Shirley Moody-Turner and P. Gabrielle Foreman to Speak at Friends Meeting

Shirley Moody-Turner and P. Gabrielle Foreman, founding co-directors of the Center for Digital Black Research/ #DigBlk, Penn State College of Liberal Arts at Pennsylvania State University, will be the featured speakers at the annual Friends of the Libraries membership meeting on Saturday, November 13. Their presentation, #DigBlk: Building Today’s Archives Through Oberlin’s Early Black Activist History, will lay the groundwork for collaboration between the Center and Oberlin faculty, students, and the college archives and libraries. Their visit to Oberlin will include conversation with classes, co-sponsored by the Office of the President, Africana Studies Department, History Department, and English Department, in addition to the Friends.

Foreman is the founding faculty director of the award-winning Colored Conventions Project and...
From the Director

guides and teachers we help students and faculty find, evaluate, and have confidence in their information sources. My hope is that we will work together to develop more specific visions and goals for the Libraries, listening to the ideas and needs of students, staff, and faculty and thinking strategically about the future of the Libraries.

It has always been clear to me that good libraries focus on the people who use them. Libraries collect, preserve, and make accessible all forms by which knowledge and ideas are communicated. That might sound as if we are mere information hubs—but that misses the mark. We are here to collaborate with students, faculty, and researchers, to get them the resources they need, and, most importantly, to help them turn all that information into knowledge, creativity, ideas, and understanding. We must be innovative and flexible, ready to evolve to meet the needs of our community in their teaching, learning, and research. We also need to offer welcoming spaces, where people feel comfortable expressing and discussing ideas. Oberlin’s commitment to diversity, inclusion, equity and access is not only shared, but also championed by the Libraries. That is important to me as a librarian, and I am happy to find kindred spirits here.

I am extremely impressed by the dedication, enthusiasm, and commitment to good service among the Libraries staff. I have also felt a lot of energy from faculty members and students who seem to love their library. That’s a great foundation. In the first few months, I will continue to try to take it all in and learn. Thereafter, my goal is to help the Libraries build upon strengths while listening—and encouraging everyone in the Libraries to listen—carefully to our campus community, our alums, and leaders in our profession. Working together, we can move forward toward a vision of service and partnership in which the Libraries remain an essential part of the educational mission of Oberlin. I am excited about being at Oberlin, and I’m looking forward to being part of it all.

Valerie Hotchkiss

Scholars visit the College Archives

Emeritus Associate Professor of Religion and Africana Studies A.G. Miller hosted a conference in August for scholars as part of the Dialogue on Race and Faith from the 19th to the 21st Centuries Project. This project, funded by the Murdock Charitable Trust, the Maclellan Foundation, and Seattle Pacific University, brings together a multicultural team of Christian scholars who are focused on three goals: to study a newly-discovered journal of abolitionist David Ingraham, to travel to sites of importance from the 19th century antislavery movement, and to converse on how issues of faith and race among abolitionists may be able to provide a usable history for addressing the struggle for racial justice today. Ingraham was enrolled at the Oberlin Preparatory Department, 1834-35, just one of many reasons for the scholars to visit the College Archives on August 3, where College Archivist Ken Grossi spoke about the early history of Oberlin and its antislavery activity. An exhibit of materials from Archives and Special Collections provided the scholars an opportunity to view some of the documents, photographs, and artifacts related to the early history of Oberlin.
Back to the Library

One year ago, *Library Perspectives* (Spring/Fall 2020) offered a review of the libraries’ “pandemic preparedness” and the changing nature of in-person and virtual services. Library users became accustomed to de-densified library spaces, loss of access to library stacks, picking up requested items from a locker at the delivery dock of Mudd or handed off somehow from a branch library, and communicating to staff through masks and Plexiglass dividers. With the opening of the campus, there is cautious optimism that all libraries will offer full in-person services again, with open hours that are very close, if not identical, to pre-pandemic practice. Community users are welcome on campus, while browsing in the stacks and sharing a reading table with friends have become the norm. There is, of course, the big caveat: what will the pandemic do? In-person services and access to facilities will be dictated by campus ObieSafe protocols and, most importantly, reliant on staff remaining healthy.

Hours for all libraries will be updated on the website as soon as possible if changes are necessary, including hours for online Chat. Flexibility and patience will be essential as we navigate uncertain circumstances. Virtual services will continue to be important: requesting items using OBIS and arranging pickup by email, contacting staff by email, Chat, or phone, and holding research appointments or instruction sessions via Zoom. Welcoming everyone back to the libraries is a step in the right direction, on a path we hope to sustain!
Recent Gifts

The Libraries gratefully acknowledge the following significant monetary gifts and gifts-in-kind.

Major monetary gifts:

Generous monetary gifts:
- Robert C. Biggert ’62, for the Librarian’s Discretionary Fund.
- Kathryn Dugger on behalf of Edwin Dugger ’62 for the Conservatory Library’s Contemporary Scores Fund.
- Gwendolyn F. Freed ’85, for the Librarian’s Discretionary Fund.
- Alex T. Ho ’91, for the Librarian’s Discretionary Fund.
- Richard O. Lehmann ’70, for the George A. and Susan P. Lanyi Fund for Library Acquisitions.
- Lucy K. Marks ’73, for the Friends of the Libraries.
- William C. Pelster ’64, for the Friends of the Libraries.
- Clarence B. Sheffield, for the Librarian’s Discretionary Fund.
- Michael Shinagel ’57, for the Friends of the Libraries.
- Christopher T. Smith ’68, for the Librarian’s Discretionary Fund.
- Mark W. Smith ’90, for the Clarence Ward Art Library Special Book Fund.
- Sharon A. Sutherland ’87, for the Librarian’s Discretionary Fund.

Significant gifts-in-kind:
- Glorious Sun Group donated books to the Terrell Main Library.
- Patricia Huff donated books to the Terrell Main Library.
- Jean Bailey Jerauld ’69 donated the Ward E. Bailey, Sr. Family Collection of missionary materials to China to Oberlin College Archives (story p. 10).
- Ricardo Lewitus donated CDs to the Conservatory Library.
- Don Mennel donated works of Robert Burns and William Wordsworth to the Terrell Main Library’s Special Collections (story p. 7).
- Kensuke Nagase donated books to the Terrell Main Library.
- Kiyoshi Nakaizumi donated books to the Terrell Main Library.
- Nancy Rossiter ’67 and Hiroaki Sato donated Japanese language materials to the Terrell Main Library.
- Robert Rotberg ’55 continues to donate books to the Terrell Main Library.
- Kenichiro Sasae donated books to the Terrell Main Library.
- Andrew Soth ’87 donated books to the Clarence Ward Art Library.
- John Willoughby (from the library of his father Robert Willoughby) donated scores, books, and CDs to the Conservatory Library.

Jillian Scudder Presents Book Talk

Assistant Professor of Physics Jillian Scudder gave a faculty book talk in StudiOC on July 29, the first in-person book talk sponsored by the Friends since the campus was largely vacated in March 2020. It was delightful to welcome people back to a Friends-sponsored event, whether they joined in person or by Zoom. In her presentation, entitled “Astroquizzical: What Happens When You Let Curiosity Go First?” Scudder explained why she began her blog, Astroquizzical.com, which invites anyone to ask her space-related questions anonymously, and how the blog led to her book, Astroquizzical: A Curious Journey Through Our Cosmic Family Tree, just released in paperback, with a new edition forthcoming. As with all Friends events, a recording is available on the Libraries Vimeo channel, linked from the Friends of the Libraries webpage libraries.oberlin.edu/friends-of-the-libraries. A direct recording of the Zoom presentation is on Google Drive for a closer look at the images shared during the talk: bit.ly/2WtXljS. A copy of Scudder’s book may be borrowed from the Science Library.
Neal Baker ‘20, James Miller ‘17, Isabelle Rew ‘16, and Ellen Ward-Packard ‘20 are winners of the 2021 Friends of the Oberlin College Libraries Graduate Library School Scholarship. Each scholarship winner receives a $3,500 award.

Neal Baker grew up in Austin, Texas and came to Oberlin in 2016 to study comparative literature and French. His encounters with historical records, manuscripts, and media sparked an interest in the preservation and organization of archival materials. During his time on campus, he cooked in Tank Co-op, played trumpet in the Arts and Sciences Orchestra, and hosted for WOBC. Since graduating from Oberlin, he has returned home to attend the University of Texas, where he will use his scholarship to pursue a Master of Science in Information Studies in hopes of becoming an academic librarian or archivist.

James Miller graduated Phi Beta Kappa with a double major in Classical Civilizations and History. Since graduation, the Buffalo, New York native has lived and worked in the Boston area with his wife, Connie Estevez ‘17. After working for the past few years in immigration law, Miller began pursuing a master’s at Simmons University. Upon graduation, he hopes to pursue a career in academic libraries, special collections, and museums.

Isabelle Rew majored in Comparative Literature and Geology and is currently enrolled in the Library and Information Science program at Kent State University. At Oberlin, she hosted radio programs at WOBC, performed in Indonesian gong ensembles, and worked with children at Oberlin elementary schools through America Reads. After discovering her passion for public libraries as a Youth Services Associate in 2017, she transitioned to her current role as Community Engagement Associate at the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library. There she advocates for the mission of public libraries by performing engaging outreach services at community events and developing innovative ways of sharing information about library services via social media, podcasts, and press releases. She has also collaborated with a team of librarians to develop Memory Kits for people living with dementia and manages the library’s monthly food distribution service. She looks forward to exploring the burgeoning fields of User Experience librarianship and design thinking in order to solve problems relating to information access and empowerment for underserved communities.

Ellen Ward-Packard was born and raised in Walworth County, Wisconsin. At Oberlin, she studied English literature and rhetoric and composition. She worked as a Writing Associate and for the Firelands Field Office of the Western Reserve Land Conservancy. In 2018, she studied and worked at the Newberry Library as part of the Associated Colleges of the Midwest Newberry Seminar in the Humanities. Ward-Packard began working for the Lake Geneva (Wisconsin) Public Library in November of 2020. In the time since, she assisted with a capital campaign that has raised more than $600,000 for the library’s renovation. She is currently working on an ALA Libraries Transforming Communities-funded project to educate the public about freshwater lake conservation and is applying for a second LTC grant to bring entomophagy—human consumption of insects—to the library. She is enrolled in the Library Science program at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

Friends Vice President Jennifer Graham ’12, Associate Director of Libraries Tracy Sutherland, and College Archivist Ken Grossi comprise the Friends of the Libraries Scholarship Committee.
Moody-Turner and Foreman

professor of English, African American Studies and History at Penn State where she holds the Paterno Family Chair of Liberal Arts. She is the author of five books and editions, which include most recently, The Colored Conventions Movement: Black Organizing in the Nineteenth Century, and Praise Songs for Dave the Potter: Art and Poetry for David Drake (forthcoming, 2022). In 2022, she’ll be the Distinguished Scholar in Residence at the American Antiquarian Society and has been invited to travel across the country as one of Phi Beta Kappa’s Visiting Scholars.

Moody-Turner is an associate professor and award-winning teacher of English and African American Studies, Pennsylvania State University. She is faculty co-director of the Black Women’s Organizing Archive and founding director of the Cooper-Du Bois Mentoring Program. At the Center for Digital Black Research, she works with a cross-institutional team of faculty, staff, librarians, post-doctoral fellows, student leaders, and community members to bring to digital life the lost, overlooked, and buried histories of nineteenth century Black organizing. She is the author or editor of four books, including recently released African American Literature in Transition 1900-1910 and the forthcoming Penguin Portable Anna Julia Cooper. She is currently at work on an interpretive biography of Anna Julia Cooper for the Black Lives Series, Yale University Press.

Through “archive and pipeline building, #DigBlk is committed to preserving Black organizing histories in the long nineteenth century and to building future generations of Black scholars who advocate for social justice in higher education, repositories, museums, and beyond. #DigBlk is home to the award-winning Colored Conventions Project, Douglass Day, and the early Black Women’s Organizing Archive,” which features Mary Church Terrell among others. Find this and more at the #DigBlk site: digblk.psu.edu/research.

The full list of participants on this group includes:
Kathleen Garvey, Cataloging Associate, Wooster
Chris Hudson, Director of Collection Services, Kenyon
Tim Keller, Head of Collections and Discovery, Oberlin
Denise Monbarren, Special Collections Librarian, Wooster
Dee Peterson, Director of Libraries, Ohio Wesleyan
Sarah Schaff, Discovery Librarian, Denison

In support of DEIA initiatives within the Five Colleges of Ohio consortium, staff in Discovery and Metadata Services are collaborating with the OH5 Collection Services group to flag problematic Library of Congress subject headings within CONSORT, the consortia’s public catalog. The project was spearheaded by Ben Daigle, the former Director of Consortial Library Systems, with the goal of identifying problematic terms so that libraries could communicate to patrons the recognition of the potentially harmful nature of the flagged terms, as well as create pathways to leverage for change.

To that end, while Oberlin’s catalog is separate from the other four colleges, the OCL will provide through its participation in SACO (the Subject Authority Cooperative Program through the Library of Congress Program for Cooperative Cataloging) the ability for patrons or researchers to propose that a subject heading be changed. Proposed changes can be submitted through Oberlin to the PCC. Submissions must include justification and sufficient evidence.

Another way librarians and patrons alike can contribute to the growing conversation around subject heading changes is through the Cataloging Lab (cataloginglab.org), a crowdsourced effort to compile Library of Congress subject headings that some consider problematic for a variety of reasons. In collaboration with impacted communities, it strives toward making changes for the terminology that negatively affects others.

A trial period to test the functionality for flagging terms, gather feedback, and study the user experience of the flagging feature is scheduled to take place within the next six to eight months.

College Archivist Ken Grossi and Associate Director of Libraries Tracy Sutherland at the First Annual Meeting of the Wilson Bruce Evans Home Historical Society, September 18. Sutherland gave words of welcome to the gathering on behalf of President Carmen Ambar and Oberlin College and Conservatory. More: evansshhs.org/
Don L. Mennel of Fostoria, Ohio, recently donated a significant collection of the works of Robert Burns and William Wordsworth, to be housed in Special Collections.

The collection includes early works, handsomely bound in leather, with some decorative plates and framed prints that express the nineteenth century’s heightened public devotion to these two icons of the Romantic movement. The earliest works in the gift are fine 1787 editions of Burns’ Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect, printed in Edinburgh, Dublin, and London. There are also many interesting association copies, such as the collection of Burns’ poems given by British Admiral Adam Duncan to his daughter in 1803 and the 1828 prayer book Christian Year which was passed through the family of William Wordsworth’s younger brother Christopher.

The amassed collection represents the work of a lifetime. “My collection really dates back over 50 years ago,” Mennel wrote. “I majored in English literature at Macalester College and taught school for a short time after that, picking up a master’s in English literature at Eastern Michigan University. My undergraduate college roommate, also an English literature major, was working on a doctorate at the University of Edinburgh during this period, and I visited him there often. He became discouraged when there were no positions open for him and became engaged in the rare book business developing quite a large and active business with a partner. I caught the bug and began searching book stores whenever I was in a large city.”

Mennel added that he is also an advocate of liberal arts colleges; “I wanted to find a good home for the collection and really didn’t want to piece it out… I chose Oberlin after searching for libraries with similar collections… Oberlin] looked like a true fit.”

Associate Professor of English Natasha Tessone looks forward to exploring the collection with students in ENGL 299: What is Literature. She noted, “It would be wonderful to witness students experience firsthand original editions—in all their physical glory—of poetry they encounter in class, as they ponder all the ways in which print culture contributed to the phenomenon of the Romantic Author.”

Special Collections and Preservation Librarian Ed Vermue added that gifts of this vintage and quality are rare. Special Collections has been using the Romantic literature they already own with visiting classes, such as its holdings of William Blake, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and William Wordsworth. Vermue stated, “Mr. Mennel’s donation deepens that subject area substantially and makes it a real subject strength. What is more, Burns’ lyrical poetry was widely read by all social classes and was very motivating for those toiling for reform in the 19th century, especially those in the anti-slavery movement. The collection thus lends itself to students who are attempting to understand how art and literature can nudge cultural sentiments in new directions with vast social and political consequences. The libraries have received an overflowing ‘cup o’ kindness.’”
The Oberlin College Libraries are pleased to announce it recently received a gift from the Sato family’s Japanese literature collection, which consists of 40 hardcover and 39 softcover Japanese language monographs and one cassette tape. The collection ranges from important Japanese classics to modern Japanese literature.

“Thanks to the generosity of Nancy Rossiter ’67 and Hiroaki Sato, students and faculty will have access to this distinctive collection of Japanese books through the Oberlin College Libraries,” remarked Professor of East Asian Studies Ann Sherif. “The books reveal the research and reading essential to the influential career of Hiroaki Sato, poet and renowned translator of more than 25 volumes of Japanese poetry and prose fiction. For more than half a century, Sato’s engaging translations have introduced English-speaking readers to the richness of Japan’s literary heritage, from Basho’s beloved haiku and poetic travel journals, Mishima Yukio’s controversial modern fiction and Noh plays, and the Chinese verse of Ema Saikō, one of the few known early 19th century women poets, along with the classical canon of Japanese waka poetry,” she further added.

Assistant Professor of East Asian Religions Andrew Macomber noted, “Hiroaki Sato’s generous donation greatly expands the library’s collection of offerings in modern Japanese literature, especially into the life and work of Yukio Mishima. Of personal interest for my research on Japanese medical history, the gift also includes an important edition of the diary of Fujiwara Teika (1162–1241), an aristocrat who not only got sick frequently but also — thankfully for historians — loved to write about it. I’m excited students will be able to make use of these materials in their own research.”

East Asian Studies Librarian Runxiao Zhu remarked, “We appreciate the great trust that Hiroaki and Nancy have placed in us by giving part of their essential Japanese literature collection to Oberlin College Libraries. Japanese Studies has always been one of the strong points of Oberlin College. This collection will create new prospects for its future. Both our faculty and students from the East Asian Studies Department will definitely benefit from this generous gift.”

Nancy Rossiter ’67 came to Oberlin from Carbondale, Illinois. She majored in Art History, and subsequently worked in the art world in a number of roles, including as a printmaker and a design assistant. After moving to New York, she completed a master’s degree at Hunter College. Rossiter paints regularly (which she calls “my dream means of expression”), swims avidly, and is an art gallery enthusiast.

Hiroaki Sato was born in Taiwan to Japanese parents. He attended Doshisha University in Kyoto, receiving bachelor’s and master’s degrees in English literature. Sato moved to the United States in 1968, and worked for the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) for 44 years. He is one of the leading translators of Japanese literature into English and the winner of many awards, including the PEN Translation Prize.

Sato has published more than 50 books, mainly translations of Japanese poetry and prose. Authors he has translated include Yukio Mishima, Kenji Miyazawa, and Kazue Shinkawa. He has also written essay collections; his latest, On Haiku (New Directions, 2018), reflects his lifelong connection to this characteristically Japanese form of writing. He was a regular columnist for the Mainichi Daily News (1984-89), the Japan Times (2000-13), and a number of other publications.

Rossiter and Sato have worked together on several books, most recently So Happy to See Cherry Blossoms: Haiku from the Year of the Great Earthquake and Tsunami (Red Moon Press, 2014). They currently live in New York City.
The College Archives loaned photographs to the Allen Memorial Art Museum for *Focus: Power, Agency, and Objectivity in Early Photography*, on display in the Ripin Gallery, August 26 – December 23, 2021. The exhibition, curated by Alexandra Letvin, Assistant Curator of European and American Art, with assistance from Zoe Iatridis ’21, “traces the early history of photography while probing how myths surrounding the perceived objectivity of this new medium conceal the power dynamics inherent in who photographs, what is photographed, and how photographs are viewed and understood.” Featured here are images of two of the photographs loaned to the Art Museum. The photograph of Edward H. Hazen is one of several borrowed from the photo album of Lester A. Bartlett, enrolled in the Oberlin Preparatory Department, 1860-62. More information about the exhibition is at amam.oberlin.edu.

The Press and the Presidency traveling exhibit comes to Terrell Main Library

The Mary Church Terrell Main Library hosted a traveling exhibit curated by the Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums, made possible by Ohio Humanities, a state affiliate of the National Endowment of the Humanities.

From the Presidential Library & Museums’ press release, “The media has always played a role in American politics. Since George Washington, presidents have had to respond to negative press and use media coverage to their advantage.” *The Press and the Presidency* exhibit “examines how journalism has evolved throughout American history, the role of bias in news coverage, how various presidents have employed differing approaches to use the media to further their administrative agendas, and the sometimes amiable and sometimes contentious relationship between the press and presidency, from Washington to Trump.”

The Press and the Presidency exhibit was on view in the Terrell Main Library from August 3 - September 24, 2021.

In the spirit of sharing public programming, the Oberlin College Libraries’ traveling educational exhibit *Mary Church Terrell: An Original Oberlin Activist* was on loan and on display at the Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums in Fremont, Ohio, during the same time period.

*The Press and the Presidency* traveling exhibit installed in Mudd Center’s Academic Commons.
A collection recently gifted to the Oberlin College Libraries is the Ward E. Bailey, Sr. Family Collection, consisting of printed materials, glass lantern slides and photographs, and Chinese textiles, embroidery, and jewelry. These items give the researcher an interesting view of some of the educational resources that would have been used by American missionaries in China, and they offer snapshots of late 19th and early 20th-century Chinese culture. The collection was amassed during Rev. Ward E. Bailey, Sr. and his wife Bertha’s missionary work in China.

“We are thrilled to receive the Bailey Family collection as it will enhance our holdings of East Asian culture, is a great addition to our current “Shansi: Oberlin and Asia” archival collection, and will be a beneficial educational tool for our faculty and students,” noted Runxiao Zhu 朱潤曉, East Asian Studies Librarian.

According to the Baileys’ granddaughter Jean Bailey Jerauld ’69, “Rev. Ward E. Bailey, Sr. attended Shurtleff College in Illinois where he met Bertha Louise Collins, a student in the Music Department. Bertha graduated from the Music Department at Shurtleff in 1907 and then attended Central College in Iowa. Ward transferred to Central College and was awarded a B.A. in 1909. Ward and Bertha decided to go into the mission field and were married August 25, 1909. They settled in Rochester, New York, where in 1912 Ward graduated from Rochester Theological Seminary.”

Jerauld further notes, “They were accepted by the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society and assigned to work in China. Ward and Bertha sailed from San Francisco on the S.S. Korea on October 12, 1912. They enjoyed layovers in Honolulu and Yokohama before sailing on to Shanghai. It was a time of expanding Christian mission in China. Mission agencies from many denominations worked together on creating schools and medical services. Learning the language, developing native leaders, and respecting culture were becoming high priorities.

After nine months of language school in Nanking and Kuling, they traveled up the Yangtze and Lin Rivers by steamer, houseboat, and raft to Yachow (Yaan) in Szechuan Province. It took ten weeks. There, Ward supervised the building of a church and later a school for boys and one for girls. Bertha taught piano lessons on the piano they had shipped from Rochester. Together they taught children and instructed them in Christian Education.”

After their term had ended, the Baileys with their son Francis Meade (born January 10, 1916, in Yachow, China) sailed on the S.S. Shinyo Maru, departing on March 5, 1919, from Hong Kong to San Francisco. From there, they traveled by train to Rochester, New York, where they settled.
The Libraries’ Commemorative Calendar is back for 2022!

Back by popular demand, a commemorative calendar for 2022 is being offered from the Libraries to donors who give $100 or more to the Mary Church Terrell Endowed Book Fund. For each month, the calendar, 2022: Treasures from the Libraries, features objects from Special Collections or the College Archives that illustrate either ‘forgotten’ college traditions, lesser-known collections, or unusual collection holdings.

As in the past, the calendar highlights certain aspects of the collections, and is given with thanks to generous donors to The Mary Church Terrell Endowed Book Fund. This fund is designated for expanding collections and acquiring materials related to cultural diversity, civil rights, community leadership, and social justice. It has been well-supported since its inception in 2018, coinciding with the naming of the Mary Church Terrell Main Library.
The Libraries have done a phenomenal job responding to the pandemic, making sure that services and resources remained accessible to users. The situation called for resourceful responses to unexpected events by improvising and introducing new strategies to carry on the Libraries’ mission.

Now it is time to reflect on what we have learned, how we have changed, and what is the next normal in a post-COVID reality. We have begun a visioning exercise, working together to reflect on core values of college librarianship, and thinking strategically about how we can become the best possible library system for the College and Conservatory. This will include extensive communication with students, faculty, staff, alumni, the community, and, most certainly, the Friends.

From October to December, we will talk to numerous “stakeholders” in groups and one-on-one. As a staff, we will reflect upon the profession and the state of contemporary librarianship, contemplating our values and principles as information providers and research experts. As information sources shift and explode, what is the role of the subject specialist? How should collections develop in our über-information age? How does the Libraries’ mission complement the overall educational mission of the college? What kind of library spaces do our users need? Library services have expanded—do they need to expand further? And in what directions?

Once we have gathered feedback from constituencies, we will draft a roadmap for the next few years. With a shared vision, we can develop goals and objectives that are clear enough for action and flexible enough for change and innovation. In short, we can move forward together with our values and our vision aligned—inspired by our mission and by the people who love the Oberlin College & Conservatory and its libraries.
Since 2011, the Terrell Main Library’s Letterpress Studio has supported curricular interest in the History and Art of the Book with a hands-on “lab space.” In 2012, Special Collections and Preservation Librarian Ed Vermue proposed a Letterpress Experimental College (ExCo) course, which would make the studio experience available to more students than could be accommodated through the usual class visits and the annual Winter Term intensive. This year, for the first time two former Winter Term 2020 Letterpress students, Jenna Hoover ’22 and Izzy Snyder ’23, will lead the ExCo under the supervision of Vermue.

Students are often drawn to the Letterpress Studio ExCo class due to the physicality of the creative technology and the chance to work with their hands. Hoover, a Creative Writing major, stated “[It is] so nice to reconnect with using my hands to make something.” First year student Teaghan Duff ’25 asserted “[The creative process illustrates] how connected you are to the things that you’re making.” Izzy Snyder ’23, Student Co-Instructor and Computer Science and Studio Art major who plans on making gifts for others, added that “Reproducible art is a really cool way of connecting people because you can make so many copies of things.” Julie Lam ’23, a Computer Science and Creative Technologies major, admitted that it was a friend’s Risograph-printed gift that inspired her to investigate the Letterpress ExCo offering.

Participants have also reflected on how the studio experience will add to their studies at Oberlin. For example, creative writing majors frequently affirm how the opportunity helped them to think deeply about composition and typography. As Juli Freedman ’22 admitted, “I love me a good typeface. I love fonts as a creative writing major it changes everything.” Fourth-year Biology and Cinema Studies major Beryl Robinson ’22, who is currently taking an experimental cinema production class, mused “I hope that the piece we work on here synthesizes the two together to make one avant-garde project.”

The Letterpress Studio is a low risk, creative safe space which provides a basic introduction to the craft of letterpress and is meant to encourage all students to create.

Above: Izzy Snyder and Jenna Hoover demonstrate how to run a press for enrolled participants.
Renovations to Mudd Center

In April of 2020, a multi-phase plan was agreed upon for A-level of the Mudd Center to bring key collaborators such as the Center for Engaged Liberal Arts (CELA), the Bonner Center and Career Development Center into the building, allowing for important collaboration between CELA and the OCL.

This project involves the renovation of Mudd A-level into new student counseling, engagement and activity space, including a complete rebuild of the former Center for Information Technology spaces and lower courtyard enhancements to allow direct access to CELA from the A-level courtyard. This work also includes the installation of a new concrete ADA ramp for the lower courtyard.

Led by Infinity Construction, A-level renovations continue even as they experience schedule delays due to the impact of material delivery issues. Many deliveries are 8-10 weeks out. Firelands Electric continues with core drilling of holes for new cable for the new data rooms. There are third-shift workers demoing and pulling new cable (as they remove and replace data cabling) on the main floor of the library. Lake Erie Electric is also setting up server racks and will be installing cable trays.

Innovative Interiors is framing the walls of the new gender-neutral bathroom, and Lucas Plumbing and Heating put in new water lines to Azariah’s Café. American Fire and Sprinkler continues to lay out sprinkler hangers and has started installing piping. T.H. Martin is completing the layout of the ductwork installation; outside of the building, North Coast Concrete continues to dig and form footers and walls for the new ramp and will be forming steps soon. Concrete was being removed from the plaza, and this work continued through the end of August, and in support of this effort, the sidewalk heading in the southwest direction from Mudd Center was designated for equipment through the end of August. Wayfinding signs still identify pathways for pedestrians and bikers to follow.

Additional phased changes to the interior of Mudd will take place throughout the year until the projected completion in early 2022.

Staff Publications, Presentations, and Professional Activity

Kathleen Abromeit, Conservatory Public Services Librarian, compiled the “Music Received Column” in Notes: The Quarterly Journal of the Music Library Association. Vol. 77, Nos. 3 & 4, featured recently published works by BIPOC composers and women; Vol. 78, No.1, focused on recently published works by LGBTQIA composers.


Alonso Avila, Information Literacy and Student Success Librarian, and Elizabeth Sullivan, Assessment and User Experience Librarian, co-led the workshop “Actionable Design Justice for the Academic Library,” with colleagues of the Five Colleges of Ohio, September 14, 2021, held virtually.

Deborah Campana, Head, Conservatory Library. Her photograph, “Union of Birkerts, Yamasaki, and WRL,” was invited to be exhibited in FAVA’s (Firelands Association of the Visual Arts) National Juried Biennial Photography Show 2021. Barbara Tannenbaum, Cleveland Museum of Art’s Chair of Prints, Drawings, and Photographs and Curator of Photography, was the 2021 Juror of the show. Forty-one photographs were chosen from nearly 300 submissions for the exhibit held August 14 through October 31, 2021.

Ken Grossi, College Archivist, published “Oberlin College, the Suffrage Movement, and Oberlin Women in Leadership,” in the Ohio Archivist, Spring 2021.

Heath Calvin Patten, Visual Resources Curator, presented with Jason D. Haugen, Associate Professor, Department of Anthropology, and Nina Lorence-Ganong ’20, “Mapping the Uto-Aztecan Language Family: Past, Present, Future.” June 4, 2021, at the 2021 Friends of Uto-Aztecan Conference (FUAC), held virtually.

—– gave a talk on his book Follow the Drinking Gourd: Williams County and the Underground Railroad to the Literary Forum of Williams County, Ohio.


—– served on the planning committee for the Great Lakes Science Bootcamp for Librarians, held virtually over six days in July, and moderated two sessions during the conference.

The Friends of the Oberlin College Libraries provide significant support for special acquisitions and programs that help the libraries fulfill their mission in the academic life of the college. Members receive the Library Perspectives newsletter, invitations to Friends programs, and other privileges. Most of all, Friends have the satisfaction of supporting Oberlin’s outstanding libraries.

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Staff Changes in the Libraries

Music Cataloger in the Conservatory Library
Faith Hoffman assumed a new role as Music Cataloger in the Conservatory Library on March 2, 2020. This position is part of the library’s technical services team, who ensure that all of the information library users need to easily find scores, recordings, and other materials is in the OBIS, Summon, and WorldCat catalogs, and that those items are in excellent condition for browsing, lending, study, and performance. Hoffman brings a background in music and 22 years of Oberlin College Library and Conservatory Library experience to her new role.

Curatorial Assistant for Special Collections in the Conservatory Library
Caleb Smith joined the Libraries as the Curatorial Assistant for Special Collections in the Conservatory Library, where he helps preserve and provide access to materials in the James R. and Susan Neumann Jazz Collection, and other jazz-focused special collections. Caleb received a bachelor’s in Jazz Performance from the Oberlin Conservatory in 2019, and a master’s in Jazz Performance from the New England Conservatory in 2021. He has worked as a student recording engineer at the New England Conservatory, a Thoma Engagement Apprentice at the Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland, as part of the faculty at the Tri-C JazzFest Summer Academy, and as a performer locally, nationally, and internationally. Caleb is looking forward to being part of Oberlin’s vibrant community and learning more about Black American music while working in the Conservatory Library. Aside from everything music-related, he enjoys making cakes, reading, watching anime, trees, long walks, and Game of Thrones.

Faith Hoffman

Caleb Smith
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Friends of the Libraries — Fall Programs

Something About Mary Exhibit
Archives and Special Collections Exhibit,
Academic Commons, Terrell Main Library, Mudd Center
August–October 8, 2021

The Early History of Oberlin Exhibit
Archives Exhibit in Goodrich Reading Room,
Terrell Main Library, Mudd Center
August 9–October 29, 2021

Focus: Power, Agency, and Objectivity in Early Photography
Ripin Gallery, Allen Memorial Art Museum
August 26–December 23, 2021

Rostros Migrantes: colección de cien microhistorias
[Migrant Faces: a collection of one hundred microhistories]
Stories of Migrants in Their Own Words
Clarence Ward Art Library
October 4–December 23, 2021

Banned Books Week Read-Aloud
Wednesday, Oct. 6, 4:30 p.m.
Azariah’s Cafe, Terrell Main Library, Mudd Center

Faculty Book Talk: Jay Fiskio. Climate Change, Literature, and Environmental Justice: Poetics of Dissent and Repair.
Wednesday, October 27, 2021, 4:30 p.m.
Norman C. Craig Lecture Hall, Science Center
In-person and via Zoom

Friends of the Oberlin College Libraries
Council Meeting
Saturday, November 13, 2021, 1:00–3:30 p.m.
Goodrich Room, Terrell Main Library, Mudd Center

Friends of the Oberlin College Libraries
Annual Membership Meeting
Saturday, November 13, 2021, 7:00–7:30 pm
Dye Lecture Hall, Science Center
In-person and via Zoom
7:45 p.m. featured speakers (see page 1 for details)