

Penrose Library

Penrose Library provides critical services, collections, and programs in support of the Whitman College mission and the needs of the college curriculum. The Library provides an exceptional space for learning, personal growth, and communication, while at the same time providing a variety of print and electronic resources and services that enable students to engage in intellectual exploration and creativity. The faculty relies on the Library to provide materials not only for their pedagogical needs but also to help advance their research agendas. These activities in turn feed back into the classroom, providing a model for the student scholar at an institution that actively promotes undergraduate research.

Librarians at Penrose Library value an environment focused on teaching and learning. Instructional programming occurs at several different levels, all aimed at integrating life-long information literacy skills into a student's larger academic development. Librarians work collaboratively with faculty to prepare classroom presentations that facilitate a problem-based approach to instruction. The instructional program is fundamentally about "source literacy" to ensure that students have an understanding of the differences and the uses of primary and secondary sources. This approach provides the opportunity to move beyond simply reviewing secondary literature and into engaging in original research. Students are gradually learning how to construct "Research Questions" and integrate primary sources (both digital and analog) into their work. In essence, they begin to experience the complex and messy world of scholarship.

Beyond supplying rich and deep collections for research and learning needs, the Library offers physical and virtual spaces to meet the College's mission of graduating critical thinkers. Many of its resources are available in digital formats that are accessible anywhere students choose to study. The building provides a variety of spaces for learning opportunities including group study, quiet individual study and audio-visual support rooms. An informal environment is encouraged by providing appropriate furnishings that lead to collaborative, discussion-based learning. By focusing on the social as well as the intellectual needs of students, personal growth and social development are fostered in the Library – values which the College strives to instill in Whitman graduates.