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# How a Small Library Can Support Digital Scholarship... Without a DS Center or Anyone with DS in Their Job Title

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# How a Small Library Can Support Digital Scholarship... Without a DS Center or Anyone with DS in Their Job Title

## **Abstract**

*Webinar Description:* Digital scholarship is a growing trend across a range of higher education institutions, from research-intensive universities to small liberal arts colleges. Many academic libraries are responding to the trend by creating services and spaces to support digital scholarship. But how do smaller institutions with limited resources provide broad support, particularly when there's little-to-no expectation of hiring multiple experts to provide services and support across a range of areas (e.g. data services, GIS, data visualization)? This webinar will explore approaches for mid-size and smaller libraries and library experts to support digital scholarship given staffing and other resource limitations.

## **Keywords**

digital scholarship, digital humanities, Musselman Library, summer fellowship

## **Comments**

Presented as part of the webinar "Building a Digital Scholarship Program with Limited Resources," hosted by ACRL Digital Scholarship Centers Interest Group, on February 6, 2018.

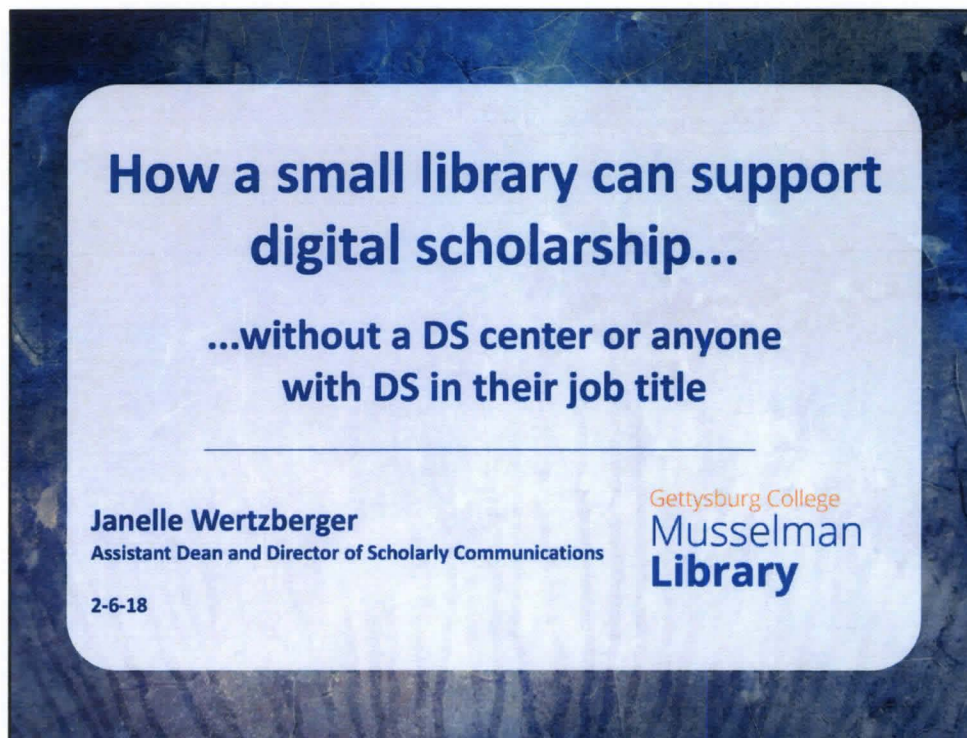
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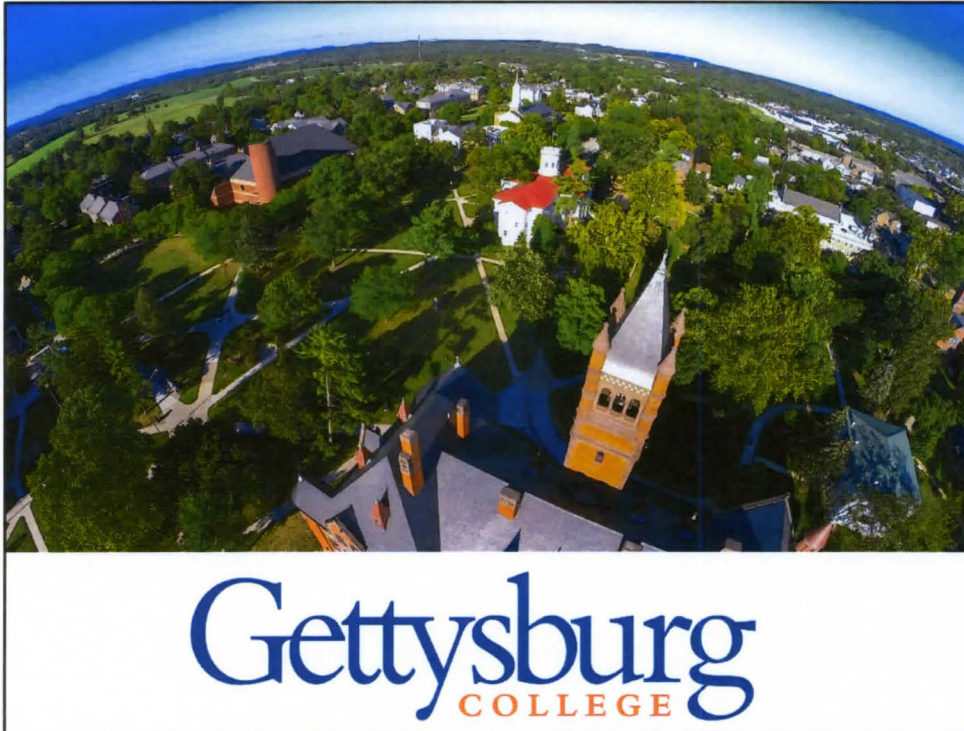
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Overall webinar title: "Building a Digital Scholarship Program with Limited Resources"

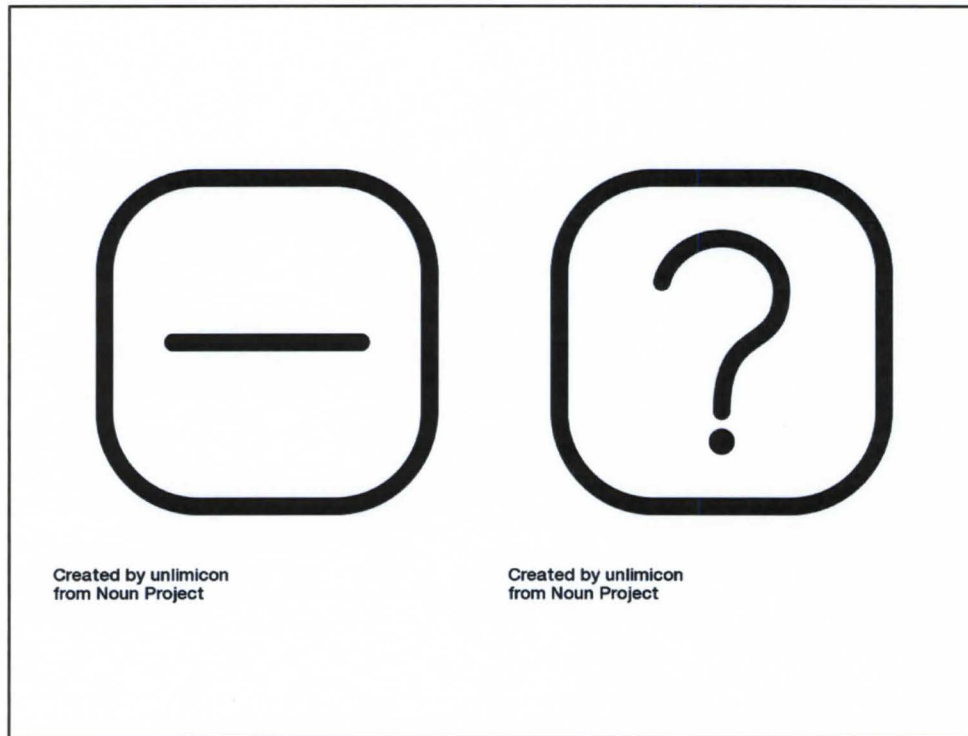
Image: [Digital Art Texture 160](#) by [mercurycode](#)



## About Gettysburg College

I work at Gettysburg College in Gettysburg, PA. We are a small, private, residential liberal arts college with about 2,600 undergraduate students. Liberal arts colleges are a rare breed in the American education system. By “liberal arts college,” I don’t mean a large university that has a College of Liberal Arts and Sciences – I mean a small school that focuses on undergraduates and provides a broad foundation in liberal arts and sciences as well as a specialized major. Only about 2% of U.S. college graduates receive this type of education. Studying for a bachelor’s degree at Gettysburg is different in many ways than studying for one at an ARL school. We have small classes, no graduate student instructors, many opportunities for high impact educational experiences, and an emphasis on teaching. Often visitors are amazed at the kind of research our students do, and I like to quip that we don’t have any pesky graduate students to get in the way of undergraduate excellence. We are all about undergraduate excellence.

Gettysburg has a lot going for it in terms of an environment that encourages creative teaching and doesn’t overemphasize high productivity publishing for faculty.



Still, it's important to recognize the aspects of our climate that allowed a DS program to grow, as well as the aspects that were missing. I'll start with what we DIDN'T have:

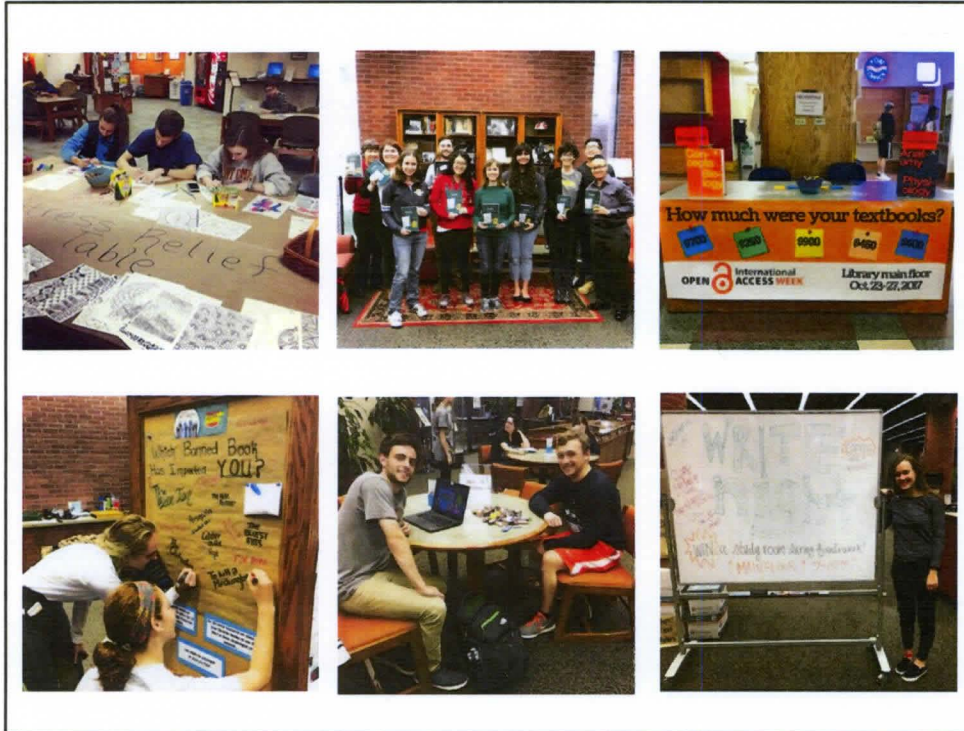
We didn't have:

- a mandate to start a DS program from the administration, either at the Provost or President level. Not only did we not have a mandate, we didn't really have understanding of what DS is or why it's important.
- Faculty using DS methods in their research or teaching, at least not in a way that they recognized as "DS"
- Space or money to construct a physical DS center

Check Mark by unlimicon from the Noun Project

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We DID have:

- A library culture that is very centered on students and student learning (as these photos from our Instagram account attest)
- Our library dean has fostered a culture in which all employees are encouraged to develop ideas
- ...and she provides support for professional development that helps us have those ideas and execute them

I believe that our library culture is the #1 reason that we have a library-led digital scholarship program today.

In addition, we also had some influence from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Mellon gave Gettysburg College an undergraduate research grant and kept asking us where the digital scholarship was. Eventually, someone wrote it into the grant... and then there was a little more interest when the library started talking about digital scholarship.

Today, we have a DS summer fellowship for students and a reputation on campus for being the people who are ready to consult with faculty and students on DH issues.

Photos from <https://www.instagram.com/gburgcollibrary/>



The centerpiece of our DS program is the Digital Scholarship Summer Fellowship.

- 10-week, paid, summer program for rising sophomores and juniors
- More programmatic than other summer research fellowships on campus, which tend to be faculty-mentored independent research or research based in our science faculty labs. Our fellowship is grounded in a curriculum that introduces students to digital scholarship concepts and tools.
- In addition to learning about DS, students also conduct their own research during the summer.
- The expected outcome is a student-created, public-facing, digital research project.

## Resources



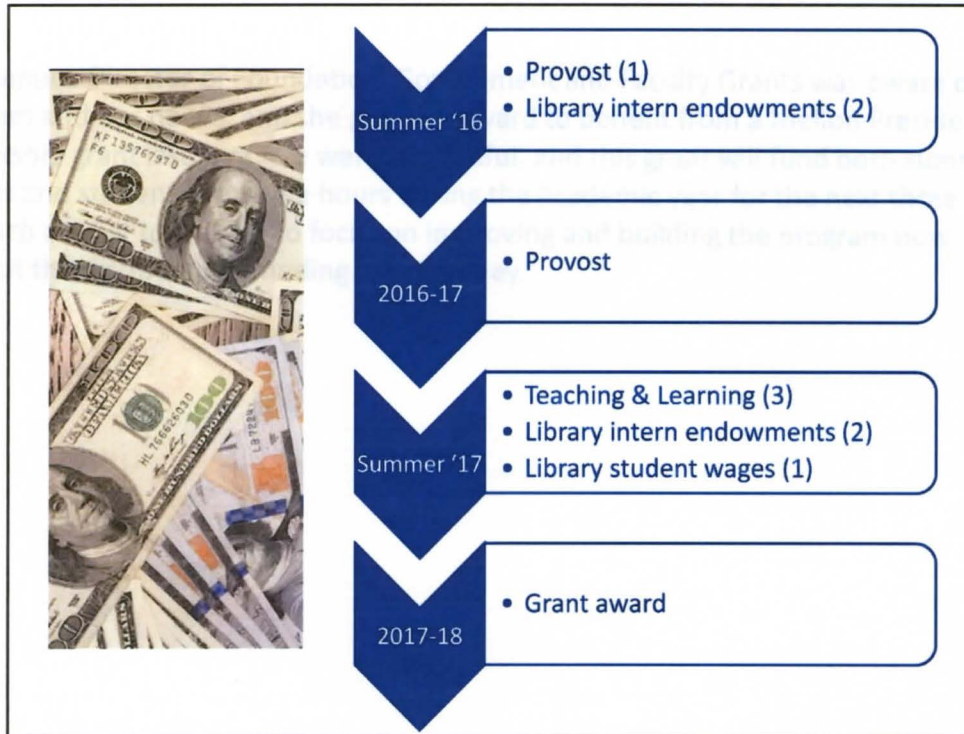
What resources are needed to run a summer fellowship like ours? I selected these images for this slide because I was tempted to claim that you can run a surprising portion of a digital fellowship on post-its and white boards. I knew you wouldn't really believe that, so I'll also talk about financial and other resources. (But really – we utilize post-its and white boards a LOT.)

Let me tell you what we didn't need.

- We did NOT need extra technology. Our dean was surprised that we didn't request a technology budget. All the software students used was already licensed by Information Technology, or freely available.
- We did NOT need extra space. We don't have a DS center or any designated physical space for DS. That said, running a program like ours does require physical space. If you're going to teach workshops for students, they have to be held somewhere. Because we don't have summer classes, our building is underutilized in the summertime – and we were able to use our classroom lab whenever we wanted to for structured learning sessions. Our students also worked on their own for a lot of the time. We found that our student fellows needed both independent and group work spaces, but they worked everywhere – in a library computer lab, a library meeting room, study spaces on various floors of the library, Special Collections and College Archives, and the library patio. Flexible space works best for us.

So, we didn't need extra technology or extra space...but we did need some money, and we needed the right people.





Let's talk about money first. The largest amounts are for student stipends and housing costs. Our stipend is \$3500 (consistent with other summer research experiences on campus), and summer campus housing is about \$400. We did not pay for student meals except for a weekly lunch meeting. We also spent a modest amount of money on field trips, mostly for campus vehicle rentals and gas. We did pay for student meals when we were off campus.

People always ask me where the funding comes from. For us, it comes from a variety of sources, both on campus and off. The hardest money to find was the first batch – after that, it was easier to get more money based on what we had accomplished. As you can see, we funded our first 3 summer fellows with \$4000 from the Provost's Office and \$8000 from within our own library budget. Then, after attending the end-of-summer presentations in 2016 and liking what he saw, our Associate Provost for Academic Technology Initiatives & Faculty Development gave us another \$4000 to fund students to work through the academic year. They assisted with DS needs in the library and in the classroom. (By the way, we pay our DS Fellows \$8.50/hour.)

Progress was impressive enough that our Center for Creative Teaching & Learning chipped in with a significant amount for the next summer. We continued to utilize the library budget that summer. And based on those successes, we were able to get a grant award from the Arthur Vining Davis Foundation to fund the following school year (which is where we are now).



Even more important than money, I think, is getting the right people involved. Human resources can make or break a program like this. As you can see by this slide, we go with the “more is better” approach.

It has been important to our success to have an interdepartmental team of librarians who each bring their own strengths to the program. All important:

- Systems and technology
- Information literacy and instruction
- Scholarly communications and copyright
- Special Collections and Archives

Our library’s DS committee has representation from all these areas, and this core group of people had oversight over the summer experience.

We pulled in other campus partners, too – from Information Technology, Computer Science, and History. We even had a recent Gettysburg alumna who works as a User Experience Designer deliver a session on user experience – the students loved that. We have 17 people who help deliver our summer program.



**Students from  
Gettysburg and  
Bucknell after a  
workshop on  
creating elevator  
speeches**

**Lauren White '18  
presents her project  
at the Keystone DH  
conference in  
Philadelphia**



We created an even more vibrant community by looking beyond our campus. We had very fruitful encounters with librarians and student fellows at Bucknell University and Lafayette College. We took students to regional conferences that exposed them to ideas and digital specialties that we don't currently support here. When they were ready, we found opportunities for students to present their work at conferences. That is one of the most gratifying things about being involved in this work. It takes a lot of preparation and rehearsal, but we make sure students are ready to present – and the feedback they get from attendees, as well as the confidence they gain, is absolutely worth it.

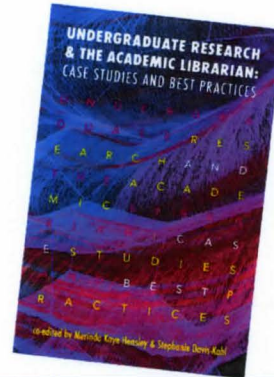
What's next? We have secured funding for the next three years, so we're not paying attention to that kind of resource issue at the moment. Right now, our DS committee is concentrating on improving the 2018 summer experience. We have reviewed and tweaked the summer curriculum (we also condensed it, and it will be an 8-week experience in 2018). We are expanding the circle of librarians who are involved in delivering the curriculum – this will be great for the students but also make it more sustainable for us. We just rewrote the job advertisement. We are revising our recruitment plan and planning to actively recruit in even more areas than we have in the past. Our goal is to recruit the most diverse applicant pool to date – we're looking for diversity in discipline and digital approaches as well facets of personal identity in our applicants.



[dssf.musselmanlibrary.org/2016/](https://dssf.musselmanlibrary.org/2016/)

[dssf.musselmanlibrary.org/2017/](https://dssf.musselmanlibrary.org/2017/)

Miessler, R.C., and Janelle Wertzberger. 2017. "Dreaming Big: Library-Led Digital Scholarship for Undergraduates at a Small Institution." In *Undergraduate Research and the Academic Librarian: Case Studies & Best Practices*, edited by Stephanie Davis-Kahl and Merinda Kaye Hensley. Chicago, Illinois: Association of College & Research Libraries.



We invite you to take whatever might be helpful to you in developing your own program. One of the best things about librarians is that we know how to share. Whether you're thinking about starting or expanding a DS program, if anything in our curriculum helps you do that, please use it!

Bucknell University started a Digital Scholarship Summer Research Fellows program in 2017, and they began with the syllabus we created in 2016. We liked some of the changes they made to it, so we're reusing some of their tweaks in our 2018 program. Sharing benefits all our work and we welcome it.

I've listed the URLs for the two summer programs we've run so far – you can find the syllabus, student blog, and links to final projects there. There's also the reference for a book chapter that I wrote with my colleague R.C. Miessler. You can find that chapter in our open access institutional repository (of course).

Thank you!



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Slides are available in  
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