UL administrators discuss outdated library books, online solutions

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The Edith Garland Dupré Library at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette is often used by both students and faculty alike for the books, for the computers, and, for some tired students, to sleep. However, the library, in some ways, is outdated.

"The library's aesthetics should be updated since it has been 20 years since carpeting and furniture were installed," Susan Richard, the interim dean of university libraries and professor of library sciences said. "This is a well-used building, and the condition of the furnishings and interior reflects that use. An update in design and furnishings will lead to a better user experience."

The library also needs to be updated in terms of the books they offer; however, this is not as important to a lot of people because of computers.

"I think some of the books are outdated and need updating, but the majority of students, whether they are on campus or distance learning students are using electronic resources because they have access from anywhere. Plus more students have grown up researching on the computer instead of books," Valerie Jumonville from Fiscal Services in the Library said in a statement to The Vermilion.

Richard also added later that online resources are more convenient.

"Many academic departments select and/or request their materials to be purchased in electronic format. These resources are convenient, easy to use, and available 24/7," she said.

Although the resources are more focused on electronics now, that has not stopped the university from providing funding for library books.

According to the University Finance Records, which are available at the library, around $26,000 was spent on supplies in total in the 2018-2019 year with the budget for supplies for this upcoming year to be about the same; however, there is no specific account of the amount spent on books in that physical record.

The record for the specific amount spent on books is located in the collection department, and, according to Ian Richardson, head of Distance Learning Services, the amount spent on books in the last five years is as follows: 2015, $90,174.70; 2016, $67,105.99; 2017, $5,433.99; 2018, $3,801.44; 2019, $33,216.33. This implies that more regard for the books was added in the last year.

When asked why the amounts varied so drastically, he responded that it is because of the overall budget and because of electronics.

"When the state of Louisiana, and/or UL begin to struggle financially the overall budget suffers and everything monetarily downstream slowly dries up. This factor, coupled with a general transition to acquiring more electronic resources, is the reason it varies so much," Richardson said.

Students, while not knowing everything about the budget, believe that the books need to be updated and are out of date.

"The books need to be updated. I've seen a lot of resources that are from like the 1940s and the 1950s," Talitha Pickey, a Biology major at UL Lafayette said.

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Some students say many books in the Edith Garland Dupré Library are out of date.