

Pandemic: What do we do now?

How the Mississippi State University Libraries Weathered the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Timeline of COVID-19

- End of 2019** - Unidentified virus in reported Wuhan, China
- Jan. 20, 2020** - Cases of the virus confirmed in other countries including the United States
- Jan. 30, 2020** - World Health Organization (WHO) declares global health emergency
- Feb. 11, 2020** - Virus named Covid-19 for coronavirus disease 2019 by WHO
- Feb. 29, 2020** - First Covid-19 death reported in the United States
- March 9, 2020** - Spring Break begins at Mississippi State University (MSU)
- March 11, 2020** - First case of Covid-19 reported in Forrest Co., Mississippi
- March 13, 2020** - President Trump declares "National Emergency"
- March 14, 2020** - Governor Reeves declares a "State of Emergency" in Mississippi
- March 16, 2020** - MSU Spring Break is extended
- March 19, 2020** - Mississippi Public schools ordered closed until April 17, 2020
- March 30, 2020** - MSU Libraries announce revised operating procedures
- April 1, 2020** - Statewide "Shelter-in-Place" order set for April 3-20, 2020
- April 17, 2020** - Statewide "Shelter-in-Place" order extended one week
- June 5, 2020** - MSU Libraries update operational plans
- June 15, 2020** - MSU's Mitchell Memorial Library opens in a limited capacity. Only Computer Commons open to faculty, staff and students via key card access
- August 3, 2020** - MSU's Mitchell Memorial Library resumes normal operations and opens to all patrons

The Library Today

- **Fall Semester began on August 17, 2020 with the library resuming nearly normal operations.**
- **Most library departments are operating with some modifications.**
- **All library instruction takes place online.**
- **Most reference consultations take place online, however, a space for in-person consultations has been established where social distancing can be maintained.**
- **Special Collections is open by appointment only.**
- **The library is electrostatically cleaned daily. Disinfectant cleaning wipes are available in key locations so that patrons can clean surfaces as they feel the need.**
- **All returned books are held for three days before being returned to the stacks.**
- **Cowbell Well is the University program to educate and stress preventative practices to minimize the spread of COVID-19.**



References:

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Mississippi State University. (2020, September). Cowbell Well. <https://www.msstate.edu/covid19/students/cowbell-well>

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Library Processes During the Shutdown

While the University at large was closed, library departments worked diligently to maintain services.

Access Services - Maintained access for users through many avenues including Interlibrary Loans, Electronic Reserves, and book circulation via mail delivery. Six employees rotated shifts inside the building to assist patrons. When possible, advance preparation was performed by employees at home, so that tasks could be executed more efficiently by employees when working on site at the Library.

MaxxSouth Digital Media Center (DMC) - Technology Specialists from the DMC continued workshop presentations online. The Media Specialist produced 200 face shields and ear protectors for frontline workers. The DMC handled the circulation of laptops and hot spots to faculty and students.

Systems - Several Systems employees prepared 150 laptops for use by imaging, encrypting and installing software. Systems also assisted the DMC with circulation of these items by coordinating delivery to faculty and students via the Library entrance.

Research Services - The Research Services faculty worked remotely to provide virtual reference and instruction services such as Chat, recorded library instruction sessions and workshops, and any general reference requests.

Collection Management Services (CMS) - The faculty and staff of CMS supported continuity of cataloging projects by working remotely where possible. Many electronic thesis and dissertations (ETD), microfiche, and other cataloging projects were successfully completed despite the closure of the library.

General Mail - Mail was sorted and sprayed to allow sanitation prior to outbound delivery the following day. Received books and book-like materials were quarantined for three days.