



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

2020-2021

Creation of University Libraries Diversity Statement

In February, 2021, the Libraries' Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) Task Force was formed. In their first semester, the group drafted the University Libraries Diversity Statement, which was approved by all bodies of the Library in March. This statement will appear on a new page within the Libraries' website that will display both the University Libraries Diversity Statement and the newly adopted Oakland University Land Acknowledgement. The Diversity Statement is as follows:

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.

- OU Libraries celebrated Open Access Week in October with a series of virtual presentations organized by Julia Rodriguez, Associate Professor and Scholarly Communications Librarian, and Stephanie Swanberg, former Associate Professor at the OUWB Medical Library. 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 2020 was "Open with Purpose: Taking Action to Build Structural Equity and Inclusion." Presentation topics this year included a look into how search engines reinforce racism, how to build an open monograph ecosystem, and the basics of creative commons licensing.
- For African American History Month our Outreach Librarian, Anne Zacharias, once again organized an outstanding program. On February 4, 2021, the Library hosted an online panel discussion entitled "Black Lives Matter." This panel featured student leaders and members of the metro Detroit activism community.

- The University Libraries were a co-sponsor of the March 17, 2021, online panel presentation, “Indigenous Archives and Food Sovereignty,” presented in conjunction with a course taught by Professors Andrea Knutson and Megan Peiser. The panel of scholars and activists discussed the importance of honoring indigenous connections to the land, respecting cultural traditions, and increasing awareness of colonizer structures.
- Every year, OU Libraries participate in Oakland University’s annual celebration of Pride Month. On March 18, 2021, Outreach Librarian Anne Zacharias held an online panel discussion entitled “Trans Rights Are Human Rights,” this group included speakers from Affirmations, the Ruth Ellis Center, and ACLU Michigan. There were some technology challenges with this event, but it was very well attended and the speakers shared great information!
- The University Libraries are co-sponsoring the May 25, 2021, screening of the film “Who Killed Vincent Chin,” in celebration of AAPI Heritage Month. The movie is part of the University Libraries’ streaming video collection.
- OU Libraries offer a monthly Literature to Film book club. Each year, the club membership selects books on current topics that have been made into film and engages with both by reading the book and watching and discussing the film. Noteworthy titles from this year that relate to raising awareness through literature about issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion include *Call Me by Your Name* by André Aciman, *The Zookeeper’s Wife* by Diane Ackerman, *The Lost Child of Philomena Lee* by Martin Sixsmith.

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.

- 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 now 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.
- In an Archives instruction session for IS 2700 (Introduction to the Middle East), materials from the OU Archives were used to illustrate various aspects of Middle Eastern cultures and their representations in the West.
- The University Libraries conducted an online survey during the winter 2021 semester with the goal of determining whether our services are meeting the needs of specific groups of students. The data will be disaggregated to allow for evaluation by respondent demographic groups, including first-generation college students, non-native English speakers, International students, and gender.
- OU Libraries has purchased more pod-like study stations for the 4th floor of Kresge Library. These units are helpful for individuals with autism or other sensory processing disorders and enjoyed by all patrons who seek focused, quiet study.

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.

- The Library continues to offer [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.”

- Recently our Scholarly Communications Librarian, Julia Rodriguez, made a presentation about the value of OER to the Strategic Enrollment Group. At this meeting, Provost Rios-Ellis approved the rollout of no-cost and low-cost course markings in Banner, which will allow students to search for this course attribute when registering for classes. Low-cost courses are defined as those with materials costs of \$40.00 or less. Professor Rodriguez led the development of the guidelines for this service several years ago.

*(<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.”

- Our Collections Support Services (CSS) team, led by Associate Professor and CSS Coordinator Shawn Lombardo, are undertaking the replacement of the subject heading “Illegal aliens” with “Undocumented immigrants” in our online catalog. The project is supported by Library Technology Services, where Library Systems Analyst Sarah Butash is handling the technological implementation of the change in the system.
- The library faculty, led by Collection Development Librarian Helen Levenson, have added some interdisciplinary non-subject parameters to the Libraries' book approval plan, which reflect an emphasis on DEI collection building. These new parameters work in conjunction with our other non-subject parameters and include items such as LGBTQ+ Studies, Women's Studies, Asian American Studies, and Black/African-American Studies.
- The Medical Library has focused on collecting and promoting resources that include images of diverse patient populations to support faculty in developing their teaching materials.
- Dr. Dominique Daniel, Professor and Coordinator of University Archives and Special Collections, created an online exhibit showcasing the [Pontiac Oral Histories](#) collection that is housed at OU, summarizing it as follows: “In the 1970s, OU conducted interviews of older Black residents of Pontiac to capture their stories. Most had come from the

South in the 1920s and lived through the Great Depression and war in Pontiac. Learn more about the recordings and the woman who started the project, Johnetta Brazzell.”

- The [Black Alumni Association digital collection](#) features photos and texts donated by black alumni during and after their 2019 reunion (project in collaboration with Alumni Engagement and the Black Alumni Association OU Chapter). The Archives and Special Collections team are working on improving the metadata and plan to invite alumni to submit comments and information online.
- 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!
- 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.
- 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.

Internal Library IDEA Efforts

As described in our newly adopted 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 developed plans for a library staff diversity book club and learning community, which will be launched in fall 2021. This initiative will provide a safe space for colleagues within the libraries to learn and grow together. Each semester the library staff will read and discuss a book and host a speaker under a unified IDEA theme. Our first book club selection this fall will be *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism*, by Robin Diangelo.
- The Library’s Committee on Appointment and Promotion, chaired this year by Associate Professor Shawn Lombardo, met virtually with members of the university’s Faculty DEI Committee to discuss library review procedures.
- Assistant Professor and Digital Strategies Librarian, Molly McGuire, conducted research in ways to improve accessibility in the University’s institutional repository, OUR@Oakland.
- The University Libraries Case Statement Working Group built their work on a foundation of Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility to ensure that our development efforts are directed toward serving our entire community in respectful and equitable ways.

IDEA-Related Research by Library Faculty

Emily Spunaugle, Assistant Professor and Rare Books Librarian, has established a research agenda focused on the [Marguerite Hicks Collection of Women's Literature](#), 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. She and her co-researcher, Assistant Professor of English Megan Peiser, shared their research in two venues this year. In addition, the Women’s Print History Project has updated data based on Professor Spunaugle’s research (see below).

Scholarly Presentation:

Spunaugle, E.D., & Peiser, M. "Collecting Queer: Intersectional Bibliographic Methods and the Marguerite Hicks Collection," RSA/SHARP* Panel: Disrupting the Canon: Feminist, Queer, and Global Book Histories. Renaissance Society of America, 2021 Annual Meeting. April 14, 2021.

* RSA= Renaissance Society of America; SHARP= Society for the History of Authorship, Reading, and Publishing

Invited Talk:

"Gender, Disability, and Finding Women in the Archives: Establishing the Provenance of the Marguerite Hicks Collection, 1660-1820." Invited virtual presentation with Megan Peiser to members of the Michigan Legislature. April 19, 2021.

Contribution:

The [Women's Print History Project](#) (the "comprehensive bibliographical database of women's contributions to print for the long eighteenth century") has corrected its data for Mary, the Osier-Peeler, crediting Emily Spunaugle's article and the Marguerite Hicks Collection at OU. See Spunaugle, Emily D. (2020) "A Travel Writer Reconsidered: Recovering Mary Morgan's Mary, the Osier-Peeler," *ABO: Interactive Journal for Women in the Arts, 1640-1830*: Vol.10: Iss.2, Article 2.

<http://doi.org/10.5038/2157-7129.10.2.1218>

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