



2022-2023 Annual Report

September 2023

WISPALS, the Wisconsin Project for Automated Libraries, was organized in 1989 by librarians at Gateway Technical College, Moraine Park Technical College, and Waukesha County Technical College. Now, [eleven total colleges form the membership](#) of the consortium, representing more than half of all the technical college students in the state and two-thirds of all the technical college credentials granted.

The **WISPALS mission** is to advance the teaching and learning missions of its member institutions through sharing information and creating collaborative and financially responsible solutions to common challenges.

The **WISPALS values** are to work toward solutions that are financially responsible and efficient in order to provide the best possible service to the college community; to educate one another and learn together; to stay on the forefront of librarianship, each developing professional skills while innovating and experimenting to further collective and individual missions; and to work to highlight the value of technical college libraries to member institutions and to the wider library community.

The **WISPALS purpose** is to provide member libraries shared access to an integrated library system, information resources, electronic databases, and other services and technologies at reduced costs. It promotes the exchange of knowledge, skills, and best practices for libraries. WISPALS also serves as a liaison between member libraries and local, state, and national library organizations and vendors.

The 11 WISPALS colleges have a combined total of 1,534,334 resources available to their users via the shared consortium catalog. In 2022-2023, 31,615 physical items were checked out to patrons with an additional 26,799 renewals.

WISPALS Officers

Board President through 12/31/2022: Bryan Albrecht, Gateway Technical College

Board President beginning 1/1/2023: Dr. Jeannie Worden, Northcentral Technical College

Executive Committee Chair: Katie Aldrich, Northcentral Technical College

Executive Committee Incoming Chair: Kim LaPlante, Northeast Wisconsin Technical College

WISPALS Executive Committee



Madeleine Pitsch, Blackhawk Technical College

Kathryn Johnston, Fox Valley Technical College

Gary Flynn, Gateway Technical College

Ashley McHose, Lakeshore Technical College

Amber Stancher, Mid-State Technical College

Hans Baierl, Moraine Park Technical College

Katie Aldrich, Chair, Northcentral Technical College

Kim LaPlante, Northeast Wisconsin Technical College

Alison Moffat, Northwood Technical College

Amy Manion, Waukesha County Technical College

Ellen Range, Western Technical College

Welcome Message from WISPALS Chair

Together is stronger than alone. This is the impact of our consortium's work.

Whether it's the gathering of caring, skilled people in a single field to share best practices, gaining the cooperative purchasing and support advantages of a shared Integrated Library System, or working collaboratively on projects that enhance our ability to meet the needs of students and faculty, WISPALS is a great network with the power to make it possible.

This year, we welcomed a new member, Blackhawk Technical College! I'm proud of the people that I get to partner with through WISPALS and the work we do every day to help others.

This WISPALS Annual Report shares highlights of the 2022-2023 academic year. Thank you to all who made this happen.

Our partnership makes us better together!

- Katie Aldrich, Northcentral Technical College, WISPALS 2022-2023 Chair

2022-2023 Consortium Highlights

Core services

Integrated library system (ILS) support and administration continues to be WISPALS' principal service. The ILS is the main access point for staff, students, and community members to access the library's holdings. The library uses the ILS to catalog, index, and track materials and patrons, place orders, and lend out materials. WISPALS maintains and updates the system for all members as well as provides webinars and pre-recorded training sessions. In 2022 and 2023, WISPALS held 9 training sessions for library staff. The consortium maintains and updates a user guide with best practices and procedures as well.

In addition, consortium members continue to participate in a suite of cooperative purchases. In 2022-2023, WISPALS provided the cooperative purchasing coordination and management for 64 electronic resource subscriptions with eight vendors, totaling \$372,023.22 for the year. The consortium continued to advocate for reduced yearly price increases for electronic resources and of the 64 renewing subscriptions, 55 renewed at lower than a 5% increase from the previous year and 31 renewed at or below 3%.

Also, a new member joined the consortium. In July of 2022, WISPALS welcomed Blackhawk Technical College to its membership, allowing the library to increase usability and discoverability of its online collection.

Streamlining the consortium

In May of 2022, during the annual meeting, WISPALS members convened to discuss their needs and wants from the consortium, including those that were critical to the everyday running of their libraries and those that, while outside of the core needs, were still vital to providing quality service to their students and faculty. These needs were weighed against the capacity of library staff and the individual goals of libraries and their colleges and prioritized accordingly. What resulted was a clear need to simplify and streamline some of the work of the consortium to ensure that consortium work yielded a high return on investment of both money and time.

The following activities were undertaken in 2022-2023 to achieve this:

- A project planning template was developed to help guide decision-making on which projects are taken on and provide assessment guidelines for measuring the success of each project. This template ensures that any collaborative projects:
 - derive directly from WISPALS members
 - are clearly tied to the missions and needs of member technical colleges and/or libraries
 - have clear and unanimous support from all WISPALS members

- are guided by time-limited workgroups with clearly defined expected time commitments and deliverables which can be shared across consortium members
- involve minimal time from WISPALS library staff members while drawing more on the Project Managers' efforts as required
- Project Managers created space and time for project ideas to be shared, during Executive Committee meetings and online with broader WISPALS library staff.
- The standing meetings of the four standing subcommittees - Instructional Services Committee, User Services Committee, Technical Services Committee, and the Faculty User Needs Workgroup - were eliminated; the teams were not dissolved so they could be reconvened if needed.
- To ensure that information shared about and between WISPALS members is clear, organized, and accessible, the consortium restructured its Annual Report, reorganized its shared Basecamps, and created a single-page reference guide that links to all shared materials.

Exploring library experience options

An important process that every library should undergo is evaluating its integrated library system (ILS) software. WISPALS has a contract with an ILS vendor that will expire in 2025. In anticipation of that contract end date, in 2022, WISPALS began an exploratory process to better understand and acquire specific information about products and services as well as product development initiatives of integrated library systems. WISPALS aim in evaluating existing products is to find the most suitable solution at the best price and ensure the best possible service to each institution's students, faculty, staff and community. This year a Request for Information (RFI) was developed and issued to several identified vendors and products.

Supporting students and faculty

In 2022-2023, the WISPALS Faculty User Needs Workgroup continued and wrapped up efforts started in previous years to understand and improve library service to faculty through targeted surveys and focus groups. The Workgroup developed, launched, and analyzed a survey to non-instructional faculty and staff, which became the tenth program area targeted by the group's work, joining other common program areas like nursing, communication, and adult education. Survey results were aggregated and shared among consortium members; individual responses from faculty were shared with their representative on the WISPALS Executive Committee for direct feedback to that library.

WISPALS wrapped up its ongoing initiatives supporting students and faculty from 2021-2022. In an effort to ensure that the WISPALS libraries serve students and faculty equitably, the consortium completed and compiled research to develop a process to create and manage a policy think tank. They also collaborated to create a list of common community organizations and developed guidelines on establishing relationships with them. WISPALS gathered input and shared ideas to

increase student usage and engagement by creating survey questions to be shared and used by individual WISPALS members. WISPALS also completed work to ensure that member libraries are student-focused in their services and collection by sharing best practices and assessment strategies.

Growing the professional network

As part of its work in understanding and improving library service to faculty, the Faculty User Needs Workgroup shared the bank of questions used to develop its ten surveys targeting various program areas, along with messaging and a general process for conducting those surveys, with peer organizations. The questions and supporting resources were posted online on the WISPALS website and shared with peer organizations like the Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (WAICU), the Council of University of Wisconsin Libraries (CUWL), and relevant units within the American Library Association (ALA).

In June of 2023, WISPALS joined the Wisconsin Library Association as an institutional member, unlocking some key opportunities for professional development, cost savings, and demonstrating its commitment to the library profession.

Highlights from Previous Work

Student affordability

WISPALS technical college libraries are invested in finding ways to make higher education more accessible and affordable for students. Many WISPALS member libraries operate as key components of affordability initiatives on their campuses, implementing low-cost or no-cost textbook programs, circulating textbooks in their libraries, and working to help faculty discover, use, and create open educational resources (OER).

In 2022-2023, as an extension of this work, three WISPALS colleges were interviewed about their strategies for communicating the impact of their OER and affordability programs on the student experience. The interview responses were compiled into [this report](#) and shared for other WISPALS members to integrate into their own communication and advocacy efforts.

Equitable service

WISPALS libraries are committed to ensuring that their libraries serve students and faculty equitably and have collaborated to develop processes and resources that can be used by each member of the consortium in their own efforts.

WISPALS members developed [a worksheet](#) to guide libraries through the process of creating a student advisory board, including identifying expectations, defining the purpose of the group,

recruiting members, and conducting meetings. The worksheet includes resources that reduce the time and effort needed for other WISPALS members to implement a student advisory board, including templated messaging for a call for volunteers, a sample meeting agenda, and tips for maintaining and sustaining the group.

The consortium also shared and compiled their own best practices with one another on reviewing library policies through an equity lens to help reduce barriers. These practices include reconsidering fines and fees for overdue or missing items, placing blocks on accounts for fees owed, and revising language so it is inclusive, positive, and welcoming,

WISPALS members collaborated to identify and share community resources that benefit students including resources for child care, financial assistance, housing and food, and occupational support. The resulting document aims to help students, discourage duplicate work among WISPALS members, and encourage community partnerships.

The consortium also developed a shared set of questions for a user and non-user survey to administer to students to better understand their library needs. To ensure a meaningful response rate, the group also created promotional materials for libraries to use to promote their surveys.

Student and faculty success

Between 2020 and 2022, WISPALS members developed, deployed, and aggregated results from ten surveys to understand how libraries can better serve faculty and students in Wisconsin technical colleges. Surveys were tailored to common technical college program areas including nursing, trades, communications, behavior and social sciences, business, allied health, adult education and English language learners, agriculture and natural resources, and paralegal and public safety. In order to meet the full spectrum of the college community's needs, a survey was also developed and deployed for non-instructional staff.

Responses were aggregated and shared with all WISPALS Executive Committee representatives with identifying information removed. Individual responses were shared directly with that college's representative on the Executive Committee for local enhancement of library service.

Read more about work completed by the WISPALS consortium in recent years [here](#).

Highlights from the Member Libraries

Blackhawk Technical College Library focused on upgrading its library systems to increase usability and discoverability of the Library's online collection. BTC joined WISPALS consortium and completed the transition to the Sierra system in December 2022, making it easier to search eBooks from universities and other top publishers, feature films, classics, and documentaries from several library subscriptions simultaneously. They also designed and launched a library button for the BTC LMS (Learning Management System) Blackboard in Spring 2023. The button gives students access to the 24/7 online library inside of their course environments. Additionally, the Library offered ten workshops and coordinated two historical exhibits with the Wisconsin and Beloit Historical Societies.



Fox Valley Technical College Library is now part of new faculty orientations and instruction invitations for individual classes and department meetings are increasing to pre-pandemic levels. The Library finished its first complete inventory of the collection and is on track to verify missing and misplaced items.



Gateway Technical College Library developed its co-curricular assessment model utilizing ACRL's Project Outcome Immediate Survey. Librarians reviewed feedback and metrics from 2022-23 and found students have successfully applied what they learned and improved their knowledge of library resources. Two consecutive cycles of the ACRL's Project Outcome Immediate Survey were used to assess student skills, and the results indicated that they felt confident and could identify specific resources for success after the teaching sessions. The Library was also happy to welcome therapy dogs to campus for the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic.



Lakeshore Technical College Library launched a number of new initiatives in 2022-23. With the help of the WiLS Ideas to Action Fund, the Library rolled out the Multilingual Library Initiative, which included translating key service documents, curating a Hmong and Spanish language print collection, and providing bilingual programming to promote inclusivity and belonging across campus. With the transition to eCampus Online Bookstore, the Library incorporated bookstore functions into its workflow, creating a one-stop book hub to support students in finding, ordering, and picking up their course textbooks. The Library also went fine-free in early 2023 and expanded its return procedures to include drop-offs at Sheboygan and Manitowoc Campuses. These two policy changes improved the Library's return rate by 50% and increased the accessibility of library services.



Mid-State Technical College Library went through a service team review. Using student feedback, they were able to get board approval to move the Stevens Point library to a new location in hopes of providing a quieter and more welcoming space for students on the Stevens Point campus. Through the renovation process, they also received approval to change the Library's marketing tagline to "Your connection to library resources and study support."



Moraine Park Technical College Library collaborated on the redesign of the Beaver Dam campus, which involves many changes to the library that will better serve students and other college departments. They also developed a new, broad policy for library services and related, specific procedures for circulation and collection development.



Northcentral Technical College Library enhanced its physical space and digital presence with a relocation of its main collection to a more visible place on the first floor, the construction of NTC's Center for Innovation and Inclusion, and the launch of the Virtual OneStop Canvas course. They increased opportunities for student support with a new weekly drop-in lab, featuring in-person and virtual access to academic coaching, writing, research, and citation support services, and designed a self-paced audio tour of the library space and services with accessible transcripts that were successfully launched in a fall scavenger hunt challenge. In collaboration with faculty, the library created an asynchronous point of support for paralegal students via a research reflection interaction embedded in their Legal Research and Writing course, and expanded the Library's collection to meet the identified needs of the college's new literature courses in Liberal Arts.



Northeast Wisconsin Technical College Library increased instruction by offering technology and research training sessions on the College's event portal, expanding its popular Technology 101 videos series, and creating microlearning



videos on research and citation. The library supported the move to the Canvas LMS by creating the student orientation course, videos, handouts, and training sessions, integrating LinkedIn Learning, Films on Demand, and the EBSCO Discovery Service with Canvas, and producing research, citation, and technology instructional modules for faculty to import into their courses. The library added a Diverse Voices and Topics collection, expanded resources for the AA/AAS degrees, added the Kanopy online video collection, and remixed several OER textbooks for instructors through LibreTexts. To provide additional help to students, the library also added a Chatbot integrated with an Ask a Librarian FAQ site and checked out over 1800 laptops and 300 hotspots.

Northwood Technical College Libraries, now part of the college's Innovative Teaching and Learning Center (iTLC), made updates to the college's LibGuide templates and library databases page. The Superior campus library is getting refreshed with new shelving, tables, and seating.



Waukesha County Technical College Library successfully collaborated with many departments this year. They worked with the faculty development office to secure grant money for LibWizard, another Springshare module. The Library then spent the year sharing an interactive online tutorial creation tool with



faculty and staff across the campus. Additional grant money was obtained in partnership with student services to purchase a self-checkout machine to serve students on the autism spectrum. The Library provided access to archival material to assist the college's marketing department as they promoted and celebrated WCTC's centennial. Finally, the Library has joined other offices on campus to increase artificial intelligence (AI) literacy through a LibGuide and workshops.

Western Technical College Library, in addition to sustaining ongoing work in collection development, policy revision, information literacy instruction, and campus-wide use of Open



Educational Resources (OER), is proud of its efforts in supporting literacy, as foundational reading continues to be a challenge for students across all programs. The Library joined Wisconsin's Shared Collection for Academic Libraries (WISCAL) and launched an on-campus version of Raising a Reader where student parents and grandparents are invited to participate in a summer storytime series along with children in their care. They are establishing a reading community that invites parenting students to participate in programming along with their children and encourages affinity, connection, support, and an excitement for pleasure reading. The Library is also working on high-interest reading circles for students across multiple divisions and programs. These groups encourage community, belonging, foundational reading and communication skills, and connection to the content students are studying in their courses.

Budget

Below are the actual expenditures for WISPALS' 2022-2023 fiscal year.

Item	Amount
Project management/staff	\$ 100,000.00
ILS software	\$ 148,979.92
Electronic resources	\$ 373,509.22
Other	\$ 225.87
TOTAL	\$ 622,715.01

Looking Forward

ILS exploration process

During the next year, WISPALS will review responses from their ILS Request for Information. In the autumn of 2023, the group will review and select products they wish to pursue. Demonstrations will be scheduled through the Spring of 2024 with the goal of making a decision on an ILS change by July of 2024. Implementation and migration would be scheduled for August 2024 through June of 2025 with a go-live date of July 2025.

Building community

With the pause in meetings of WISPALS' subcommittees, the Executive Committee recognized that there were now fewer opportunities for WISPALS staff members to connect with one another and leverage the expertise from within the community to learn and improve service. To help to bridge that gap, the consortium will work to create opportunities for those connections, including using its online space for a message board that allows staff to introduce themselves, ask for help, or answer questions from other staff members in similar roles at other WISPALS technical colleges. In addition, a directory of all staff at WISPALS member libraries was made accessible.

Future collaborations

The WISPALS consortium members continue to look for ways that they can collaborate toward shared goals. By continuing to share information in their regular meetings and via their online communications, the Executive Committee and project managers will be able to identify common challenges and efforts, and use the newly developed project planning template to ensure that collaborations are meaningful to all involved and create robust, concrete outcomes.