



LIBRARIES

OAKLAND UNIVERSITY

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

2022-2023

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.

- 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. In October, our Scholarly Communications Librarian, Associate Professor Julia Rodriguez, organized a panel presentation entitled, "Open for Climate Justice." The panel featured OU professors Dr. Mozhgon Rajaei, Dr. Thomas R. Raffel, and Dr. Thomas Bianchette.
- In celebration of African American History Month in February, our Outreach Librarian, Associate Professor Anne Zacharias, organized a panel presentation entitled, "Race & Policing: A Virtual Panel Discussion." Moderated by Dr. Pernell Witherspoon of Lindenwood University, this event featured OU professors Dr. Chaunda Scott and Dr. Caress Dean, University of Michigan professor Dr. Christopher Knight, and OU student leader Destiny Williams.
- Every year, OU Libraries participate in Oakland University's annual March celebration of Pride Month. This year, Outreach Librarian Anne Zacharias organized a screening of the documentary "Real Boy," moderated by Blake Bonkowski, Coordinator of OU's Gender and Sexuality Center.
 - Our Archives and Special Collections team prepared an exhibit for the event which included highlights from the Robert Gaylor collection of LGBTQ books and periodicals.

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.

- In October we dedicated the new Ahern Accessible Collaboration Room, made possible thanks to the generosity of Charter Class member Mary Jo Ahern. The room features a large, seated-height touch screen monitor and rolling furniture to allow for wheelchair access.
- Through the work of our Access Services Department we will be doing away with charging overdue fines to our users for late materials. This initiative will help remove financial barriers to use for our students.
- This summer we will be expanding the use of the Library's Reflection Room into a Wellness Room, which will now include comfortable seating for individuals who are lactating.

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 Affordable Course Materials Initiative (ACMI) which supports 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." With this third round, we have converted 15 different courses over 30 sections and impacted 994 students in the first semester of conversion. With the completion of round three we have surpassed \$100,000 in

potential first-semester savings. Starting in Fall 2023 PSY will use low-cost materials for all their sections, saving students \$40,000 each semester.

- This year Student Congress committed an additional \$10,000 to the ACMI stipend fund.

*(<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.”

- This year our Digital Strategies Team developed a harmful content statement to be displayed on collections containing material that is potentially offensive or harmful:

“In providing digital access to these unique library resources, we recognize that some content may be offensive or harmful, and may represent outdated views that do not reflect the values of OU Libraries. Images or language in these collections might depict racist, sexist, and/or hateful attitudes toward marginalized communities. We reject these views, and we strive to acknowledge the power imbalances inherent in our collections. While it is important to preserve the original context of historical materials, we are working to provide additional context for these items through descriptive cataloging, respectful terminology, and warning users about potentially sensitive content. OU Libraries are committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and we welcome input about your experience with these digital collections. Please fill out [this form](#) if you would like to report any potentially sensitive content.”

- We continue the diversity audit of the Jane M. Bingham Historical Children’s Literature Collection in order to identify material in the collection that may be offensive to URM library users as well as to foreground materials that emphasize and celebrate diversity.
- 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.

- The periodicals of the Robert Gaylor collection of LGBTQ materials have been cataloged and can be found through Library OneSearch. In addition, an [online inventory](#) presents the collection. An online inventory of [ephemera](#) from the collection is also available.
- 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!
- We continue to support the digitization and transcription of the Pontiac Oral Histories project. Professors Dominique Daniel and Molly McGuire are part of the team that assisted with Professor Crystal Van Kooten's (Writing and Rhetoric) recent grant submission, "Stories of Pontiac: Documenting Black American Experiences in Michigan through Oral History," which seeks funding from the Michigan Humanities "to digitize and provide online access to the Pontiac Oral History collection, a series of audiocassettes from the Oakland University Library."

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 2022-23 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 neurodiversity. The book selection was *We're Not Broken* by Eric Garcia.
 - In winter semester we took up the theme of disability, reading *Demystifying Disability* by Emily Ladau.
- To accompany the exploration of neurodiversity as our fall theme, the IDEA Task Force organized a training session for library faculty and staff entitled, "A Practical Autism Overview." The session was led by Kristin Rohrbeck, Director of the Joanne and Ted Lindsay Foundation Autism Outreach Services (OUCARES).

IDEA-Related Research and Activities by Library Faculty

- This year Associate Professor Helen Levenson, the Collection Development Librarian, has participated in a *Library Journal* diversity collection assessment online course, from which she plans to develop tools for the library faculty to use for DEI collection assessments.
- Associate Professor Julia Rodriguez is one of the biggest proponents at the university of the use of open education resources and affordable course materials for students, to help defray the cost of college and make it more accessible. This year she had an article published on the topic:
 - Rodriguez, J. E. (2022). How Much Do Faculty Think Students Should Pay for Course Materials? A Survey of Instructors' Use of Current Course Materials and OER Use. *Journal of Librarianship and Scholarly Communication*, 10(1). OPEN ACCESS <https://www.iastatedigitalpress.com/jlsc/article/id/13273/>
- Assistant Professor Emily Spunaugle continues her work with the Marguerite Hicks Collection, a special collection of women's literature amassed by its queer, blind namesake.
 - "Do Books Have Genders?" A Round table convened by Kadin Henningsen and Sarah Werner with Christopher Adams, Leah Price, and Emily D. Spunaugle. (2023, June). The Society for the History of Authorship, Reading, and Publishing annual conference.
 - This round table consisted of five speakers studying Anglophone texts from the Renaissance through the 20th century, each giving a short position paper focusing on one aspect of book interfaces in order to

query the gender of books, including women's books, queer books, and trans books.

- Spunaugle, E.D., & Peiser, M. (2023, March). "'Shall We Join the Ladies?': The Marguerite Hicks Collection of Women's Writing," Women and Books Panel, Women's Caucus, American Society for Eighteenth Century Studies 2023.
 - From one of two panels hosted by the Women's Caucus of ASECS, this presentation focused on the intersection of gender, class, and disability of Marguerite Hicks and her partner, Thelma James, as they built their respective book collections that are now held at Oakland University.
- Peiser, M., & Spunaugle, E.D. "The Marguerite Hicks Collection: Disability, Collection Building, and the Politics of Care." Archive and Theory: The Future of Anglo-American Early Modern Disability Studies at the UCLA William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, October 2022.
 - This invited conference brought together major voices in the field of disability studies and practitioners of the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries. Our presentation focused on the intersection of sexuality and disability in the creation of the Hicks Collection.
- Spunaugle, E.D., & Peiser, M. (2022, July). "'Cheap, Working Copies': Reading the Photostatic Negatives in the Marguerite Hicks Collection," SHARP 2022.
 - This presentation focused on the photostats in the Marguerite Hicks Collection at Oakland University. Photostats, an early duplication process, gave Hicks cheaper access to 17th century women's texts when the originals were unaffordable in the late 1930s. The negative photostat, notable for its white text on a black background, inverts the values of the original document, much as Hicks's gender and sexuality "inverted" the values of book-collecting norms.
- OUWB School of Medicine Librarian David Stewart graduated from the 2023 OUWB Diversity Cohort program.

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