“The months and years ahead are going to offer extraordinary challenges and opportunities for the University of South Carolina Libraries. Our focus must remain on the provision of exceptional library collections and services to those who rely on us.”

Tom McNally, Dean
“There has never been a great university that did not have a great library.”
- Ray Bradbury, Thomas Cooper Society Medalist

No element is more critical to a university than its libraries, which not only house the essential raw materials for academic scholarship but also serve as a vital connection between the university and the larger world, providing resources and services to the local community and beyond.

When library resources are strong, the entire academic community becomes stronger as well. It has often been said that it is impossible to build a great university without a great library. An outstanding library positively impacts the experience of everyone on campus, accelerating both learning and research.

The University of South Carolina is fortunate in that respect. Our collections are extensive, our library services are renowned, and our libraries have a rich history of innovation and a reputation for excellent stewardship of our resources.

Now, building on our tradition of excellence, we seek to take our collections and our services to the next level. At this critical juncture in the University’s history, when our faculty and students are more talented than ever, but when many resources are stretched thin, it is essential that our libraries remain strong. We must continue not only to build impressive collections but also to innovate in response to the evolving needs of the university community and the larger community.
The library plays a key role in the process of teaching, learning, and research. We must continue to build and conserve our collections. We must work daily to develop services that keep pace with the technologies that our users are employing. We must remodel our libraries to reflect the ways students learn and interact with one another.”

Tom McNally, Dean
In this electronic age some might ask: “What is a library?”

The truth is the library of today is not that different from libraries of the past.

The library must have exceptional collections. It does not matter if the resources are in print or digital format. What matters most is that the library offers the content that the scholar, researcher, or professor is seeking. It is crucial that our libraries continue to acquire resources in new areas as scholarship evolves.

The library must be a place where teaching, research, and learning can occur. The library’s physical space should be flexible, technology-rich, and responsive to individual needs. We need to continually renew our physical spaces to keep pace with our users. We now see unprecedented numbers of students using our libraries on a 24/7 basis. As their needs change, we need to adapt.

The library must offer innovative services. We have moved far beyond simply answering questions and lending books. We still do those things, but sophisticated technology and delivery services have made our services even better. And what seemed like a distant dream only a few years ago – making those services available any time of the day or night from anywhere in the world – is now within reach.

Your support of the University of South Carolina Libraries is vital to our ability to do what must be done. Our libraries are absolutely central to our mandate to provide the best possible academic environment for our students, educators, and researchers.
“I spend a lot of my time at Thomas Cooper Library researching the history of transatlantic relations. I’m usually on the first floor in the history section. It’s great to cut out all the distractions. It’s calm and quiet – just a great place to get things done.”

Christian Buckson
the promise to nurture: innovation, renovation

“If you have a garden and a library, you have everything you need.”

- Marcus Tullius Cicero

For students like Christian Buckson, senior history and international studies major, and winner of the University Libraries Undergraduate Research Award, the library has always been a vital hub of research.

But in the past few years, for many students, it has become much more. Expanded computer labs, renovated study rooms, and even our new coffee shop reflect our commitment to making the library a comfortable, inviting space that meets a wide range of student needs – whether it’s studying alone, working collaboratively with classmates, or just unwinding at the end of the day.

At peak times (like Mid-terms, end-of-semester Reading Days, and Exam Weeks) more than 10,000 students per day pass through Thomas Cooper Library. They’re not just there for our collections or the top-notch assistance of our reference librarians, they’re also seeking out – and finding – the right kind of space in which to get their work done.

Please support our USC Libraries. By doing so, you can enrich the educational experience of thousands of students. Whether your gift touches students directly – for example, by establishing internships, or graduate or undergraduate assistantships – or indirectly by building collections or supporting library staff, you create opportunities for students to use our resources that optimize their learning experience.

THE CAMPAIGN for the UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA
“In my senior year, I took an independent study course in civil engineering and did an 80-page literature review. I used interlibrary loan – a lot. The librarians showed me how it worked: you just request a magazine or journal article and in 24 to 48 hours you have a copy of it by email.”

Nick Williamson
“I have always imagined that Paradise will be a kind of library.”

- Jorge Luis Borges

Whatever you need to know, ask a librarian.

Nick Williamson, ’11, will tell you it’s not just a bumper sticker; it’s advice that works. And today, you don’t even have to ask in person.

Our tech-savvy team of reference librarians will field questions via email, chat, or instant message, meaning students can get the answers they need without leaving their dorm rooms.

That’s just one example of how our library staff is transforming what we can do. New technology hasn’t just sped up interlibrary loan and expanded the reach of our reference librarians, it has also allowed us to digitize many of our unique resources so that we can more easily share them with anyone who needs them.

It takes an outstanding staff to put these new technologies to the best possible use. Digitization, for example, requires our staff to be specially trained in leading-edge computer work, and that’s an investment that pays off in many ways: better access to important resources, preserving rare and special collections, and building our reputation as a leading hub of scholarly research.

When you support library staff, you are dramatically expanding the horizons of possibility for students and patrons. The more librarians we have, and the more training and resources we can provide them, the more we can do to bring the world to our students and to share our collections with the world.
“I work part-time in the Irvin Department of Rare Books and Special Collections in the Hollings Library. One of my favorite projects has been foliating a rare, 13th-century bible – it was written in Oxford, England, around 1240. So for me to get to work with it, and to help make it easier for students and other researchers to examine it, has just been a priceless experience.”

Trey Gordner
“The library is the temple of learning, and learning has liberated more people than all the wars in history.”

- Carl Rowan

Books and other artifacts in our special collections are tangible connections to the past. And regardless of your areas of interest, Trey Gordner, an international business and management major, would be the first to tell you that they're also uniquely valuable resources for students and scholars worldwide.

Like all major research universities, USC has long held extensive collections of rare books and artifacts. Over the past few decades, though, generous donors and a visionary special collections staff have made ours truly remarkable. We not only house centuries-old treasures like the bible Gordner helped restore, we’re also at the forefront of collecting moving images. Our rapidly growing Moving Image Research Collections (MIRC) is one of the nation’s most comprehensive film and television archives. It and other strong collections like the G. Ross Roy Scottish Studies Collection and the Matthew J. and Arlyn Bruccoli F. Scott Fitzgerald Collection attract researchers from around the world, bringing international attention to our outstanding library resources.

Our collections have grown in large part because we have a reputation for excellent stewardship of these important materials. Donors entrust their collections to us because they know we will both preserve them and make them as accessible as possible to others who will treasure them.

Help us ensure that valuable records of our past will be preserved long into the future. With your support for the USC Libraries, we will continue to be one of the nation’s leading repositories for essential texts and artifacts old and new.
“Some come to college thinking of history as boring lectures and boring textbooks. But we have all these wonderful primary historical documents that bring history alive. When we put them in students’ hands, it not only makes history more exciting, those students become more active learners who can create their own interpretations of the history we study.”

Bobby Donaldson
“A library, to modify the famous metaphor of Socrates, should be the delivery room for the birth of ideas - a place where history comes to life.”

- Norman Cousins

How can we keep the past alive?

In a history-rich state like South Carolina, that’s an important question. Associate Professor of History and African American Studies, Bobby Donaldson, would be quick to answer that – for our students and all South Carolinians – history lives on in two remarkable collections: the South Caroliniana Library and the South Carolina Political Collections housed in the Hollings Library.

The Robert Mills-designed South Caroliniana Library was the nation’s first freestanding academic library, and it remains in use today as the repository of a rich array of books, manuscripts, and other documents relating to the history of the state and USC. The South Carolina Political Collections encompass highly detailed records of political leaders, political parties, and other individuals and organizations that have played major roles in the state’s politics and government.

Both collections attract researchers from around the globe, and together they comprise the most comprehensive archive available of information about our state’s political, cultural, economic, and social life throughout its rich history.

Whether it’s a donation of your own collection of South Carolina related documents or funds for the preservation of these important resources, your gift to the South Caroliniana Library or the South Carolina Political Collections helps us maintain and expand our state’s vital historical record, now and into the future.
“I loved the new technology lounge. It was an incredible addition to the library and after it was built I shifted my go-to study spot from the first floor to the tech lounge. The atmosphere is so conducive to studying, with the separate spaces and the different kinds of study table options. I studied for countless tests down there over those last few semesters.”

Katie Parham, ’11
“What is more important in a library than anything else - than everything else - is the fact that it exists.”

- Archibald MacLeish

Do great spaces make a difference? Ask today’s students, and they will tell you that a comfortable environment – with all the right resources close at hand – can make all the difference in the world.

Our students asked – and we listened – when we created our new technology lounge and redesigned our study rooms. The needs and comfort of our patrons also drive our ongoing creation of study alcoves in the South Caroliniana Library, and they’re reflected in many of the innovative architectural features of our new Hollings Library, where our philosophy of library spaces is evident at every turn.

Hollings was built for the most obvious of reasons: Our special collections had grown so dramatically that we were running out of room for them in our existing facilities. With the construction of this new space, we saw the opportunity to consider just what students and patrons want from a library and how our use of library spaces could maximize the value of our collections.

In addition to housing books, Hollings boasts exhibition, classroom, and reception spaces. Since it opened in the summer of 2010, these hospitable spaces have brought people together to research, learn, study, and simply share a collective love of books.

Support the enhancement or expansion of our facilities and you will transform the way students and other patrons experience their libraries. With your help, we will continue to develop new ways to put our space to the best possible use, making our libraries as welcoming, comfortable, and user-friendly as they can be.
“I enjoyed having these beautiful books in my home growing up. I love Catesby and I love the University of South Carolina, so I am very happy to be able to place these wonderful books where many students will be able to enjoy them also. If I’d known it was going to be so much fun to donate these volumes, I would have done it sooner.”

Susan Gibbes Robinson
“A library is not a luxury but one of the necessities of life.”

- Henry Ward Beecher

When the late Susan Gibbes Robinson, ’51, made her first donation to the University Libraries, she didn’t know she was starting a family affair. Robinson gave materials and books belonging to her father, Dr. J. Heyward Gibbes, to the South Caroliniana Library. Dr. Gibbes was the first community president of the University of South Caroliniana Society and a prominent South Carolina physician.

Our conscientious stewardship of Dr. Gibbes' materials led Mrs. Robinson to donate family movies to the Moving Image Research Collections (MIRC). Her son, Heyward, is working with MIRC to draw attention to the films as documents of family and South Carolina history by making them available on the MIRC website. Another son, David, donated an extensive collection of books on African and Arabian history that will strengthen research holdings in both the Irvin Department of Rare Books and Special Collections and the Thomas Cooper Library.

In 2009, Mrs. Robinson brought one of her family’s greatest treasures to the library: a very rare first edition of Mark Catesby’s 18th century “Natural History of Carolina, Florida, and the Bahama Islands,” purchased by Dr. Gibbes in the 1920s.

Having the Catesby first edition at USC is, says history professor Walter Edgar, “absolutely incredible. People don’t realize what a document like this can mean to students of history. Too often our state’s treasures are bought up by folks from elsewhere and carried off around the world. This one, thankfully, will stay home where we can learn the wonder and variety of our state’s natural heritage.”

Your gift to our libraries is a gift to our students and faculty, to the people of South Carolina, and to future generations for whom so many unique and valuable resources will be available.

THE CAMPAIGN for the UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA
“We are moving forward to make our University Libraries great. We have momentum, but reaching these goals takes financial support. We struggle to decide what is most important for the limited resources that we have. That is why private support will make the critical difference between having a good library and having a great one.”

Tom McNally, Dean
Carolina’s Promise is your opportunity to do something extraordinary.

Your important contribution will help expand our important contributions to the scholarly life of the University, the education of our students, and the research needs of the Columbia community and beyond.

Over the next few years, with your help, we will:

- provide enhanced student support through the creation of research awards, internships, and assistantships that spur innovative work and enhance the value of students’ degrees;
- endow faculty positions that will allow us to offer unrivaled services to library patrons;
- enhance our collections by growing endowments and expanding our technological capabilities;
- strengthen our facilities through renovations and expansion.

We’re extremely excited about this pivotal opportunity to build on our tradition of excellence and build an outstanding library that will benefit generations to come.

To lend your support, please contact:
USC Libraries Development, Thomas Cooper Library
library.sc.edu, libdev@mailbox.sc.edu or (803) 777-1278
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