

Assistant Director Report October 2026

Polaris

Ongoing Performance Issues

We have been experiencing regular Polaris slowdowns and outages since going live in August. They most commonly occur early in the morning and between 2 and 4pm. They are usually resolved in an hour or two. OWLS has informed us that their implementation team has addressed the issue in the following ways.

1. Implemented geofencing to block international bots. This made an immediate difference in performance.
2. Added more server memory.
3. Cleaned up background processes.
4. Updated their servers to the newest version of Vector monitoring. The team found that Vector has sometimes been using significant server resources and believes this may be contributing to the slowness.

However, despite this we are still experiencing frequent slowdowns and outages. OWLS noted that the other library system nearest us, Winding Rivers, who also uses Polaris does not experience issues like this, so they are confident they can narrow down the issue to Polaris's installation on OWLS library servers.

Staffing

New Hire Trainings

Alan Voss and Crystal Thiel, our two newest On-Call library assistants have been fully trained. This means they are capable of working our service desks solo, are able to pick up open shifts, and are working one day every other week as well as Saturdays every few months.

Materials

Book Repair

Last month I reported that we were planning on ordering a Thermobind book repair machine in addition to a paper cutter that allows us to trim the edges of a damaged book even so that they may be glued more effectively. The Thermobind book machine works exactly as advertised and we are quite happy with the results. Unfortunately, the paper cutter broke within the first week of use, so I ordered a much heavier duty one. It has taken longer than expected to ship, though it is expected to ship later this month.

RHF Donation

Ashley gave a great summary of the RHF donation we received this month that will support our large print collection and other functions that align with our 2027-2030 strategic plan. I want to provide an update on specifically what we are choosing to do with the \$10,000 doing towards our large print collection. I have been in communication with Cengage/Thorndike to see if we could purchase such a large number of items at a cheaper price than our normal vendors. I was happy to discover that the \$10,000 does qualify us to purchase the books at a discounted rate that is higher than we could get elsewhere. In addition, they support EDI ordering, which is the new ordering process that we are utilizing with Polaris. Currently, Spencer is working with them to set it up with Polaris. In the meantime, I am working on going through our large print collection to identify series with gaps in them, items that may need weeding to make room for the new items and selecting new items that would make a welcome addition to our collection. Once I finish this and Spencer confirms EDI ordering is set up, I will place the order.

Library Hardware

Self-Checks, RFID Pads, and Gates

The self-checks have arrived and are working perfectly. We even discovered we can include marketing on our screens featuring any library programs we'd like to promote. The RFID pads were also delivered, and Spencer is working on setting them up. If they are ready on time, he will train staff on how to use them during our staff training day on November 6th.

The gates and AMHS are due to arrive on December 8th. Pete Nelson from DPW and I met two weeks ago to look over the schematics that Bibliotheca provided and verified that the hole that our current bookdrop occupies can be modified to accommodate the new AMHS. We determined that the existing hole thankfully needs only minor alterations. However, the width of the wall underneath the bookdrop is wider than the width suggested by Bibliotheca. Because of this, a representative from Bibliotheca is going to meet Pete and I on October 26th to see if the width will cause a problem, and if so, see if we can do anything creative to make it work out without cutting into the stone.