Collaborating to Remove Barriers to Success

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abstract: This article begins with a brief description of access and affordability and their relationship to equity, diversity, and inclusion within the higher education sector today. Because the authors work at a Jesuit Catholic institution, awareness and appreciation of the call to uphold access and affordability at Jesuit institutions are also important. COVID-19 institutional and library impacts are summarized, followed by the identification of pandemic-created opportunities for the library to demonstrate commitment to institutional values and align with institutional and library strategic directions and priorities. Descriptions of initiatives launched in the 2019–20 and 2020–21 academic years to advance access and affordability are provided, accompanied by profiles of campus partnerships that ensured the success and sustainability of these initiatives. Finally, the authors consider the challenges and benefits of constructing and maintaining campus partnerships to improve access and affordability for students and the components of effective campus partnerships.

Introduction

The 2019–20 and 2020–21 academic years were uniquely challenging—a balance of jarring new routines, a search for normalcy, gearing up for (and defining) a "new normal," and looking toward a new future. Looking back on the 2019–20 academic year and reflecting on the 2020–21 year, this much is clear—pandemic-fueled disruption and pandemic-fueled opportunities existed side by side. At Seattle University, the pivot to online teaching and learning in spring quarter 2020 provided the Lemieux Library and McGoldrick Learning Commons with an opportunity to demonstrate its commitment to inclusive academic excellence through a variety of strategies to improve access and affordability for Seattle University students.

Access and Affordability

Within higher education, access and affordability are often considered as one notion and are commonly linked to equity, diversity, and inclusion. Today, at colleges and universi-

ties across the country, and in our professional organizations as well, we have witnessed a proliferation of efforts to advance equity. On our campuses, access and affordability have been shown to impact student retention, learning and engagement, success, and degree completion. Efforts to advance equity are fueled in part by growing evidence that extending access and affordability to all students, regardless of academic specialization or intended career, helps ensure a pathway to opportunity.[1]

The authors' institution is one of 28 Jesuit colleges and universities that comprise the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU). These institutions are based in 17 states, the District of Columbia, and Belize. They include major research universities, comprehensive universities, smaller colleges and universities that combine the liberal arts and professional studies, and one strictly liberal arts college. Defined by their commitment to scholarship, faith, and social justice, Jesuit colleges and universities share a distinct mission that centers on access and affordability as part of the social justice work of Jesuit higher education.

Seattle University

Seattle University is a Jesuit Catholic institution in the heart of the Pacific Northwest committed through its mission to educate the whole person, to foster students' professional formation, and to empower leaders for a more just and humane world.[2] The vision for the university and the goals outlined in the document "Strategic Directions 2020–2025" present in a clear and compelling manner what the university wants and what it is committed to become. The university's values are also reflected in its centers and long-standing initiatives, including the Center for Community Engagement (founded 2004), Seattle Youth Initiative (2011) and Indigenous Peoples Institute (2016).

Lemieux Library and McGoldrick Learning Commons

In its placement and prominence, its status as both destination and hub, and its physical and virtual spaces, resources, collections, and integrated services, the Lemieux Library and McGoldrick Learning Commons plays an integral role in supporting Seattle University's mission, vision, and strategic directions. As the information environment, higher education, and the university itself have changed and evolved, the Lemieux Library has forged pathways to serve faculty and students more effectively. Guided by its vision, mission, and strategic plan,[3] the library has not only fulfilled the role envisioned for it more than 10 years ago but also surpassed expectations. During the pandemic, the library developed an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan that addresses spaces, programs and programmatic initiatives, curation and collections, and structural change.

COVID-19 Institutional and Library Impacts

The COVID-19 pandemic had an unprecedented impact on university finances, both on revenue generation and incremental costs. Seattle University is a midsize liberal arts university with a Carnegie classification of Doctoral/Professional University. It is largely dependent on tuition-driven revenue. Thus, the impact of COVID-19 has been severe, with estimated revenue losses of $24.5 million, due to lower than expected enrollment

of first-year and transfer students, lower than expected retention of students, and lower fees from residence halls (which were reduced by two-thirds or $10 million), as well as losses in other revenue generation services. Expenses also increased with greater costs for safety and health. One area of major expense was technological, with new expenditures on software, hardware, and streaming services to support the virtual learning environment and remote working. These revenue losses and incremental costs started in winter quarter 2020 when the university rapidly transitioned to virtual learning and emptied the residence halls, and they continued during the 2020–21 academic year.

Focusing on 2020, the Lemieux Library not only pivoted to support online teaching and learning but also "problem-solved the pivot," working out the complex and nuanced challenges it created. Core functions and operations were successfully transitioned to online delivery. The development and delivery of enhanced virtual services with an emphasis on flexibility and ease of access for users were prioritized. Equitable access to library resources and services was also emphasized. Library faculty and staff worked with campus partners to develop, unify, and effectively market a growing suite of access and affordability initiatives. Collaborations with a variety of campus partners helped remove barriers to student success.

The pandemic-driven pivot to online teaching and learning in spring quarter 2020 shone a spotlight on the Lemieux Library's critical role in access and affordability. New technology access and affordability programs were launched, and additional resources were dedicated to existing programs. Implementation of electronic reserves (e-reserves), expansion of streaming media access, and launch of textbook access and affordability initiatives complemented technology lending. In fall quarter 2020, the library extended, enhanced, and further developed these programs. Digitization services and the provision of Zoom-ready rooms joined a growing suite of access and affordability efforts. In fall 2021, in direct response to the evolving preferences and priorities of students and faculty—preferences that were not only honed but also made requirements by the pandemic—95 percent of library resources were delivered online.

> **Implementation of electronic reserves (e-reserves), expansion of streaming media access, and launch of textbook access and affordability initiatives complemented technology lending.**

These included electronic databases, journals, e-books, and streaming media, which are carefully aligned to support curriculum, teaching, and scholarship across all academic disciplines. Intentional partnerships, including cooperative arrangements with the Academic Assembly, Campus Store, Center for Digital Learning & Innovation, Facilities Services, Information Technology Services, Mailing Services, Marketing and Communication, and Student Financial Services, ensured the success and sustainability of the university's access and affordability initiatives.

Problem-solving the pivot positioned the Lemieux Library, as the fall quarter 2020 began, to reopen its facilities to the university community without a glitch. The reopening or resumption of spaces, core functions, operations, and limited in-person services were successfully phased in. Problem-solving the pivot prepared the library for further change and transformation as it readied for fall quarter 2021.

Commitment to Academic Excellence[A head]

Strategies to improve access and affordability for Seattle University students supported the university's mission, vision, and values, and aligned with its "Strategic Directions" document. The pivot to online teaching and learning in spring quarter 2020 provided the Lemieux Library with an opportunity to demonstrate its commitment to inclusive academic excellence through a variety of means to improve access and affordability for our students.

Library faculty and staff knew that they needed to ensure that the library's resources, spaces, and services would support and enhance the study and research behaviors of twenty-first century learners. The pandemic showed that the creation and maintenance of outstanding learning environments responsive to the needs of users are key to meeting this challenge and taking advantage of this opportunity.

Initiative Profiles

Profiles of library initiatives launched in the 2019–20 and 2020–21 academic years to advance access and affordability follow in chronological order by academic term. Each profile includes a brief description of the presenting challenge and supporting solution, as well as a summary of the initiative's impact and the lessons learned that have informed, or will inform, future initiatives.

Fall Quarter 2019: Long-Term Laptop Lending Pilot

Seattle University does not have a laptop requirement for students outside the School of Law. While it is common for students to own a laptop, the lack of a requirement means that many students do not regularly bring a laptop to class—either because they do not own one, or because the device they have is inconvenient to carry. This drives heavy competition to schedule classes in one of the campus's few teaching computer labs and presents a challenge for faculty presenting instruction that requires computer access. In response to growing interest in laptop lending from various sectors, the Lemieux Library in partnership with campus Information Technology Services (ITS) launched a pilot program of long-term laptop lending in fall quarter 2019. Most of an initial batch of 10 Chromebooks were loaned out for fall quarter 2019 and renewed for winter quarter 2020.

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The success of the fall pilot program led the library to expand the service. Library faculty and staff learned that inexpensive Chromebooks could meet the needs of many students who did not own or carry a laptop, that the campus technology infrastructure would support the use of Chromebooks, and that marketing the service to targeted student audiences was effective and easy. Prior to the fall quarter pilot, Chromebooks

were new to the campus technology mix. They could not integrate with existing single sign-on systems, which permit students to employ one set of log-in credentials to access multiple applications, or the managed print systems, under which an external provider administers the university's printers, scanners, and copiers and its document handling. After testing, the library provided borrowers with documentation to ensure that most students could complete any task with a Chromebook that they could carry out in a campus computer lab. Additionally, Chrome-

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books provided students with the tools necessary to participate in synchronous online instruction. Library faculty and staff little knew how important this pilot project would prove to be before the end of winter quarter 2020.

Winter Quarter 2020: Rapid Expansion of Laptop Lending

On March 9, 2020, Seattle University became the second school in the United States to move to virtual instruction in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.[4] Faculty, staff, and students were told to leave campus and begin working and studying from home. Within days of the announcement, the library ran out of laptops and Chromebooks to lend to students who did not have computers at home or who had a computer incapable of joining synchronous online video classes.

Having just completed a successful test of lending Chromebooks to students during fall quarter 2019, the library and ITS moved rapidly to order additional Chromebooks. Demand had begun to spike, and finding inventory proved challenging. At the end of winter quarter, to prepare for the demand expected in spring quarter, an additional 40 Chromebooks were ordered, to increase the inventory to 90.

Neither the Lemieux Library nor ITS had budgeted for such a rush of equipment orders. Overall, 90 Chromebooks were purchased in four batches between September 2019 and May 2020. Approximately $15,000 in costs were shared between the library and ITS. The Chromebooks were loaned to students as quickly as they arrived on campus, and the library began mailing them to students who lived at a distance from Seattle.

An unanticipated advantage that Chromebook lending had over Windows or Mac laptop lending became apparent after the library started shipping devices to students. Domain-joined university computers require new users to sign in for the first time while on the campus network. An Internet connection at home, even with a virtual private network (VPN) connection to campus, cannot substitute for this requirement. Chromebooks did not have this limitation, so they could be loaned to students (and faculty and staff) who could not travel to campus to pick them up. At the same time as the unprecedented demand for Chromebooks and other laptops had begun to restrict supply, the global demand for webcams had completely outstripped inventory. Students and faculty could not find a webcam to purchase anywhere. All Chromebooks ordered by the library came equipped with webcams, however, so many loans ended up serving students who would not have needed to borrow a computer if they could have purchased a webcam for the computer they already owned.

Spring Quarter 2020: Internet Access

Many students who returned home during winter quarter found that their home Internet access was not only slower and less reliable than the campus networks but also inadequate for live video classes, which require high outgoing and incoming Internet speeds. Many home Internet connections, especially the satellite and digital subscriber lines (DSL) connections that many rural Internet customers use, have download speeds sufficient for high-quality streaming video but only limited upload speeds.[5] Zoom classes can quickly saturate such asynchronous home Internet service, and the quality of the call suffers. On March 30, 2020, the library and the Office of Student Development e-mailed a Spring Quarter Technology Needs Survey to all non-law undergraduate and graduate students, asking about their technology requirements for a fully virtual spring quarter. Responses showed a two-to-one ratio of students needing Internet access support compared to those who needed to borrow a computer. Students who lived outside the coverage area of high-speed Internet needed another solution.

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Partnering with the Campus Store, the library acquired 40 iPhones with unlimited Internet service plans and hot spot capabilities to lend to students who could not meet their Internet needs another way. Because the campus and the Campus Store had an existing arrangement with Verizon, the library acquired the phones at no cost, other than that for the service contracts.

All 40 devices were loaned out to students before the end of the quarter, who used them to supplement nonexistent, inadequate, or unreliable Internet service. Though summer enrollment was low, 10 students kept the devices for summer quarter as well.

Phones made unsatisfactory hot spots because their "unlimited data" plans are not truly unlimited, even when the user paid a surcharge to enable the hot spot feature. Students who relied solely on the phone for their Internet access could run through the hot spot data allowance before the end of the month and see their connection speeds throttled. The library recommended that students make their Zoom connection to class directly from the phones when possible, so that the heaviest data usage would not count against the limited data allocation. By midsummer, as soon as supply became available, all the phones were replaced with dedicated hot spot devices, solving this problem. Hot spots were expensive to provide, but they enabled students across many departments to participate in classes, perform in live-streamed theater events, and connect during Internet outages. Funding from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) ultimately covered nearly $15,000 in data plans in 2020, and the university maintained this level of investment in 2021.

Electronic Reserves

During pandemic-driven campus and library closures, the Lemieux Library's physical course reserve collection was inaccessible to students. A rapid pivot from physical to electronic course reserves was required. While expensive, the easiest way to implement digital replacement for course reserves was to purchase e-book copies of reserve materials. Every course reserve title available as an e-book was licensed and made available online to students. Many faculty worked with the library and their liaison librarians to ensure that their required readings were available electronically through the library. Nearly all other collection purchasing was put on hold to support the rapid acquisition of titles to meet course demand. Changes to course reserves in response to COVID-19 are documented in a library guide on course reserves.[6]

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Expansion of Streaming Media Offerings

The loss of access to physical collections similarly impacted the library's media collections. Courses across the curriculum relied on physical copies of films held in library collections for student viewing. Not every DVD or Blu-ray title in the Lemieux Library's collection could be streamed on popular streaming platforms, and not every student had access to all the platforms. Streaming copies of many films were licensed for a quarter, a year, or sometimes longer. Digital copies were acquired in a variety of ways—some provided directly by the publishers, some digitized from disc with publisher permission, and some within a streaming platform like Kanopy—and made available online to students. When possible, a title was obtained on an existing library streaming platform, and catalog records were created for it. When a digital copy of a title was provided or created, it was posted to Microsoft Stream, an access-controlled streaming platform available to the campus as part of a contract with Microsoft Corporation. The library acquired 288 titles in digital formats to serve students in 86 courses. Many of these titles were not available to the students in any other fashion.

Captions and transcripts are not always provided with digital films. The Microsoft Stream platform will display provided captions and has the capability to auto-generate transcripts, a critical accessibility feature. Microsoft Stream also offers flexible access control, so that a title can be controlled in accord with sometimes restrictive licensing terms. In the past, the library had been reluctant to acquire digital films that were not offered as part of an existing streaming package or platform. Library faculty and staff are now confident that the tools to host these videos have matured to the point where this should no longer present a problem.

Textbook Access and Affordability

The pandemic prompted the Lemieux Library to critically review pre-pandemic instructor options for making library and nonlibrary materials available to students, as well as

relevant campus resources. Consideration of the future of course reserves also prompted library faculty and staff to consider the future of textbooks. They undertook an evaluation of the way the library provided access to textbooks, and adjustments inevitably followed.

All textbooks are not available as e-books, and all e-textbooks are not available for library purchase. Licensing terms can limit the use of e-textbooks, or publishers can refuse to sell them to the library. While recent numbers suggest that the cost of textbooks is slowly trending downward, likely driven by open educational resources (OER) initiatives and e-books,[7] textbook affordability is still a major factor in the overall cost of a college education. Lack of access to the library's physical collections during the pandemic worsened this problem. Over 930 new electronic titles were acquired by the Lemieux Library in 2020 to help alleviate some of this burden.

Options for accessing books and textbooks were identified, pursued, and promoted. These options included the Seattle University Campus Store, which sells and rents books in physical and electronic formats, and Canvas, the university's learning management system,[8] managed by the Center for Digital Learning & Innovation.[9] Linking to library e-books in Canvas (rather than uploading copies) improves findability for students and avoids copyright concerns. Canvas also provides access to open educational resources, which are freely available online. Both the Center for Digital Learning & Innovation[10] and the library[11] offer guides to locating quality open resources, including open textbooks. To increase the visibility of OER, the library plans a new initiative aimed at proactively identifying and cataloging relevant resources, instead of waiting for a faculty member to request them for course reserves.

> **Linking to library e-books in Canvas (rather than uploading copies) improves findability for students and avoids copyright concerns.**

When a student needed assistance with access to a textbook that the Lemieux Library could not acquire electronically, the library worked with the Campus Store, operated by the Follett Higher Education Group, and Student Financial Services to connect that student to scholarship funds to purchase an individual copy. The Follett Textbook Scholarship Program spanned spring quarter 2020 through fall quarter 2020. If no digital copy of a textbook was available or a student needed a digital copy of a book they had already purchased in print, the Follett program provided a separate fund that the Campus Store could use to either purchase an e-book or to have a replacement physical copy shipped directly to the student. Use of this fund required direct permission from the library dean to the Campus Store. Students were asked to confirm that the book in question was a required or assigned textbook that was available in the Campus Store and to send their name, e-mail, student ID, and the name and cost of the book to the dean. The dean then worked with the Campus Store manager; once the decision to support the request was made, the manager e-mailed the student with directions about accessing the funds.

The Lemieux Library is at an emerging stage in its engagement with open education. Greater use of open educational resources has the potential to increase the affordability of course materials. The rapid pivot from physical to electronic course reserves in spring 2020, along with the fact that many textbooks and other assigned readings are not available for purchase by academic libraries as e-books, showed a clear need for the library to

help steer the faculty toward more affordable student resources. Library faculty worked with the Academic Assembly to launch a new Open Education Task Force to explore opportunities for open education and open educational resources at Seattle University, to identify actions that could support those opportunities, and to advocate for making teaching and learning materials freely available online for everyone to use. Two library faculty were appointed to the task force.

Recent consortial commitments to open principles and practices provide additional opportunities for the library to increase its engagement with open education. The library is a member of the Orbis Cascade Alliance, a consortium serving academic libraries in the Pacific Northwest of the United States. The alliance has a commitment to open principles and practices and has joined the Open Education Network (OEN), "a community dedicated to working together to make higher education more affordable, equitable, and accessible."[12] The Lemieux Library has joined the network as an allied member and so has direct access to the OEN's community, tools, and resources to build and sustain open education programs on our campus.

Fall Quarter 2020: Extension and Expansion of Technology Lending

Fall quarter 2020 resumed with remote instruction for 95 percent of classes. Knowing the level of demand during winter and spring quarters and realizing that new students were the most likely to lack the technology access they would need to succeed, the Lemieux Library expanded its technology offerings again for the fall quarter. A new Technology Needs Survey was sent to all new and returning students to gauge the level of demand for laptops, Chromebooks, and Internet hot spots. Ahead of the quarter, 735 returning students and 284 new graduate or undergraduate students responded to the survey. Forty-two (approximately 4 percent) answered, "I would like to have help to develop a plan to ensure I have reliable access to a computer with a webcam and a good internet connection." Many students who had borrowed technology in winter or spring 2020 chose to keep their devices through summer and fall. Many new and returning students in the fall quarter were referred to the library by faculty or advisers or responded to the library's Technology Needs Survey, resulting in a technology loan.

At the end of fall quarter, every hot spot was on loan, and nearly all borrowers had requested extensions for winter quarter. The demand for laptop lending was steady throughout the quarter. Lemieux Library finished fall quarter with a technology lending inventory of 120 Chromebooks and 65 Internet hot spots, with 10 more on order.

Establishment of Zoom-Ready Rooms

The campus reopened its residence halls for fall quarter 2020 with reduced capacity. Hundreds of new or returning students would live on campus, so the library was asked to create spaces for students to use to join online classes.

To help identify spaces for this Zoom-ready room service, the library reached out to Facilities Services and ITS. Two Facilities Services work groups, Real Estate and Planning and Design + Construction, provided building and room use data and information, and helped evaluate existing spaces. Forty individual study carrels in the library were selected for this Zoom-ready room service. These spaces supported single occupancy

and offered sound isolation; however, they lacked computers, so iMacs were obtained and installed. ITS Classroom Services was consulted to ensure the proper technological resources were in place to facilitate classroom learning. Demand for the Zoom-ready rooms from students who lived on campus or came there for in-person classes remained steady through fall quarter, and the service continued for the remainder of the academic year. An example of how the Lemieux Library adapts to the evolving ways in which students work, study, and conduct research, the Zoom-ready rooms will remain part of the library's service portfolio in the next academic year and likely beyond.

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Digitization Services

Although the Lemieux Library reopened to students in fall quarter 2020, not every student returned to campus or lived close enough to take advantage of the library's collections. Many library materials were delivered to borrowers through the mail. Additionally, beginning in winter quarter 2021, the library launched a "scan and deliver" service to digitally deliver articles and chapters from materials in the library's physical collections to borrowers who could not access the physical items. Requests were routed into the library's ILLiad system and fulfilled by interlibrary loan (ILL) staff. This service helped reduce the demand for expensive book delivery by mail, and it opened most of the collections to borrowers who did not live close to the campus. Library faculty and staff quickly learned that the scanners and workflows that supported its ILL services were not adequate to meet the increased demand for digitization of materials. A new scanner was acquired to support digitization services, which the library believes will remain an ongoing offering even as the campus resumed a "new normal" in fall quarter 2021 and beyond.

Partnership Profiles

The development and maintenance of partnerships across the campus community with the Academic Assembly, Campus Store, Center for Digital Learning & Innovation, Facilities Services, Information Technology Services, Mailing Services, and Marketing Communication ensured the success and sustainability of these initiatives. At Seattle University, the partnership between classroom instructors and the Lemieux Library and Learning Commons is—and has been—a constant. Examples of working together to support teaching and learning include collaborating to develop collections, promote information competency, incorporate information literacy and other literacies into the curriculum, provide learning assistance, and help students find their writing voice and tackle each writing challenge. More recent examples of working across academic departments to support teaching and learning include collaborating to develop ScholarWorks, the institutional repository; to advance the university's maker ecosystem; and to plan an augmented and virtual reality lab and a data science lab. Access to shared resources, fiscal stewardship, and the opportunity to contribute to a positive campus community

and climate are just some of the many benefits the library continues to derive from these partnerships.

The pivot to online teaching and learning in spring 2020 brought the campus community face-to-face with one central question: "What do our students need most from us right now?" The Lemieux Library also grappled with this question, focusing first on its centrality to teaching and learning and its importance to the student experience writ large. Of the many disparate impacts of COVID-19 on our students, library faculty and staff were especially concerned with enablers and barriers to education, and specifically with pandemic-related access and affordability challenges. These concerns prompted the library to explore the question "What would it take to improve access and affordability for our students?" Library faculty and staff considered whether establishing new partnerships to improve access and affordability might help meet student needs. Brainstorming led to the development of several mutually supportive institutional initiatives, including those profiled in the preceding sections, that promised to improve access and affordability for students. Library faculty and staff reviewed the perceptions, lenses, priorities, and structures of university stakeholder groups. Opportunities to proactively build strategic relationships with administrative programs, services, and units on campus were identified. Specific actions to advance and promote access and affordability initiatives were determined. Outreach to the administrative programs, services, and units profiled in the following sections was launched—the first step toward establishing new partnerships.

Academic Assembly

The Academic Assembly is the elected body through which Seattle University faculty participates in decisions involving academic, university-wide matters, as well as areas that influence student learning. Such matters include academic quality, terms of faculty service, coordination of curricula across programs, strategic planning, budgets, and physical facilities. The Academic Assembly and faculty awareness of the library's access and affordability initiatives played a vital role in the marketing mix of product, placement, and promotion. During the pandemic, Academic Assembly meetings were conducted via Zoom. The library's access and affordability initiatives were promoted to the Academic Assembly and faculty either by library faculty program or policy announcements (stand-alone agenda items) or as part of the agenda at Academic Assembly meetings.

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Campus Store

Follett Higher Education Group has operated the Seattle University Campus Store since 2015. The Campus Store promotes learning and sustains the educational mission by providing academic resources, campus life needs, institutional support, and customer service. The store is also a hub for school spirit and community, and as such, it occupies a unique vantage point and presence.

Over the years, the library has collaborated with the Campus Store to bring together educational content, products, and technologies. These collaborations were informal, intra-campus partnerships around specific student needs—"one-off" responses limited to a single time, occasion, or instance. In reaching out to the Campus Store to jump-start both the technology and textbook access initiatives, the library sought collaboration with an organization dedicated to making educational materials accessible and affordable and to supporting students throughout their academic journeys.

Mindful of its status and reputation and Follett's vision to empower education everywhere learning is happening,[13] the library reached out to the Campus Store to jump-start its technology access and affordability initiative. The store sells computers and accessories directly to students and manages the campus relationship with Verizon (the source of the library's hot spots and phones for Internet access support), but it is not usually involved in technology acquisition for the university. When the library's inventory of Chromebooks ran low in the lead-up to fall 2020, and additional inventory was not available through regular channels, the Campus Store managed to secure 25 additional Chromebooks before the start of the quarter.

Outreach to the Campus Store in spring 2020 was fueled by the need to bring campus stakeholders together around an initiative—textbook access and affordability—and to leverage experience and expertise on behalf of our students. The store's philosophy is "Right book. Right price. Right now." It is known for its efforts to provide students with the best textbook prices, partnering with faculty to choose the most cost-efficient items, offering used or rental books, facilitating the return or exchange of a book, and supporting a print textbook condition substitution policy. Intentionally aligned with the Campus Store's textbook philosophy and practices, the library's textbook access and affordability initiative provided students with another solution to the problem of textbook costs.

Center for Digital Learning & Innovation

The Center for Digital Learning & Innovation is where Seattle University faculty can explore strategies for incorporating technology into Web-facilitated, hybrid, or fully online courses. The center offers a variety of workshops and activities that support teaching online. Specifically, its staff "support faculty in the thoughtful use of emerging learning technologies to ensure that all digitally mediated courses reflect the high-touch, deeply experiential learning consistent with the Jesuit approach to education."[14] Strategies for incorporating e-resources into Web-facilitated, hybrid, or fully online courses are covered in these workshops and activities. In this way, the library can promote the use of e-resources, streaming media, and digitization services, as well as signal its commitment to all things "open." The instructional continuity website of the Center for Digital Learning & Innovation is designed to help faculty quickly convert their face-to-face courses to distance delivery. To help with this task, the Lemieux Library cooperates with the center to maintain guides to "Online Learning Support at the Library"[15] and "Direct Linking to Library Resources."[16] These guides provide step-by-step instructions for faculty to incorporate library resources into their Canvas course pages. The Center for Digital Learning & Innovation has developed several resources; the library's role

in supporting teaching and learning in a virtual environment is visible directly, and indirectly, in these resources.

Facilities Services

Responsible for the physical infrastructure of the campus, Facilities Services creates and sustains the environments that support the needs of the university community.[17] Facilities Services assisted Seattle University in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic by modifying the built environment as well as providing guidance on personal protective equipment. Library faculty and staff contributed to the development of several actions that directly impacted library business and operations. The provision of personal protective equipment, community protection supply procedure, signage, safety packages, a catalog of communications templates, room capacity data, floor plans, information about operating building systems in epidemic conditions, ventilation and filtration, and building status and cleaning schedules are examples of Facilities Services actions to ensure the health and safety of the campus community. During the pandemic, the library collaborated with several Facilities Services work groups, including Building Operations & Maintenance, Design + Construction (D+C), and the Office of Real Estate and Planning.

The Lemieux Library reopened in September 2020, one of the few campus buildings to do so. To plan its reopening and revise protocols to meet evolving conditions, the library reviewed reopening plans that were shared by libraries, archives, and museums as part of the REALM (Reopening Archives, Libraries, and Museums) Project.[18] REALM's information, illustrative practices, and workflows for handling physical library collections and facilities were especially useful to support renewed access to the library building and resumption of its services. Reopening considerations were reviewed with Building Operations & Maintenance. Decision-making regarding library materials, the physical setting, and library operations were made collaboratively, resulting in the timely resolution of maintenance issues to meet the needs of the campus community. Urgent requests, such as safety-related issues, loss of power, or difficult working conditions, were also responded to as quickly as possible.

D+C manages all design and construction for campus remodeling, renovation, and new construction. Collaboration with D+C ensured a safe reopening and the smooth implementation of mitigation strategies to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Restricted access, masking, social and physical distancing, density management, hand hygiene, and ventilation are examples of such mitigation. In addition to contributing to the development of these strategies for their building, library faculty and staff worked with D+C to assess and apply evolving health and safety protocols.

The mission of Seattle University requires that the physical development of the campus is done in an intentional manner consistent with its academic programs, student requirements, and Jesuit tradition. As early as spring quarter 2020, library faculty and staff realized that the implementation of pandemic-related health and safety policies, procedures, and protocols involved significant changes in space use. Classrooms, group study rooms, Learning Assistance Programs intake and support, Math Lab configuration, Media Production Center facilities, Writing Center workflows, and even the Byte café would need to be reimagined, redesigned, or reset, as would workplaces. A

rigorous process was undertaken with the Office of Real Estate and Planning to assess space requirements in public and staff areas and to prioritize needs. Outreach to, and

> **The implementation of pandemic-related health and safety policies, procedures, and protocols involved significant changes in space use.**

partnership with, Real Estate and Planning made sense given its function. In addition to helping the university study, evaluate, define, and prioritize capital projects and options, the office also negotiates and manages leases; maintains building and room data and information; and ensures that campus growth balances university and community interests. When the university renovates, changes space use, or constructs new buildings, the office monitors compliance with the city's Major Institutional Master Plan, which sets out requirements to guide expansion by institutions of higher education.

Information Technology Services

Powered by a shared commitment to providing services and resources for remote work and positioning our students for success, the partnership between the Lemieux Library and ITS was and is key to the successful jump-start and continuation of the library's suite of access and affordability initiatives. The library availed itself of numerous ITS services and resources to help launch various programs. ITS Technical Purchasing acquired the equipment for the library's affordability lending. ITS Desktop Services received and prepared the hardware, and the library then cataloged the equipment and managed distribution by mail and contactless services. Deployment of single sign-on options to new library resources improved off-campus accessibility at a time when all users were remote users. Online platforms like Microsoft Stream extended the library's ability to provide materials online. ITS launched new remote tech-support options to assist users having trouble with technology from home, and the library provided access to a Web-chat tool so that the ITS Service Desk could provide real-time chat support to campus technology users, both students and employees.

Mailing Services

By managing campus mail, parcel shipping, and outgoing domestic and international mail, Mailing Services provides the university with extensive expertise in postage, shipping, and applying postal regulations. As the liaison between Seattle University and the United States Postal Service (USPS), Mailing Services is a valuable resource when planning and processing mailings. It was one of the few campus offices to remain open throughout winter and spring 2021. The library partnered with Mailing Services not only for delivery of materials to students away from campus but also as a drop point for patrons returning materials in person and a pickup location that students, faculty, and staff could access when no other service point was open on campus. Mailing Services helped to minimize delivery costs and shipping times for lending by mail and served as a distribution point for technology going out from ITS to faculty and staff.

Marketing Communications

A strategic partner to all academic and administrative units within the university, Marketing Communications (MarCom) offers solutions for Seattle University's marketing and communication needs and serves as a clearinghouse for advancing the university's internal and external relationships. Consultation with MarCom helped the library develop supporting narrative and stories, raise awareness about its access and affordability initiatives, and, ultimately, elevate its centrality to the student experience. Much of the university's internal communications is handled by MarCom. Collaboration ensured that the library utilized "Campus Announcements" to faculty and staff to promote its access and affordability initiatives; took advantage of "Official Communications" e-mails, as needed, to inform the campus of important changes in library practices; and kept the campus community up-to-date via *The Commons*, Seattle University's faculty and staff online news site.

Discussion

The establishment, development, and curation of strategic partnerships allowed the Lemieux Library to develop and deliver innovative solutions to pandemic-fueled educational disruptions. Highlights of important lessons and insights follow.

Constructing and maintaining effective campus partnerships to improve access and affordability start with effective leadership and the development of mission-aligned proposals. Understanding the campus community, the identification of key stakeholders, and thoughtful, tailored outreach to specific programs, services, and units are key steps in the construction and maintenance of effective campus partnerships. On the authors' campus, proactively building strategic relationships positioned the library to develop and deliver innovative solutions to pandemic-fueled educational disruptions.

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Thinking differently led the library to consider the value of cultivating allies to increase access and affordability for our students. Focusing on creating partnerships, the library considered the different cultural perceptions, lenses, priorities, and structures of university stakeholder groups. This led to intentional outreach to specific programs, services, and units, many of whom had given little thought to how the library could support them or help them problem-solve, and were not likely to come to us asking. When the library started reaching out, we were surprised by the extent of excited uptake. Over a half-dozen programs, services, and units jumped at the offer of access to the LibraryH3lp Web chat tool. Staff from Library Systems, Technology, and Media provided guidance on how to conceptualize, develop, and adapt the LibraryH3lp tool to boost customer engagement and service. The library distributed materials for Disability Ser-

vices, ITS, and others when it was one of the few spaces open, and Mailing Services, in turn, distributed materials for the library. The library took the initiative to reach out to the Campus Store to provide additional technology-buying power and fielded requests from faculty and staff across the campus for short-term loans of hot spots, including to support two live-streamed theater performances.

Conclusion

Globally, COVID-19 exacerbated existing inequalities among social, ethnic, and racial groups. Nationwide, within higher education, the pandemic laid bare—and exacerbated—the contours of inequality. Today, in United States colleges and universities, the focus has shifted, or is shifting, to emerging from COVID-19. Leaders are figuring out what a return to "normal" looks like. Institutions of higher education and academic libraries alike are focused on essential reforms for a more resilient, sustainable, and inclusive economic recovery.

At Seattle University, COVID-19 institutional and library impacts led the Lemieux Library to launch a series of initiatives in the 2019–20 and 2020–21 academic years to advance access and affordability. At the library, faculty and staff have seen that cross-campus collaboration among academic and administrative programs, services, and functional units is an important way for our institution to innovate and adapt in a time of rapid and continuous change. Intentional partnerships, such as those the library developed and nurtured during the pandemic, are part of what makes Seattle University a vital academic community. Coming together with campus partners to help students navigate the many disruptions caused by COVID-19, the library saw firsthand that intentional cross-campus partnerships have the potential to transform the student experience. Successful strategic partnerships with campus partners promise to ensure the sustainability and further development of access and affordability initiatives as we emerge from the pandemic in the years ahead. Indeed, the authors suggest that integrating essential reform depends on intentional collaborations with campus partners to improve access and affordability for all students.

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Notes

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