

# Empowering Student Employees: Integrating Information Literacy with Practical Training

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EMORY  
LIBRARIES

Oxford College Library



# Oxford and Emory Land and Labor Acknowledgement

Emory University acknowledges the Muscogee (Creek) people who lived, worked, produced knowledge on, and nurtured the land where Emory's Oxford and Atlanta campuses are now located. In 1821, fifteen years before Emory's founding, the Muscogee were forced to relinquish this land. We recognize the sustained oppression, land dispossession, and involuntary removals of the Muscogee and Cherokee peoples from Georgia and the Southeast.

We acknowledge with respect the diverse histories and cultures of the people of this region and acknowledge that we are colonizers in this territory. We also acknowledge that Emory University's Oxford Campus, where we are employed, was in part constructed by enslaved people and that the wealth and success of this university was built on their labor.



# Oxford College of Emory University

- Two-year undergraduate college of Emory University
- Located on its original campus in Oxford, Georgia, a community about 38 miles east of Atlanta
- 1049 total students



# Student Employment at the Oxford College Library

- 50 student employees annually
- Every staff member supervises 3-4 students
- Student Employment Team oversees employee program as a whole



## Diversifying the Library Field

- In 2017:
  - 85.9% of the library workforce in the US identified as white
  - 82.5% women, and 17.5% men (Data USA, n.d.)

## Reducing Barriers to Entry

- Students hired as applications are received
- We do not require previous work experience

# Library Leaders Program

- 2nd year students
- 10-15 Library Leaders each year
- Aligns with other leadership positions on campus (e.g. RAs, Orientation Leaders)
- Library Leaders supervise the circulation desk without staff supervision from 10pm-12am



# Initial Training



## Library Leader Week

- Library Leaders arrive a week before move in
- Week includes information sessions and fun events

## Group Training

- 3-hour session
- Broken into several sections, including research skills and customer service

## Training Design

- Library Leaders assist with sections
- Training is interactive
- Library employees lead training based on their work area

# Ongoing Training

- Each staff member is assigned a set of training activities to be completed by each student at the beginning of their employment.
- Students work at circulation desk and in staff offices.
- Staff hours include learning in real-life library skills.
- We developed resources for easy review of training for both students and supervisors.



# Feedback and Assessment

We assess our program using both formal and informal channels:

- Training assessments
- Library Leader meetings
- Student employee suggestions
- End of year assessment forms
- Exit assessments



# Students as Partners in Information Literacy

Throughout their time working in the library, we train our students to become strong researchers with an understanding of information literacy.

## Reference Worksheet #3

1. Do students have access to a *New York Times* subscription from Emory? If so, how can they sign up for it?
2. Do we own *Moonlight* on streaming or DVD?
  - a. If streaming, what is the name of the streaming service you can watch it on?
  - b. If DVD, which libraries own the DVD?
3. Go to the research database called ProQuest News & Newspapers. Find any article published on your birthday (date and year). Click on the article and find the Cite button in the top right. Auto-generate a citation in APA 7<sup>th</sup> edition (basic) and write it below. (Hint: Use the "Publication Date" feature in Advanced Search).

## Sample Open-ended Questions

- Where did you hear about \_\_\_\_\_?
  - Or, Please tell me more about what you know about \_\_\_\_\_.
- How do you hope to use what we can find about \_\_\_\_\_?
  - Or, Please tell me a bit about the work you are trying to accomplish so we can find the best resources to use to get there.
- When do you need this information?
  - Or, If you would share your timeline with me, I can consider all the alternatives we have that will fit with that.
- Where have you already found some information about \_\_\_\_\_?
  - Or, Please tell me where you have already looked to find information about \_\_\_\_\_.
- Why do you think [that detail] of the information is important?
  - Or, Because you say that you need to find [information of certain date, by a certain publisher, etc.], can you explain more about why that detail is important for what you need.
- Who else has been able to suggest places for you to look for \_\_\_\_\_?
  - Or, If someone else has already started working with you on this, it would help me to know where they suggested you search as well as what you've already been able to locate.
- What do you hope to find out about \_\_\_\_\_?
  - Or, Please tell me more about what you think you still need to complete your work on this.

Source: Reference Interview. Library Training and Learning Hub. <https://librarylearn.org/information-services/reference-interview/>



# Keeping Students Invested in the Library

Creating and maintaining a positive workplace culture is critical to keeping students motivated.

- Social activities
- Community building
- Additional training opportunities:
  - CPR and Fire Safety
  - Resilience training
  - Career workshops

# Student Leadership on Campus

- Students participate in orientation training with other student leaders on campus (RAs, OLs, etc.)
- Students represent the library as a leadership opportunity
- Student employees play visible roles in Library Game Night, orientation activities, and other events



# Student Employment and High Impact Practices

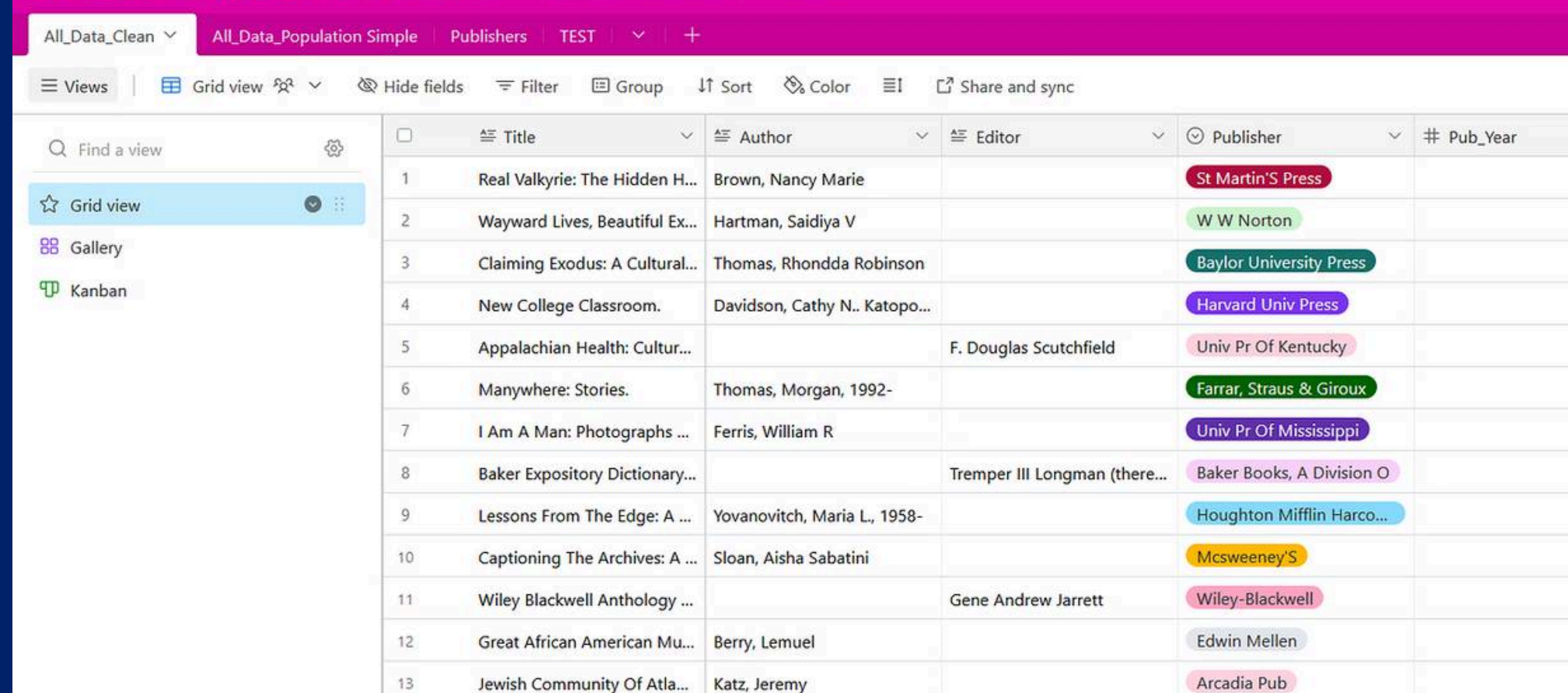
In high impact practices, students connect their learning to life experiences in the real world through experiential learning activities. (Vine, 2021)

- All students must work at least one hour a week in the library offices, learning basic office work.
- Student are matched to projects that meet their academic and professional interests
- Students meet with their supervisor on a weekly basis, practicing the basics of workplace expectations and communications



# Student Projects

- Usability testing and data analysis to improve the library website
- Student Collection Committee to add student voices to library collections
- Purchase Analysis to make sure our collection meets DEI goals



The screenshot shows a data table with the following columns: Title, Author, Editor, Publisher, and Pub\_Year. The table contains 13 rows of data, each representing a book entry. The publisher names are highlighted in colored boxes.

	Title	Author	Editor	Publisher	Pub_Year
1	Real Valkyrie: The Hidden H...	Brown, Nancy Marie		St Martin'S Press	
2	Wayward Lives, Beautiful Ex...	Hartman, Saidiya V		W W Norton	
3	Claiming Exodus: A Cultural...	Thomas, Rhondda Robinson		Baylor University Press	
4	New College Classroom.	Davidson, Cathy N., Katopo...		Harvard Univ Press	
5	Appalachian Health: Cultur...		F. Douglas Scutchfield	Univ Pr Of Kentucky	
6	Manywhere: Stories.	Thomas, Morgan, 1992-		Farrar, Straus & Giroux	
7	I Am A Man: Photographs ...	Ferris, William R		Univ Pr Of Mississippi	
8	Baker Expository Dictionary...		Tremper III Longman (there...	Baker Books, A Division O	
9	Lessons From The Edge: A ...	Yovanovitch, Maria L., 1958-		Houghton Mifflin Harco...	
10	Captioning The Archives: A ...	Sloan, Aisha Sabatini		Mcsweeney'S	
11	Wiley Blackwell Anthology ...		Gene Andrew Jarrett	Wiley-Blackwell	
12	Great African American Mu...	Berry, Lemuel		Edwin Mellen	
13	Jewish Community Of Atla...	Katz, Jeremy		Arcadia Pub	

Bunny by Mona Awad is about a college student who does not have many friends, but then joins a culty writing group where they all call one another bunny. I think this would be a good addition to the Oxford collection because it is relatable to the student body being about a college student who is grappling with a new era of her life. Yet, it does this without being the same basic trope as other coming of age novels. It has an obscure plot with themes of not only coming of age, friendship, and womanhood, but also horror. This allows it to be both relatable and unusual.

 Horror, nice  ✨  🚀

Mar 6

Student Worker

This sounds very interesting and like you said its such a different spin on coming of age! Added to my personal read list 😊

# Student Employees Make Better Students

- Student employees may experience reduced library anxiety
- Student employees disseminate library lessons to their peers
- Student employees have a greater sense of belonging on campus

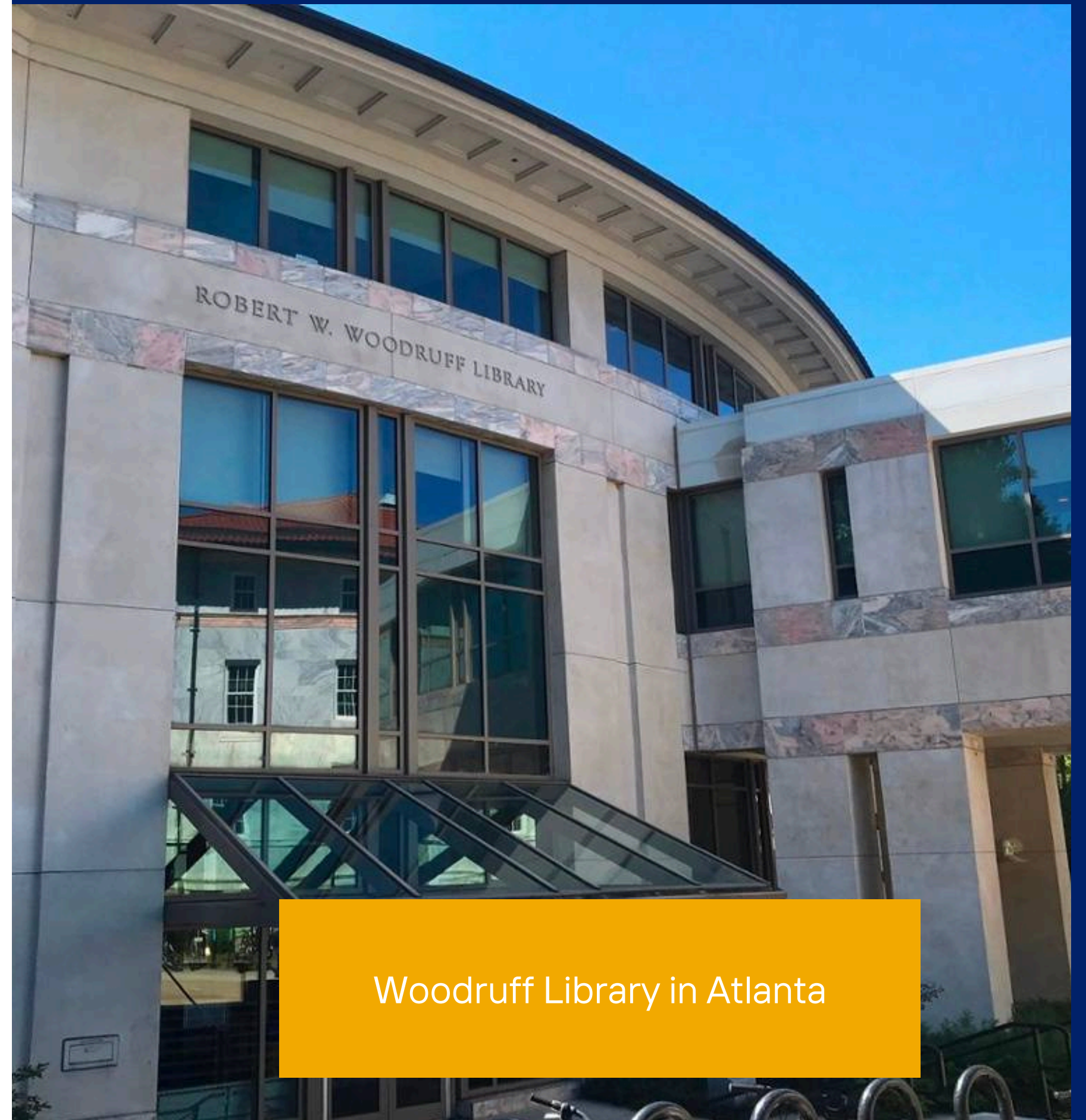
(McAfee, 2018)



**Oxford Students in 2019**

# Recognizing Student Experience

- We help students pursue other library jobs after they transition to Emory's Atlanta campus
- We host Q&A sessions with former employees and write recommendations for jobs and internships
- We ask students about their interests to assign relevant projects and training



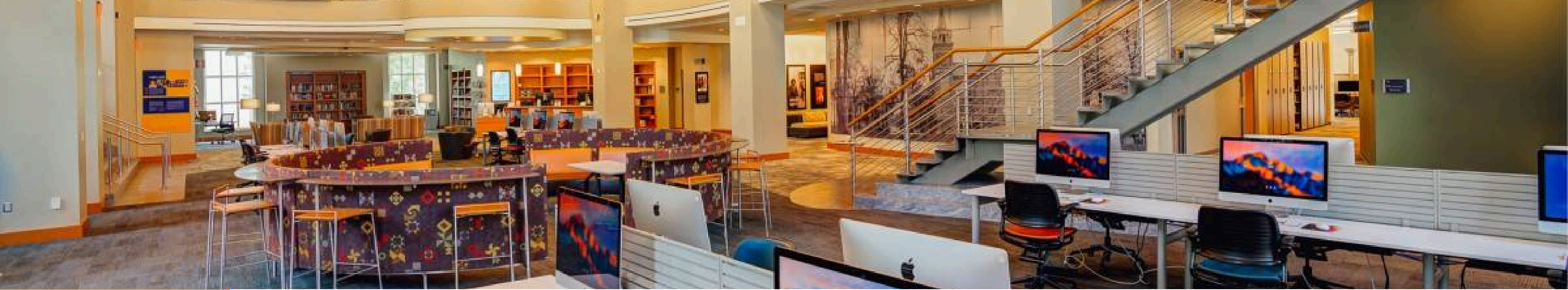
Woodruff Library in Atlanta





# Future Directions

- We want to implement a new mentorship program that pairs Library Leaders with new student employees.
- We will explore more opportunities to collaborate with other groups on campus, especially with professional development, training, and onboarding.
- We're eager to develop new opportunities to work with our student employees as partners, particularly in information literacy, library displays, and classroom activities.



# Takeaways

- Involve as many people in student employment as possible.
- Make professional development a priority.
- Design a leadership/mentorship role for high-performing students.
- Approach the employment program from a teaching mindset.  
Establish learning outcomes.
- Develop channels to assess your program.

# References

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# Questions?



## Scan for Slides