



**University Libraries
Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility
Activities**

2021-2022

University Libraries Diversity Statement

Oakland University Libraries are committed to the work of inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility for our staff, the campus, and the local community. We acknowledge the historical role that libraries have played in the systematic suppression of underrepresented groups and recognize the need to actively address these inequalities. The Libraries aim to create environments where all people feel welcome, respected, and safe and have equitable opportunities to learn and grow. We will advocate and strive for collections, services, technologies, spaces, and events that are diverse, inclusive, and accessible.

Perspective-Broadening Programming

The University Libraries seek to help broaden our community's perspective through an array of educational and culturally relevant events each year.

- In August, 2021, the OU Libraries Board of Advocacy sponsored a staged reading of the play "Alabama Story," by OU alum Kenneth Jones. This play dramatizes real-life events surrounding the purchase by a southern library of the children's book "The Rabbits' Wedding," which tells the tale of a black rabbit marrying a white rabbit.
- OU Libraries celebrated Open Access Week in October with an OA website developed by Julia Rodriguez, Associate Professor and Scholarly Communications Librarian, and Jim Van Loon, Assistant Professor and Research Data Librarian, with links to articles, eBooks, and presentations covering such elements of Open Access as inclusive knowledge, decentering whiteness in academic knowledge production, and publishing equity. Open Access Week raises awareness of the significance of global access to research as an equalizer and as an ethical mandate embraced by many funding agencies, such as the National Institutes of Health. The theme for 2021 was "It Matters How We Open Knowledge: Building Structural Equity."
- In celebration of African American History Month, Outreach Librarian Anne Zacharias organized a panel presentation entitled "Race Relations in Metro Detroit: Past Decades to Present Day." Moderated by Omar Brown-el, Senior Director of Multicultural Initiatives at Oakland University, this event featured OU Sociology Professor Graham Cassano and Wayne State University Professor of African American Studies David Goldberg.

- Archives and Special Collections partnered with OU's Center for Public Humanities to host the event "Voices Heard: Dr. Johnetta Cross Brazzell and her 1970s oral history project with Black residents in Pontiac, MI." This event featured Dr. Johnetta Cross Brazzell and Omar Brown-el, Senior Director of Multicultural Initiatives at Oakland University. Dr. Cross Brazzell's recordings are a part of OU's Pontiac Oral History Project, housed in Kresge Library. A recording of the event can be found [here](#).
- The University Libraries co-sponsored the SEHS screening of the award-winning documentary *Resilience: The Biology of Stress & The Science of Hope*.
- Every year, OU Libraries participate in Oakland University's annual celebration of Pride Month. On March 17, 2022, Outreach Librarian Anne Zacharias organized and moderated an online panel discussion highlighting the Library's Robert Gaylor LGBTQIA Collection. The panel featured retired OU librarian Robert Gaylor, Professor Jo Reger, Professor George Sanders, and alumnus Elijah Sanders. The panelists discussed the value of the collection not just for research and teaching, but also as a vital source of everyday insight into the gay community.
- Archives and Special Collections helped prepare an exhibit of materials on Black students at OU from the University Archives in conjunction with the Black Alumni Association Reunion.

Inclusive Services and Spaces

The faculty and staff of OU Libraries continually explore ways to improve the cultural awareness and engagement of our personnel and seek ways to facilitate the same in the use of our services and spaces.

- Our Technology and Access Services teams collaborated to ensure that patrons' preferred first names as noted in Banner appear in their patron records and on any mailings sent by the library. We hope that this change will help to promote a welcoming atmosphere to our users.
- Instruction and Research Help services within Kresge Library are built on inclusive, accessible, and equitable principles that reflect the core values of the University Libraries.
 - The course-integrated WRT 1060 library instruction material is offered in a fully online and asynchronous format, allowing for maximum flexibility in the ways in

which our students access and complete the content. In this instruction model, librarians are paired with WRT 1060 instructors along with the asynchronous online instruction to support student success.

- Our faculty librarians offer research help in a variety of formats, thereby allowing users to receive assistance in whatever way is most appropriate for their accessibility needs. Evening research consultations are now available as well, as an affordance of the current virtual-only service model.

OER and Low-Cost Course Materials

*“One in five college students has skipped or deferred a class due to the price of the required learning resources.”**

Open Educational Resources (OER) reduce accessibility and affordability barriers for college students, and studies have shown that courses utilizing OER see higher grades and lower failure and withdrawal rates than courses that do not use OER. The University Libraries consistently have been campus leaders on promoting the benefits of OER for our students.

- Associate Professor Julia Rodriguez chairs the university-wide group that oversees the [Affordable Course Materials Initiative \(ACMI\) stipends](#) to support the conversion of courses currently using textbooks and course materials costing more than \$50 to OER and low-cost materials. This conversion allows faculty to utilize materials “in ways that impact the greatest number of students and to reflect more diverse cultural experiences, enabling students to see representations of themselves in the instructional materials.” This year the group wrapped up their second round of stipends which amount to a potential one-semester savings to students of \$36,154.79 - \$56,962.50! They also launched their third round of stipends, selecting five applications.
 - A collaboration was undertaken with Student Congress which secured \$5,000 in funding and increased attention for the ACMI.
 - A [March 23, 2022, article](#) in the *Oakland Post* highlights the ACMI Team and their work.
- Julia Rodriguez led the push for a low-no cost marking on courses in Banner. In the winter 2022 semester, 22 courses included that marking.

- She worked with the Provost's Office to endorse the initiative in a public announcement.

*(<https://www.oercommons.org/authoring/49236-oer-basics-why-use-open-educational-resources/view>)

Diversity in Collections

The libraries' collections are developed collaboratively with Oakland University's academic community. Our [Collection Development Policy](#) includes a diversity statement that helps focus efforts to build “a balanced collection reflective of global awareness as well as fostering inclusion in all matters of diversity.”

- In the winter 22 semester, two students undertook research in the [Pontiac Oral Histories](#) collection under the direction of OU professors Kimmie Parker and Crystal VanKooten. They looked for and contacted the Pontiac interviewees' next of kin and started transcribing and indexing the interviews, with a view to setting up an online digital archive of the recordings. The project will continue with support from the Judd Family Endowment.
- New images were submitted to the Black Alumni Association digital collection in the University Archives.
- OU Libraries maintain a number of special collections of unique materials, with two of them being especially noteworthy for their relevance to diversity awareness. The [Robert Gaylor Collection](#), gifted to the Libraries by Professor Emeritus Robert Gaylor, contains many fiction and non-fiction titles of historical significance related to GLBT lives, covering a wide range of disciplines such as religion, philosophy, history, psychology, sociology, politics, literature, and the arts. The [Marguerite Hicks Collection of Women's Literature](#) is an exceptional collection of approximately 900 titles that contains British and American women writings from the 17th to 19th centuries, including unique books and pamphlets.
 - Unique publications from the Marguerite Hicks Collection were used in the History of the Book class this year.
 - The library cataloged additional books to be included in the Gaylor Collection.
- Kresge Library participates in the collective collection management community. Through this initiative, some libraries commit to preserving print copies of certain books while

other libraries commit to preserving different titles. This method of collection building makes the overall collective collection more diverse while ensuring the preservation of diverse materials. This also allows for libraries to repurpose physical spaces to better support student success!

- OUWB Medical Library continues to maintain several collections of electronic materials that focus on promoting awareness of public health issues and disparities, as well as exploring the experiences of minorities within the medical field. [LGBT Health](#) highlights resources for caring for LGBT patients and health care research in LGBT communities. [Public Health](#) highlights resources for public health issues unique to various communities, such as immigrant and minority populations. [Women in Medicine Collection](#) focuses on resources in celebration of women in medicine.
- The library is undertaking a diversity audit of the Jane M. Bingham Historical Children's Literature Collection. Professor Jane M. Bingham, a retired education professor at Oakland University, is an expert on children's literature. She amassed this collection of historic children's books, periodicals, and artifacts over a number of years. The collection is non-circulating. The books are arranged in chronological order so that researchers can see how children's books developed over the decades. The collection also includes a section of reference books related to children's literature. Among other things, the diversity audit will allow the Library to identify and add markings in the catalog on titles that may be controversial due to their dated perspectives on DEI topics.

Internal Library IDEA Efforts

As described in our Diversity Statement, "Oakland University Libraries are committed to the work of inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility for our staff, the campus, and the local community." These are some of the efforts that we have undertaken this year to model that mission:

- The IDEA Task Force hosted two very successful book clubs for library faculty, staff and student employees during the 2021-22 academic year. The goal of these book clubs is to explore one theme each semester in order to help us expand our service capacity to better assist people who are different from us.
 - In fall semester we tackled the theme of race. The book selection was *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard to Talk to White People about Racism* by Robin

Diangelo. We held two well attended book club meetings that were moderated by OU Professor Kellie Hay.

- In winter semester we read *Gender: Your Guide* by Lee Airton to explore the theme of gender. Two book club meetings were moderated internally and feedback was positive; in the post-meeting survey one attendee shared, “I wish it could have been longer! The conversation flowed very freely and all participants (those who shared their thoughts and impressions) were very engaged and insightful. I really appreciated both the topic in general as well as discussing it with my colleagues.”
- To accompany the exploration of race as our fall theme, the IDEA Task Force hosted Diversity Training for library faculty, staff, and student employees through the Center for Multicultural Initiatives.
- Kresge Library faculty reviewed their tenure and promotion guidelines with an eye toward inclusion and equity and the minimization of bias. Members of the unit met with Diversity Fellows in a brown bag session for guidance and suggestions.

IDEA-Related Research and Activities by Library Faculty

- Professor Dominique Daniel was one of 4 members of a task force who drafted a [DEI Statement and Action Plan](#) for the main library history journal in the US, *Libraries: Culture, History, and Society*.
- Professor Daniel’s scholarship on IDEA topics such as theoretical and practical works about archives of marginalized communities and also the representations of diversity in archival and library collections and digital humanities projects have received a number of citations by diverse authors in the field.

*Report submitted by Beth Wallis, Associate Dean of University Libraries
May 16, 2022*