



LIBRARIES

OAKLAND UNIVERSITY

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

2023-2024

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 and Open Knowledge Librarian, Associate Professor Julia Rodriguez, organized a discussion for library faculty and staff on the topic of how open access publishing is increasingly taking over academic publishing, and how that impacts our work in libraries.
- In November, Kresge Library was host to our first-ever Human Library. This event invites participants to “Unjudge Someone” by having conversations with human books representing different identities. Our human books included a Black, lesbian police officer; a non-binary identical twin; a First-Nations woman; a Muslim student; an ex-felon; and a rabbi. This event drew the interest of many patrons who reported gaining a lot of perspective from their conversation with the human books.
- In an early celebration of African American History Month in January, our Outreach Librarian, Associate Professor Anne Zacharias, organized a presentation entitled, “Black Hair: Politics, Discrimination and the CROWN Act.” The discussion included Maurini Strub, Assistant Dean of Performance and User Engagement at University of Rochester, and was moderated by OU Visiting Professor of Education Dr. Kat Stephens-Peace.
- Every year, OU Libraries participate in Oakland University's annual March celebration of Pride Month. This year, Outreach Librarian Anne Zacharias organized a panel discussion

entitled, “Queer Representations in Film & Television.” The discussion was moderated by Dr. Kathy Battles, OU Professor of Communication, Journalism, and Public Relations. Panelists were Bridget Kies, Assistant Professor of Film Studies and Production (OU) and Melanie Kohnen, Associate Professor of Rhetoric and Media Studies (Lewis & Clark College, OR).

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 order to improve the accessibility of bathroom facilities in Kresge Library, library administration has once again requested special funding in order to provide a wheelchair-accessible bathroom on the main floor of the building. Currently the only accessible bathroom in the building is at the far end of the lower level of Kresge Library.

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.”
 - This year the Library added a DEI category:
 - **Adoption/Adaptation with DEI/Social Justice Focus—\$1,500:** Use a DEI or Social Justice Rubric to guide the redesign of a course to replace the

required traditional textbook and course materials by adopting and adapting an existing open textbook or OER course component.

- Professor Rodriguez developed a [DEI resource area](#) on the website for stipend awardees and included information about considering DEI when converting their courses in the orientation presentation they must complete to start the program.
- Round 4 of stipends (which wraps up at the end of winter 24) impacted 169 students and saved them \$18,191.
- In total, the ACMI has impacted 1183 students with 20 courses and 33 sections converted to affordable materials, saving students a total of \$119,213.56.
- In October, Professor Rodriguez made a presentation to the DEI Council about the connection between Open Education Resources and DEI. Her slides are available [here](#).
- This spring, Student Congress committed an additional \$10,000 to support the stipends.

*(<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.”

- Archives and Special Collections contributed to the Center for Public Humanities event “Spreading the Word: Revisiting Johnetta Brazzell and the Pontiac Oral History Archive,” held on January 25, 2024, in Kresge Library. The event highlighted new work emerging from the project to digitize 1970s interviews with elderly Black residents of Pontiac that explore their experiences from the 1910s through the 1950s. Former Oakland professor Crystal VanKooten and current Oakland graduate student Justin Lamb discussed how they created podcasts from the recordings. Living relatives of those interviewed decades ago and one of the interviewers were present to share what it meant for them to (re)discover the voices of their loved ones. Some 40 persons attended in person and many more virtually, including many community members.
- Archives and Special Collections set up a display of historical photographs and documents from their collections. They gave an update on the Pontiac Oral

History Archive, a website currently under construction that will provide access to the oral histories for community use through Oakland University's Library.

- 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.
- 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!

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 Library's IDEA Task Force hosted a successful online discussion of content relating to cultural diversity, including articles, podcasts, and TED Talks on the lived experiences of Muslims, Jews, and Asian Americans.
- A subcommittee of the IDEA Task Force held two internal focus groups to explore how well library faculty and staff are serving our patrons' (and each other's) needs in inclusive, diverse, equitable, and accessible ways. The committee members developed a series of action items based on the findings of the focus groups; among other outcomes, the Library has met with Disability Support Services and the Center for Multicultural Initiatives (CMI) to discuss closer collaborations between the units.

- This summer the Library will host staff from CMI for an orientation to library services and resources in order to increase their knowledge of what the Library can do to support underrepresented students.

Report submitted by Beth Wallis, Associate Dean of University Libraries

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