

Kevin Butler

Library Award for Undergraduate Research Reflection

The library resources present at the University of Maryland have been essential in helping me in my political science research project. My project, U.S. Military Operations Post-War on Terror, is an examination of U.S. military presence and operations, analyzed through the lens of the lessons learned from the Iraq and Afghan wars. The library services at UMD, provided me with all resources necessary to complete my project. Most of my time and effort was spent in Mckeldin Library, where I learned to make the best use of its capabilities. Within Mckeldin, the research help center, undergraduate writing center, and IT help desk all were essential toward not only helping me finish my undergraduate research project, but also in teaching me how to properly research and work to my fullest extent in the future.

University of Maryland's library services were helpful towards my project by allowing me to borrow any books and articles necessary to my research. The book borrowing policy at UMD libraries allowed me to check out a variety of research materials. Historical books on the Middle East, current news articles, periodicals on Iraq and Afghanistan, and even archived news articles from past years are all widely available at UMD libraries, and all are accessible to any undergraduate student with the need or desire to research any topic. Their policy toward using or borrowing any of these resources was essential toward the completion of my project as well, by allowing me to not only use their resources, but to borrow these resources for use at home and in the classroom as well.

In addition to the enormous amount of resources available at UMD libraries, the Undergraduate Writing Center provided the tutoring and proofreading necessary toward my project. As a government and politics major, I would say my strongest academic skill is my research ability. The Undergraduate Writing Center proofread every section of my paper, and offered detailed guidance by giving specific points on my writing. In addition to proofreading, the Undergraduate Writing Center gave me writing tutoring as well. Not only was it essential toward proofreading drafts of my project, but through their tutoring, I was able to permanently improve my writing skills as a whole. Their hours are flexible, and I've never had issue finding a one on one tutor to both proofread my work, as well as teach my how to be a stronger writer in the future.

The libraries at UMD not only provided all the research and writing assistance I needed, the technical department of Mckeldin assisted me with any and all computer help as well. The Information Technology Help Desk not only showed me how to download UMD's free writing and presentation software, they also assisted in helping me format the writing and figures so that they fit into my project properly. In addition to the direct assistance with my project, the IT Help Desk not only fixed my laptop when it crashed mid-project, but they managed to recover my entire project along with all the necessary research saved to my laptop. Not only did the IT Help Desk assist me with formatting my project, but it's no exaggeration to claim that without their recovery help, my project would have been lost without their service. The Information Technology Help Desk at Mckeldin library has been an essential tool toward both creating, and saving my research paper.

Within Mckeldin, the research help center, undergraduate writing center, and IT help desk all were essential toward not only helping me finish my undergraduate research project, but also in teaching me how to properly research and work to my fullest extent in the future. The research center not only had all necessary articles, periodicals, and books necessary toward my project, but they allowed me to borrow these resources to use at home and in the classroom as well. Their online databases, available to all UMD students, contained all articles necessary toward my research as well. The Undergraduate Writing Center was helpful in not only proofreading my paper, but in offering tutor assistance towards improving my writing as a whole. Finally, the Information Technology Help Desk at Mckeldin not only helped me format my project between the writing and visual portions, but it helped recover my project after my laptop had crashing issues. These services not only provided me with all resources necessary towards my project, but each of these services took time to work with me one on one by offering help in their specialty. These lessons not only helped my project, but helped show me how to efficiently research in the future. When researching, one shouldn't assume responsibility for every aspect of the project. By utilizing the research, writing, and computer expertise available at the University of Maryland's libraries, I was able to complete my research project to its fullest extent.

-McKeldin Research help

-Undergraduate writing center

-Book borrowing

-Laptop loaning/repair