

Sending department faculty to MaRS: the Materials Request System

James Parrigin, Coordinator of Library Instruction, SU Libraries

Chris Woodall, Technology Librarian, SU Libraries

Abstract

Subject librarians strive to develop collections that support academic programs, and we often rely upon department faculty to assist with recommending materials that contribute to collection quality and relevance. However, encouraging department faculty to contribute remains a challenge.

MaRS enhances this process by centralizing the interactions that occur between librarians, department faculty, the course reserves coordinator, and technical services.

Ever-expanding liaison roles

Liaison librarian work continues to expand toward relational areas of the academy while emphasis on traditional collection development duties has remained static or has decreased (*SPEC Kit*, 2015).

Large research university libraries centralize collection development practices as a strategy that allows liaison librarians to devote more time to engagement and instruction (*LJ* 2017).

Smaller academic libraries with de-centralized collection development practices rely upon liaison librarians and department faculty for material selection.

The top challenges to collection development:

1. receiving input from faculty,
2. making format decisions—print vs. electronic
3. time constraints

(*LJ*, Academic Library Collection Development Survey, 2018)

For SU library liaisons, interactions with dept. faculty are sporadic, difficult to document, repeatedly asked questions (“Did I order that book?”), and mostly confined to easily mis-placed email exchanges.

Consequently, there is also a disconnect with other library units such as Course Reserves and Acquisition and Cataloging even though these units comprise a critically-important workflow.

MaRS

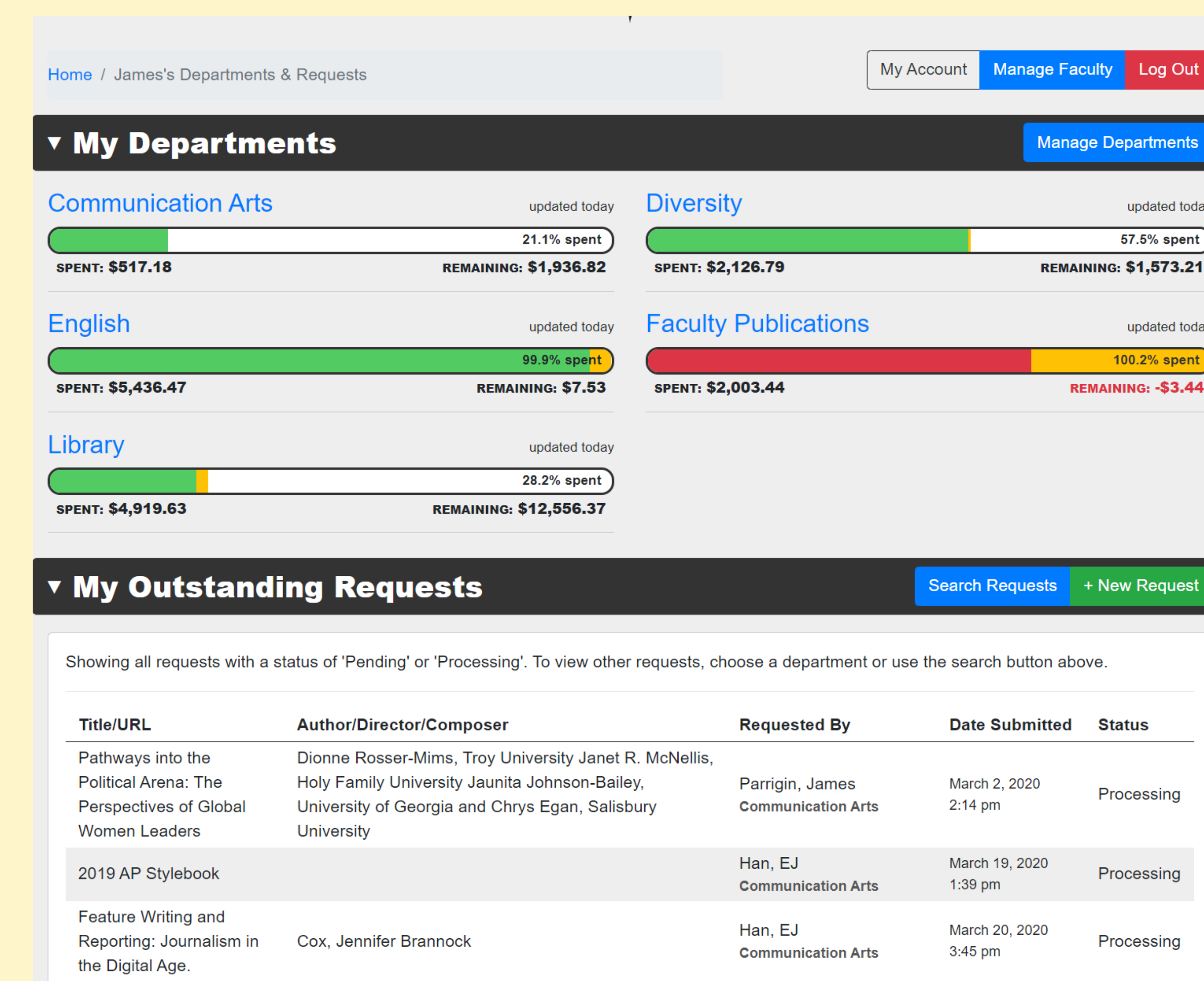
The system assists faculty in requesting material to add to SU Libraries’ collections. This includes books, films, music scores, software, and other materials with the exception of standing orders.

MaRS is intended to enhance communication between faculty and SU Libraries by

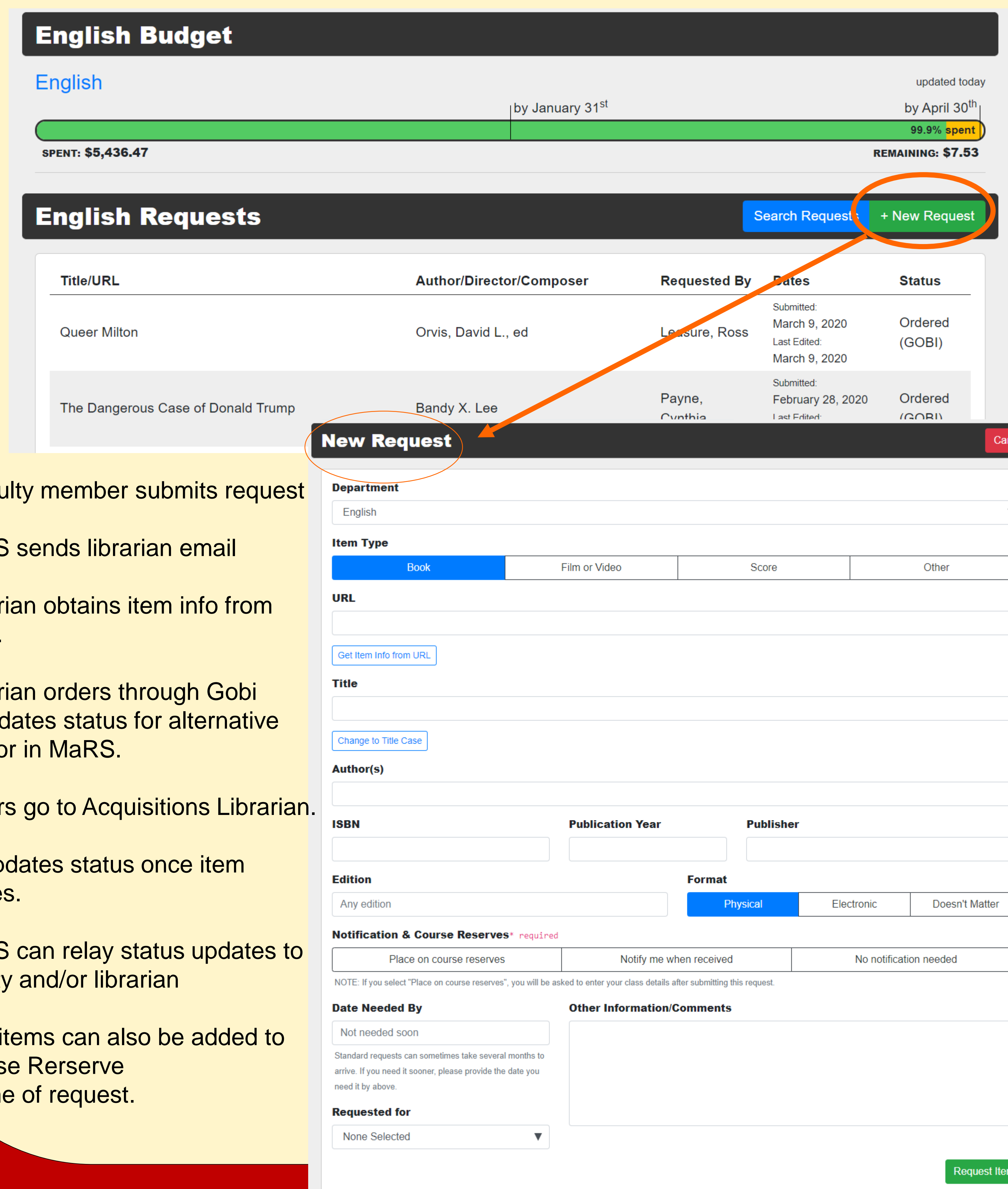
- helping faculty keep track of materials they have and have not yet requested.
- increasing department awareness of requested materials.
- helping department liaisons submit requests on behalf of their colleagues, if need be.
- helping departments to prioritize budget allocations

Inside MaRS

Librarian view:



English department faculty view:



A faculty member submits request

MaRS sends librarian email

Librarian obtains item info from mars.

Librarian orders through Gobi or updates status for alternative vendor in MaRS.

Orders go to Acquisitions Librarian.

AL updates status once item arrives.

MaRS can relay status updates to faculty and/or librarian

New items can also be added to Course Reserve at time of request.

Seismic activity!

Usage since the MaRS launch, January 2019

Librarian accounts: 19
Dept. Faculty accounts: 221 (of 435 FT faculty)
Requests processed: 1,496
Books: 1319
DVDs: 133
Musical scores: 42
Other: 2

Submitted by librarians: 1166
Submitted by faculty: 330

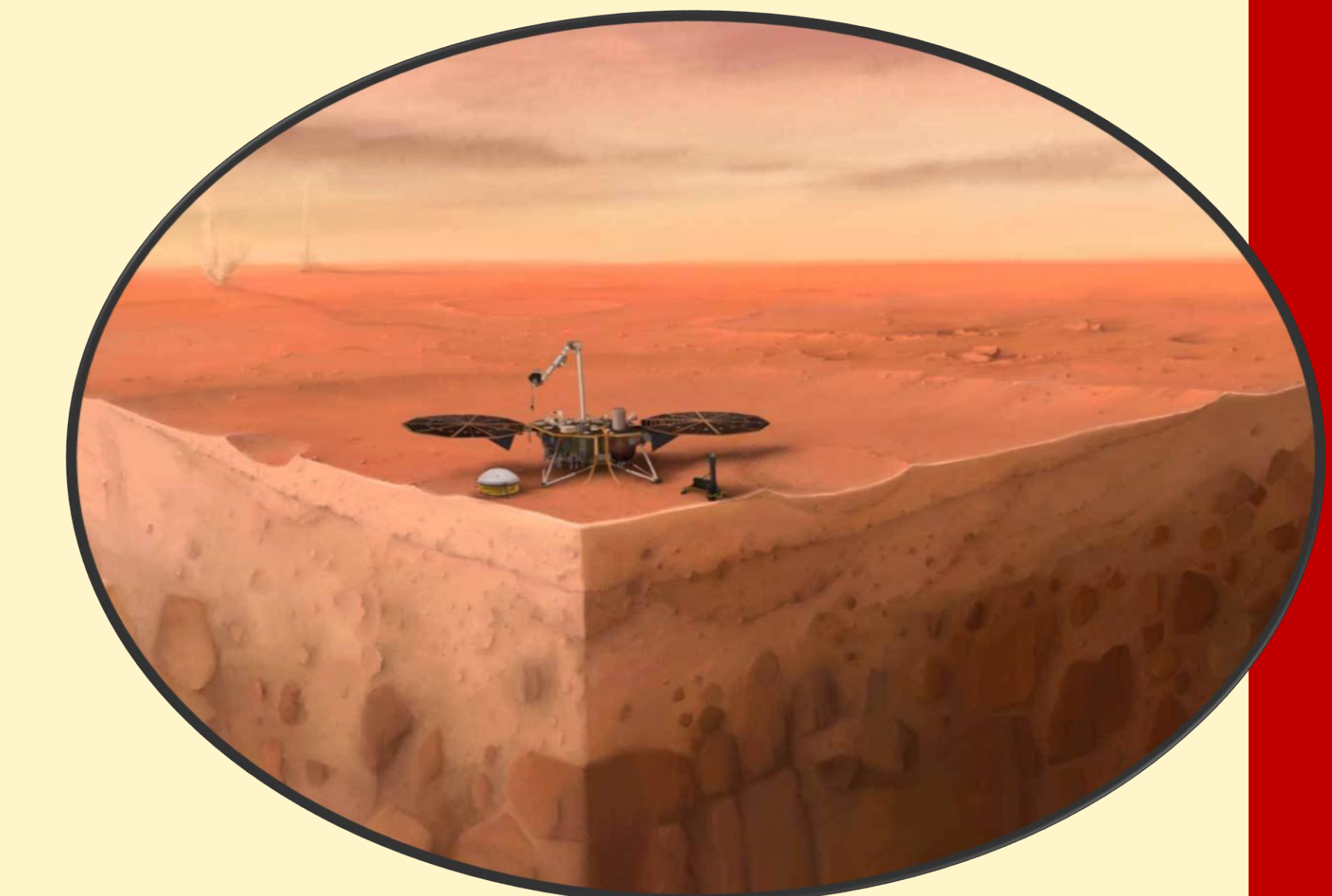


Image source: <https://mars.nasa.gov/>

Top requestors:

English 199	Conf. Res. 67	Comm 51
Leisure books 157	Music 62	Geography 45
Environ. Studies 94	Art 60	Health Sci 44
Nursing 85	Mod Lang 55	Educ. 41
Library 82		
Diversity 73		

MaRS' trajectory

Future plans include:

Faculty use analysis (underway)

How many users, how often used, how many faculty requests made since implementation.

Faculty survey

Who elects to use MaRS and why? What additional functions should it have? If faculty are not using it, why don't they use it?

Faculty librarian survey.

All faculty liaison librarians are aware of MaRS, but they don't all use it. Discover why.