

# Double Crisis: Moving a Library During the Pandemic

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# About Westminster Choir College

- Founded in 1926 in Dayton, Ohio
- Moved to Ithaca, NY in 1929
- Moved to Princeton, NJ in 1932
- Merged with then Rider College in 1992
- Train ministers of music (original mission)
- Student population prior to 2016 was ca500
- Declining enrollment (current student population ca200)
- Rider administration and Board of Trustees tried to sell WCC (2017-2019)
- On July 1, 2019, proposed move to main campus in Lawrenceville, NJ by Sept. 2020





# Talbott Music Library in Princeton

# Our Campus Move: Design Planning Period

- Working groups formed in August 2019
  - Consisted of admin, staff, faculty, and students
  - Met every two weeks starting in September
  - Library working group as a subgroup of facilities working group
- Library working group tasked with fitting Talbott Music Library into Moore Library
- Librarians tasked with supplying measurements of collections
  - Architects wanted square footage
  - Librarians knew that supplying linear footage was paramount
- Poor communication
  - Librarians and library staff were essentially not allowed to be in direct contact with architects
- Rushed timeline
  - Finalized layout expected by December 2019

# Our Campus Move: Design Planning (more) - Logistics - Execution

- Hammering out details starting in late January
  - Constantly running into issues
  - Never a clear picture of details
- Biggest issue was lack of linear footage
  - Calculations make our heads hurt!!!
  - Disconnect on how much we would weed from collections
- Planning came to a halt in mid March due to the pandemic
- Finally met with companies specializing in shelving and library moves in May
  - The whole moving process would have been improved if we met with them in September
- Packing and prepping in July
- Move in August while construction was still occurring!



# Talbott Music Library in Lawrenceville

# Library Services: Effects of Pandemic

- Closed library third week of March
- Circulation halted for two weeks
  - Users could begin returning items in the dropbox in April
    - Circulation staff checked dropbox periodically
- Reference continued through LibChat
- Extended due dates past the end of semester
  - Mostly important for graduating students, especially those out of state
- Stopped ILL of physical items until August 31
- Users could not come back into the library until August 31
- Set up remote work for librarians, staff, and student workers

# Library Services: Effects of Move

- Stopped all services for most of August
  - Circulation staff still had to scan music for choirs in order to be ready once the Fall semester started
    - Could only do this once the Performance Collection was moved
  - Moore Librarians fielded music questions on LibChat
- If it weren't for the pandemic, which already drastically altered our services and operations, we probably would have reduced services or completely stopped them even earlier than August in order to prep for the move
  - Pandemic alleviated the need to support circulation during the move

# Outreach during the pandemic

- Learning curve of virtual outreach - it took a while to really get into the swing of things
- Social media as tool of outreach
  - Resource reviews
  - Interesting articles
  - “Meet the Library Faculty and Staff”
- Lots and lots of LibGuides!
  - This helped us argue for keeping our virtual students workers - student project for finding resources that fit into the guides
- Continued attempts at (virtual) instruction
  - Music faculty tend to be very hard to convince for in-class instruction
- Drop-in Hours

# Outreach during the move

- Deadlines for checking out items?
- What to do about summer programs? How could they check out the materials needed if we were closed?
  - This ended up not being an issue, due to the pandemic
- Lack of access to materials during the move
  - Items packed away - would mean potentially completely unpacking to find particular items
- Lack of access to materials AFTER the move
  - Not all of our materials fit into the new space, so it has been necessary to create an “offsite storage” location in our ILS
  - This means having to make the trip over to retrieve items
- Confused patrons!

# Special Collections and Archives During the Move

- Packing up of Special Collections and Archives during height of pandemic in New Jersey
- Numerous email communications to make sure packing supplies were ordered, schedules cleared to access the Princeton campus, adhering to covid standards from state of NJ, Rider University, and fellow colleagues comfort levels
- Continuous meetings (in person/online) for moving concerns, moving/transition plans
- Packing and new location mapping started out organized but became frenzied at the end because of the rush to physically move collections in less than a month along with a constant change of shelving space granted for Special Collections and Archives

# Special Collections and Archives During the Pandemic

- Any on-site visitation requests cancelled/postponed
- Any requests for access/copies of physical items postponed, items scanned when possible
- To access the campus multiple emails had to be sent to Dean of Libraries, Library Chair, Campus Facilities per visit
  - First email to schedule a visit: include reason of visit, locations accessed, expected time of arrival
  - Second email sent after immediately leaving the building: reporting time left, locations actually accessed, special notes
- Scanned items kept on file for later use, especially with continued requests from popular collections

Thank You!

# Contact

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