Students express frustration with library technology, cite repetitive issues

The Edith Garland Dupré Library is a central hub for students on campus, providing both a study space and technology centers to the student body. According to the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, many different varieties of tech are open to students, but the primary attraction is the library's STEP Lab.

The school's website shares the STEP's mission statement: "The Office of STEP Support (OSS) strives to produce the most innovative and proficient ways of using technology to increase a student's educational experience."

However, this claim does not go without some objections. One student shared his dissatisfaction with current technology levels available in the library.

"The tech needs to be updated," said Alex Adams, a fifth-year senior in the computer science program.

Adams said his biggest issue was the "20-minute wait times" when it comes to actually logging into the university computers. This problematic aspect has led Adams to sparsely use the STEP Lab's facilities.

"Real talk: like twice a year," he said.

Adams also shared that his academic career had not suffered due to a certain luxury.

"I have free printing in the Honors Program," he said.

Adams urged the university to attend to problems with available technology, "Fix the login issue," he said. "That's pretty much it, other than like cell service in certain areas in here is doo-doo, but that's not really on the university."

Another student also shared her disappointment with the current status of the library's technology.

Elise Baldwin, a nursing major, said, "I mean, look at the computer systems. Most of them don't work anyway. And of those, three quarters of them don't print."

Unfortunately, Baldwin is not as lucky as Adams, and comes to the library more often.

"I come here more for the computer and printing services," Baldwin said.

According to a statement from a university employee, issues with technology could be a matter of funding.

Ian Richardson, the head of Distance Learning Services, provides library funding figures from the past five years.

Of this data, there are some very notable aspects.

In 2015, the maximum funds allotted to the library were a generous $90,174.70. This figure stands in stark contrast with a mere $3,801.44 in 2018.

However, funds greatly increased in 2019, numbering $33,216.33.

With apparent large increases in funding for the library, students hope that this money is put towards improvement of the technology available.

Baldwin, when asked if she would prefer library funding be directed to technology over books, said, "Yes, absolutely... You don't really see a lot of people checking out books here."

Baldwin also shared frustration with how the university chooses to spend their money.

"But think about it: UL can build a new ramp overlooking the swamp, but they can't appropriate it to the things we actually need like falling ceilings in a building or a library being updated," she said.

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