University Libraries Web page. Professional assistance is available during hours of operation at the reference desk, the circulation/reserve desk, and the Government Documents section. The Serials/Media Division is open 80 hours per week during regular sessions. Administrative offices are open 40 hours per week.

Watson Library maintains a Web page that provides varied library instructional materials and links to library resources and services. The Shreveport library serves a large population of nursing students and has resources reflecting that population’s needs. The Leesville collection is more general in nature but includes specialized materials for student needs, especially in nursing, education, and criminal justice.

University Libraries maintains a presence in Alexandria via the Northwestern CENLA (central Louisiana) Campus Center. Northwestern leases office space and participates in a consortium of postsecondary institutions through the Learning Center for Rapides Parish (LCRP). The LCRP library and computer lab is staffed by two part-time school librarians. Students in the area may also use libraries at Louisiana State University-Alexandria and Louisiana College in Pineville.

University Libraries Services

University Libraries has combined holdings of 320,561 books, including 75,800 bound journals, as well as several hundred thousand nonprint records. A selective depository for Federal Government Documents has an inventory of 476,585 pieces.
University Libraries' subscriptions to 1,376 journals and 70 proprietary journal databases provides access to periodical literature for on-campus students, commuter students, and distance learners. The Academic Search Premier database, for example, indexes nearly 5,000 journals, with many articles that can be printed or downloaded. The library staff is converting as many paper journals to electronic format as feasible. In addition, the library subscribes to three electronic collections via NetLibrary, providing access to more than 23,000 books. As a selective depository for publications of the U. S. Government, the library makes available documents in accordance with the rules and policies of the Government Printing Office.

Another resource and service is the Cammie G. Henry Research Center, an archival collection of primary documents regarding Louisiana and especially Natchitoches. The collection’s unique holdings and knowledge of the archivist draw national and international scholars researching Southern history.

University Libraries serves the community and region by providing programs and services through its Friends of the Library program. Further, it hosts many public events such as poetry and creative fiction readings and discussion groups.

Interlibrary loan provides students, faculty, and staff free access to electronic or print resources unavailable through University Libraries. University Libraries is connected to a national bibliographic utility, Online College Library Collection (OCLC), and use Iliad software. The OCLC database allows access to the holdings of more than 10,000 libraries. Requests for books, articles, theses, dissertations, videos, DVDs, and others are submitted electronically through the interlibrary loan link on the University Libraries home page. Materials available in electronic format will be sent directly to the requestor’s desktop and may be printed or downloaded, usually within 48 to 72 hours.

The Louisiana Library Network (LOUIS) provides invaluable digital technology support to University Libraries and to students, faculty, and staff. This statewide academic library consortium consists of 43 public and private academic libraries and employs librarians and analysts. LOUIS receives $3.5 million annually in contracts and membership fees to support consortium members. Its services include library automation, a union catalog, a digital library, electronic resources, authentication, training, consulting, and hosting related listservs and Web sites. The LOUIS professional staff assists Northwestern in its library operations by maintaining the software for the library management system (SIRSI WorkFlows), negotiating with database vendors, training for library personnel, handling all migration of records, updating software, and creating needed reports.

University Libraries also belongs to AMIGOS, a regional consortium based in Dallas, which provides a comprehensive line of services including cataloging, reference, resource sharing, preservation, digital imaging, consulting, and training. Resources like LOUIS and AMIGOS have allowed the libraries to develop a sophisticated public services program impossible just a few years ago.

For example, students, faculty, and staff can now access all proprietary journal databases, as well as the Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC). Approximately 70 electronic databases, many with full text, are provided and can be accessed from both on-campus and remote locations. In addition, the libraries use the ILLiad system for interlibrary loan activities. This system allows patrons to request and check the status
of requested materials electronically. Electronic copies of magazines, journals, and newspapers are delivered overnight to sites or to patrons’ e-mail addresses. In addition, a daily statewide courier service handles requests for books and multimedia materials. A daily courier also operates between the Natchitoches and Shreveport campuses. In addition, patrons are empowered through an online iLink account that allows patrons to place holds on library materials, use “My Account” to renew materials, and check due dates and fines.

In addition to database and OPAC services, LOUIS also supports the single-server implementation of the ILLiad Resource Management program. Particularly noteworthy is the ODYSSEY interlibrary loan program, a sub-system of ILLiad. This program allows University faculty and students, regardless of location, to request books and articles from around the world. Journal articles, for example, can be requested online and sent directly to the requestor’s computer. Faculty and students can also use the program to check the status of requested materials. Books, however, must be retrieved from the main University Interlibrary Loan office. Journal articles are free to University personnel and students.

These programs that augment traditional library resources enable students and faculty members to conduct research, which is vital for scholarship, tenure, and promotion. Additionally, these programs illustrate how information technology supports traditional research and vice versa. These programs also allow the University to provide equivalent resources to its distance-learning students.

The University places a high priority on student access to technology, which allows them to capitalize on the available learning and information resources. The 40 student computer laboratories have Internet access and are available on the main Natchitoches campus and at distance education sites in Leesville and Shreveport. The 40 labs have more than 1,000 computers, including 60 laptops available for seven-day checkout. In addition, 10 digital cameras, five Infocus projectors, 10 external zip drives, 10 digital camcorders, and 10 handheld personal data assistants (PDAs) are available.

Two student labs are located in Watson Library, one for general student use and the other designated for information literacy instructional activities. All laboratories are staffed by trained student workers. Through student technology fees, a computer technician and a Student Online Support (SOS) Help Desk are available.