

Research & Experiential Learning Unit

Overview:

The Research & Experiential Learning (REL) offers dedicated spaces and services to U of I students, staff, and faculty to engage in curricular, research, or personal learning experiences. The REL Unit delivers services through four programs: the MILL, the Studio, the Data Hub, and VERSO. Unit personnel emphasizes excellence in service delivery, creative and innovative learning opportunities, and efficient management of its resources in support of the Library's strategic priorities.

Library KPIs:

- Geographic Information Systems
 - Usage via unique logins, # of items created, collections purchased
- Research Information Management
 - Records added via Smart Harvesting, Deposits, Other
- Building Usage
 - Space usage in Data Hub, Studio Bookings, MILL Door Counts
- Research and Reference Assistance
 - Questions answered in LibAnswers
- Workshops and Presentations
 - Tech Talks
 - MILL Workshops

Objectives (includes timebound goals and projects):

Maximize user engagement with program equipment and services

- **Why:**
 - To facilitate student and patron use of Library resources effectively
- **How:**
 - Providing spaces that allow students to engage in experiential learning activities, including using MILL equipment, Studio equipment, and Data Hub equipment.
 - Providing state of the art tools that enable research and academic work in making, rapid prototyping, audio/visual production, and GIS/data-intensive computing.
 - Providing trained, educated personnel to answer queries and provide support for using the tools and equipment.
 - Promoting the spaces, tools, and personnel offered across campus
- **Success looks like:**
 - Usage metrics that meet or exceed previous performance
 - Qualitative data that indicates patron satisfaction with resources
- **Fall Update**

- MILL [door counts](#) exhibited an increase from 12650 in Fall 2024 vs. 9986 in Fall 2023. Annually, 2024 had higher door counts than 2023.
- Data Hub space usage (numbers of people observed during staffed times) was at its peak in Fall 2024 with an average of 12 people per day, up from 9.9 people in Fall 2023. The desk saw 79 questions asked, compared to 34 the previous Fall semester.
- Studio bookings were 141, which is down from 228 in Spring 24, but up from 104 in the Fall 23. We suspect a cyclical pattern with high spring usage and lower fall usage. Likewise, the hours the Studio was in use per week was 13, up from 10.75 in Fall 23, but down from Spring 24, which was 22.9 hours per week.

Create effective learning and research experiences

- **Why:**
 - To advance information and digital literacy while improving student and patron capacity to utilize a range of tools
- **How:**
 - Producing instructional resources that allow asynchronous learning
 - Developing workshops and learning events led by experts
 - Providing services that support the curriculum directly
 - Promoting the resources, workshops, events, and services offered across campus
- **Success looks like:**
 - Consistent, well-attended workshops and events
 - Course/class engagement with REL programs
 - Research lab/group engagement with REL programs
- **Fall Update**
 - Data Hub Tech Talks declined this semester, both in numbers of talks given and in terms of attendance vs. Spring 2024.
 - MILL Workshops exhibited a decline in overall attendees from the of Fall 2023, but an increase in attendance vs the spring 2024. The trend of annual attendance (spring + fall) is still increasing.
 - Course and class engagement continued.
 - The Data Hub continued to be used by VTD 254, scheduled almost weekly throughout the semester. ENVS 497 and GEOG 385 had students visit us for help.
 - The MILL has several classes that work with it, including GERM 301, FOR 274, SPAN 306, and several campus groups.
 - The Studio engaged the School of Music directly, receiving feedback for enhancing the space for their use and is used frequently for coursework.

Manage research information and data collections efficiently and effectively

- **Why:**
 - To support university and library goals of tracking and promoting university-generated research outputs

- To provide long-term, persistent, public archival support for university research information, including data and document deposits
- **How:**
 - Provide support for research data management through data management plan assistance
 - Provide support for geospatial resources and services through the management of ArcGIS resources and platforms
 - Manage information streams through Esploro/VERSO
 - Work with the DSOS Unit and relevant teams to ensure the repository functions of Esploro/VERSO function well
- **Success looks like:**
 - Continued high use of ArcGIS platforms
 - Consistent updating of VERSO
 - Engagement by at least one unit from each UI College with VERSO
 - Use of data management support meeting or exceeding previous performance
- **Fall Update**
 - GIS platforms continue to exhibit strong use patterns. Fall 2024 (August-December) unique users averaged 492 per month vs. 422 per month in Fall 2023.
 - VERSO was continually updated throughout the fall, with Research Impacts Team members managing smart harvesting and the acquisition of several larger collections of content, namely UI Extension bulletins and the RCDS data repository.
 - Based on Analytics reports ([Esploro Updates - 2024](#)), there is widespread updating of profile information. The reports make it difficult to verify but virtually all colleges appear to be represented there.
 - Data management support (in the form of DMP consultations) was down in 2024 from 2023), however, there appeared to be more RDM-related questions at the Data Hub than in previous semesters.

Revamp the "License to MILL" program (2024-2025 project)

- **Why:**
 - To create a system of validation/credentialing for students that have learned how to use various MILL equipment
- **How:**
 - Refresh the tracking document for the current MILL equipment and services
 - Establish a tracking tool internally for the MILL manager
- **Success Looks Like:**
 - A small number of students starting the program each semester
 - 100% completion by a subset of those students
 - Promotion of achievement through the MILL's communication channels
- **Fall Update**

- The MILL Manager has started to outline the new achievements for the License to MILL program. We have not yet formalized the changes yet.

Unit/Team Metrics:

All Programs

- *Qualitative information provided through follow-up surveys or anecdotal/testimonial information*
 - Fall Update: [MILL feedback](#)
- *Total # of appointments booked to use a given space*
 - Fall Update: [MILL](#) – 154 bookings; [Studio](#) – 141 bookings
- *Total # of visits to each program web site*
 - Fall Update: (Aug-Dec) [VERSO](#) – 44,852; [GIS Pages](#) – 515,595; Studio – 981; MILL – 316; Data Hub – 143; RDM Guide - 169
- *# of consultations provided at each location*
 - Fall Update: [Studio](#) – 7; [MILL](#) – 762; Data Hub – 79 (LibAnswers)
- *# of instructional materials added online (e.g. pages or discrete tutorials) for each program*
 - Fall Update: [Studio](#) – 3; MILL – unknown; Data Hub – 0; VERSO - 0
- *# of appts specifically defined for class or research projects*
 - Fall Update: [Studio](#) – 73/141; [MILL](#) – 22/154; Data Hub – 79/79
- *# of workshops provided in each program (if relevant)*
 - Fall Update: [MILL](#) - 7 (Make), 15 (Learn); [Tech Talks](#) - 5
- *# of campus partners involved in each program*
 - Fall Update: [MILL](#) – 6; Studio – 1 (Music); Data Hub – 3 (2 tech talks, 1 class reservation)

Studio-specific

- *% of Studio bookings that are new (vs. previous years)*
 - Fall Update: 81%
- *# of hours per week The Studio is in use, according to the bookings data.*
 - Fall Update: 13.5 hours
- *# of circulations of equipment associated with The Studio*
 - Fall Update: 134

DataHub-specific

- *Usage of ArcGIS Online and/or other GIS platforms*
 - Fall Update: Unique Users – 2460; New Users – 367; Items Created – 2500; Unique Creators – 525; Item Views: 625,683
- *Ratio of questions as GIS to non-GIS*
 - Fall Update: Don't have a good method for this yet. Most questions were GIS.
- *# of classes using the space*
 - Fall Update: 1 (VTD)
- *# of people using the space, according to usage data*

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- Fall Update: Count (incl. events): 889; Count (excl. events): 614, Avg (incl. events): 12, Avg (excl. events): 9.3

MILL-specific

- # of partnerships with programs outside of the library
 - Fall Update: 6
- # of visitors at Mobile MILL events or other tabling events
 - Fall Update: 711
- # of events attended to by the Mobile MILL or other programs in the unit
 - Fall Update: 3
- *MILL Door Count*
 - Fall Update: 12,650

Membership:

- Jeremy Kenyon (lead)
- Bruce Godfrey
- Hanwen Dong
- Jessica Fleener
- Norm Lee
- Seth Thompson

Reporting to:

- Jeremy Kenyon (Unit Head)
- Devin Becker (Associate Dean)