

## MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

**Dear Colleagues,**

With the loss of the great Library of Alexandria, innumerable knowledge was lost. Today, Grand Valley State University Libraries works to preserve, across a network, the artifacts of physical and digital scholarship.

These channels are creating new ways to disseminate knowledge in a democratic manner through open networks, accessible to those both in and outside of academia.

The library profession as a whole values intellectual freedom, democracy, education, lifelong learning, and the preservation of information. The freedom to access this information and educate oneself are core underpinnings of a thriving democratic society.

The digital age of publishing offers us an opportunity to further democratize information, almost as great of an opportunity as was afforded by the advent of the printing press. It is an unlocking of information for all to come and create knowledge.

Our special collections play a critical role in preserving and amplifying voices. They collect the ordinary voices of the past to give them life once more, allowing today's student scholars to contextualize history. They work to bring light to hidden voices of those historically oppressed, to ensure we have a more vibrant understanding of the social history of today's events.

Ensuring that the knowledge ownership is in the right hands is another way that University Libraries practices equity and

inclusion. We engage with the subjects of the material to ensure that the collections are centered in their terms and context.

Inclusion and the practices to foster it are a strategic priority for University Libraries. Often serving as a hub for collaboration and innovation, University Libraries ensures that spaces belong to all of our students.

Another aspect of inclusion is the access to opportunities. One barrier to educational access is cost. As a campus leader for #open (open access, open educational resources,) University Libraries partner with teaching faculty to reduce the financial burden of accessing textbooks and course readings.

The themes in this issue center around inclusion—through digital access, appropriate ownership of scholarship, diverse representation of voices, and lowering barriers to access.

I invite you to consider how you are sharing and preserving your scholarly output. How will the next generation of scholars benefit from the knowledge that you are creating today? How can you help lower the barriers to those benefits through open access? How can you support a variety of voices being heard?



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A. Bélanger".

Annie Bélanger  
Dean of University Libraries

***“Lock up your libraries if you like; but there is no gate, no lock, no bolt that you can set upon the freedom of my mind.”*** Virginia Woolf