

Fall 2022

## "Beyond the Stacks" Vol 3, Issue 1, Fall 2022

DiMenna-Nyselius Library

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# Beyond the Stacks

## *The DiMenna-Nyselius Library Newsletter*

Fall 2022 / Volume 3 / Issue 1

## Academic Commons: Supporting Student Success

In the summer of 2019 the Library went through a major renovation in order to construct the Academic Commons—a co-located group of academic support units dedicated to helping students succeed academically. Located on the main level of the Library, the Academic Commons consists of the Writing Center, the Math Center, the Office of Academic Support and Retention, the Office of Accessibility, the ITS HelpDesk, the CAS Fredrickson Family Innovation Lab, and the DiMenna Nyselius Library. In the fall of 2021, the Academic Commons welcomed Global Fairfield as its newest partner. They are located on the lower level of the building, in a newly renovated space, completed in the summer of 2022.

The Academic Commons is governed by the Academic Commons Partnership Committee (ACPC), a committee comprised of representatives from all of the Academic Commons partners and led by the Library's Associate Dean for Public Services & Coordinator of the Academic Commons Partnership.

The ACPC has spent the last two years learning about one another's services, and exploring ways to work together. Throughout the 2020-2021 academic year we conducted a series of "service share" presentations as part of our monthly meetings. Each unit provided an overview of their services, their staffing, their accomplishments and challenges. These proved to be essential in helping us to understand what each of us do to

*Continued on page 3*

**For previous issues of Beyond the Stacks, visit:  
[digitalcommons.fairfield.edu/library-newsletter](https://digitalcommons.fairfield.edu/library-newsletter)**

### *Message from the Dean*

One of the main reasons why I have remained in academia for all of these years is because of students. I continue to be involved in student mentoring programs at the University to ensure that I maintain relationships with our students. Prior to my current role as Dean, I would work alongside our student employees. One of these individuals was Justine Ferrara '18, who is now a librarian. Once I heard that Justine was interested in librarianship, I tried unsuccessfully to convince her to join the librarian ranks as an academic librarian. Justine always knew that public libraries were her calling, and she is now a children's librarian developing the collection, and creating programming for young children. See her story on page 4!

I hope you enjoy this issue of Beyond the Stacks. In these pages, you will be introduced to the Library Research Prize winners of 2022, new and enhanced study spaces, a new digitization project, the Bennett Center for Judaic Studies Digital Lecture Archive, and more. Thanks for reading.

Kind regards,  
Christina S. McGowan, MSLIS  
Dean of the Library & University Librarian

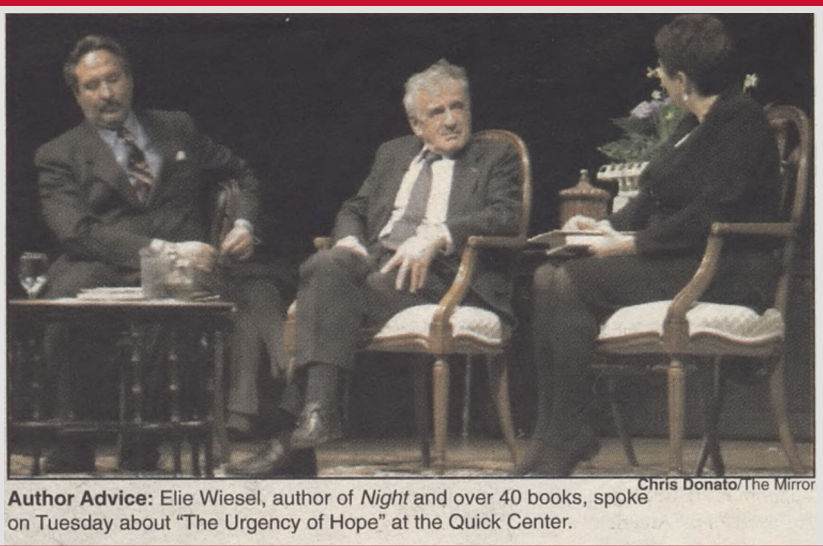
# Archives Corner:

## Bennett Center for Judaic Studies Digital Lecture Archive

The Fairfield University Archives, part of the DiMenna-Nyselius Library, is in the process of digitizing materials from the Bennett Center for Judaic Studies, donated to us by its founder Dr. Ellen M. Umansky. The Bennett Center for Judaic Studies offers lectures and annual programs to enrich the intellectual, cultural, and spiritual dialogue of Fairfield University and the community at large. Noted speakers such as Nathan Englander, Amy-Jill Levine, Jonathan Sacks, Jonathan Sarna, and Elie Wiesel have visited Fairfield University as part of the Bennett Center lecture series, made possible through the gifts of generous individuals and foundations. Plans are underway for these lectures to be made available through Fairfield University's DigitalCommons@Fairfield, a service of the DiMenna-Nyselius Library which offers open access to the collected scholarship and creative works of Fairfield University faculty, students, and staff.

The Bennett Center was founded in 1994 under the direction of Dr. Ellen M. Umansky, who served as both the Carl and Dorothy Bennett Professor of Judaic Studies (a faculty position within the University's Department of Religious Studies) and Director of the Bennett Center. During her tenure at the University, Dr. Umansky sponsored the creation of a treasure trove of academic and cultural programming. DigitalCommons@Fairfield is the vehicle through which we can share these programs with the world. The Library is pleased to welcome Dr. Glenn Dynner, PhD, a respected scholar and teacher with experience in community outreach and administration, who was recently appointed as the Carl and Dorothy Bennett Professor of Judaic Studies and new director of the Center. We look forward to working with Dr. Dynner on this exciting project.

-Elise Bochinski, University Archivist



Author Advice: Elie Wiesel, author of *Night* and over 40 books, spoke on Tuesday about "The Urgency of Hope" at the Quick Center. Chris Donato/The Mirror

Scan from *The Mirror*, Vol. 28, No. 24, April 10, 2003.  
*Fairfield University History Online.*



*Dr. Ellen Umansky winning the 2009 Fairfield University Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Faculty Vision Award.*  
*Scan from the 2009 Fairfield University Manor Yearbook.*  
*Fairfield University History Online.*

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## Academic Commons, cont.

support our students, and identify areas where our work compliments each other. Last year we organized an inaugural Academic Commons Trick or Treat event that took place on October 27th 2021 with representatives from each unit participating. Students (and a few staff and faculty) stopped at each unit to get a treat and learn about our services. We are reprising the event for Fall 2022.

The Academic Commons finished the 2021-2022 academic year with a half-day retreat where we worked on revising our purpose statement and drafting an official committee charge. These will be finalized and added to the Academic Commons website this fall. We also brainstormed ways that we can join forces to market our services to the University. The Academic Commons features prominently in the Library's new strategic plan, as part of its Modern Academic Library goal, which calls to "establish an Academic Commons identity that emphasizes the benefits to our community." We are excited for the 2022-2023 academic year, and all the possibilities that will arise from our working together to support the scholarly success and intellectual growth of our students.

*-Curtis Ferree, Associate Dean for Public Services & Coordinator of the Academic Commons Partnership*

## Make a Gift to the Library



[fairfield.edu/library/about/Give](http://fairfield.edu/library/about/Give)

## Year in Review

*Vol. 3, Issue 1*

The Library marked the start of a new chapter this past year with the release of its Strategic Plan, 2022-2026 which includes a revised mission statement and values. All library staff worked together to bring these documents to fruition and we are proud of each person's hard work in making this plan a reality. Our implementation phase has already begun and Library staff have already made significant progress on FY23 priorities. Below are highlights of our accomplishments this past year.

**7,905** *Questions Answered*

**137,000** *DigitalCommons@Fairfield Downloads*

**10,221** *Physical Item Checkouts*

**13,715** *Study Room Reservations*

**1,495,106** *eResources*

**119,698** *Total views of Library Tutorials, Research Guides, and Citation Guides*

**5,162** *Interlibrary Loan Requests Processed*

**3,292** *Students Attended Information Literacy Instruction Sessions*

**1,935** *People Attended Library Events*

**128,100** *Print and eBooks added to our Collection*

**71,310** *Visits to the Fairfield University History Online Database*

*View our FY22 Annual Report at:  
[bit.ly/DNLAnnualReport22](http://bit.ly/DNLAnnualReport22)*



## *Alumni Check-In: Justine Ferrara, '18*

Anyone who has been in our building knows that the Library wouldn't be the welcoming, helpful place that it is without our team of student employees. You'll see the majority of them at the Library Services & Information Desk checking materials in and out, re-shelving books, helping fellow students book study rooms, or directing them to various points in the building. There are also plenty of students working behind the scenes in interlibrary services, outreach, cataloging, and even in the archives. We've always sought to be a place for our student employees to explore their interests and learn transferable skills to take into their future careers. And, every so often, they end up finding their way to librarianship. So, in what we hope to be the first installment in a series of "where are they now's," we wrote to Justine Ferrara, class of 2018, to see what she's up to and how she reflects on her time working in our Library.

*-Mat Blaine, Research & Outreach Librarian*

Since I was quite young, I have dreamed of becoming a librarian. I frequently visited the library as a kid, and then volunteered at my local library throughout high school. When I began looking at colleges to attend for undergrad, a major deciding factor for me was what the school's library was like, and if I would be able to work there as a student worker. When I visited Fairfield University and saw the DiMenna-Nyselius Library, I couldn't wait to apply.

I worked at the DiMenna-Nyselius Library through all four years of my undergraduate studies, and it only furthered my aforementioned interest in the field of work. During those four years, I worked mainly in the research department, learning all sorts of library-related skills: improving my research skills, making relevant displays to highlight materials in the library's collection, inputting metadata to DigitalCommons@Fairfield, and helping to orient first-year and international students during the beginning of each school year. My favorite activity that I worked on while at Fairfield was



*Justine Ferrara, '18*

planning and executing a storytelling event that challenged stereotypes in 2016, writing the handbook for how other libraries could do the same, and presenting about it alongside two DiMenna-Nyselius librarians at the Connecticut Library Association's 2018 conference.

I worked in different areas of the Library during my time there and my supervisors were always supportive and became mentors to me throughout college. I still feel like I can reach out to them at any time if I need something. Beyond my immediate supervisors, I also met Joan Overfield (former University Librarian) who I had the pleasure of meeting with somewhat regularly as part of the Cura Personalis program. She advised me on library trends and career progression.

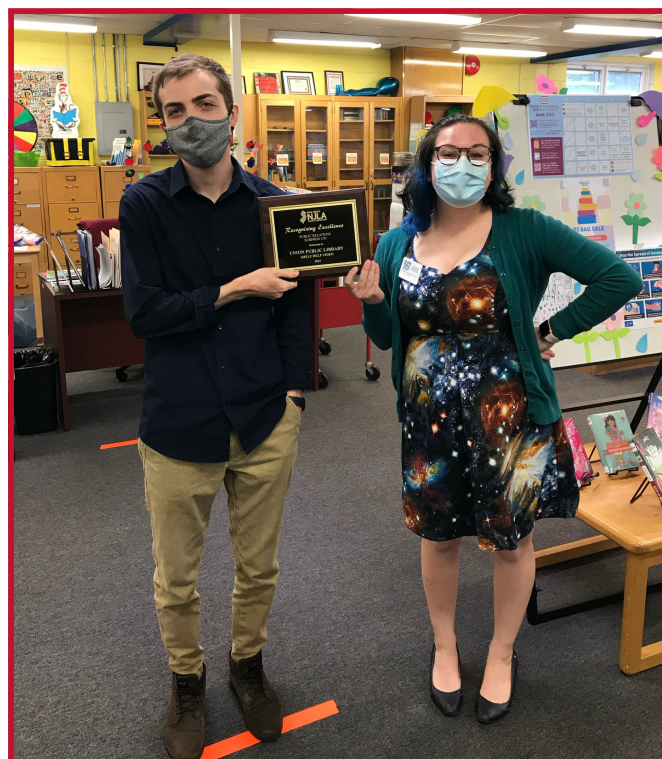
I took one year between graduating from Fairfield in 2018 and starting my Master's, during which I worked at two public libraries part-time. I started my Master's with a concentration in Library and Information Science at Rutgers and left one position for another, so I was working two part-time jobs as a Library Associate while in school. During my second-to-last semester, I started looking at full-time Librarian positions and saw that Union Public, only about 25 minutes from where I live in Jersey City, was hiring a Children's Librarian. I applied and was hired in January 2021!

Since then, I feel like I have really carved out my place in the Children's Department, focusing mainly on the youngest kids (age 0 to 5). In my role, I create programs for children and families like storytimes, dance parties, and baby lapsits. I also add board books, picture books, and easy readers to our collection, and work with people to find the books and materials they are looking for. Though public librarianship — especially in the Youth Department — is very different from academic library work, many of the skills and experiences I gained from working at the DiMenna-Nyselius Library have translated to my ability to succeed in my current role.

*-Justine Ferrara, '18*



*Justine presenting her weekly "Wobblers & Walkers Storytime" event.*



*Justine and her colleague with their New Jersey Library Association Award. They received the award for creating a tutorial video.*

# Save the Date!

## Stags Share Stories:

*Conversations That Connect Us*

11/10/22 [bit.ly/dnlevents](https://bit.ly/dnlevents)

# Circulation Supervisor, Sharon Sparkman, Retires

The entire DiMenna-Nyselius Library staff offers a heartfelt thanks to Sharon Sparkman for all the contributions she has made here over the past 34 years, and wishes her a happy and restful retirement. She retires as Circulation Supervisor but we've had to re-order her business card a few times during her time at the Library. When she first started on "a cold winter's day," as she tells it, she started in Cataloging, then, after some Library restructuring, she took a position in Acquisitions. After that, she worked in the Media Department and finally Circulation. In total, she has worked under five different Library Directors/Deans, adapted to several different integrated library systems applications, and been a part of two major building renovations.

Under her leadership and supervision, the Circulation Department has flourished as the face of the Library. She has established a standard for customer service for her team of professional specialists, student workers, and part time circulation supervisors, ensuring that our community of patrons feel welcome, that their needs are met, and their concerns are addressed. Leading this mission entails serious work, which I'm sure she would be humble about if you were to ask her. She ensured that our building was accessible and operational, even during inclement weather, and responded to both operational and medical emergencies. Sharon had a unique position at the University, one that required cultivating strong relationships with the Department of Public Safety, the Bursar, and the Rec Plex, among thousands of personal relationships with faculty, staff, and students over the years. Perhaps Sharon's greatest contribution to the Library was her recruitment, training, and development of our student work force. She has hired all of our student employees and has developed a training program that establishes high expectations for service, which includes annual performance reviews that quiz student workers' knowledge of various facts about the Library and circulation policy. She has described working with students as being like "a fountain of youth," and it is clear, from their feedback over the years, that the students value and appreciate the mentorship they receive from Sharon.

Sharon has been a dedicated, friendly, and supportive colleague to all, and we will forever miss the energy she brings to the Library. She is so dedicated, friendly, and supportive that she even agreed to answer a few questions for this article:



*Sharon and Sylvia Hurlburt, Access Services & Reserves Specialist, during Sharon's Retirement Celebration*

## ***What brought you the greatest satisfaction during your time at Fairfield?***

People! Students especially- working with them, learning their interests and skills, seeing a bit of the world through their eyes. Some former student workers will reach out to share news of their successes. I feel so privileged.

## ***What do you make of the change in the landscape of higher education that has occurred over the past few decades?***

Change is an opportunity to view situations through a different lens and I have witnessed the landscape of the library change several times. The addition that occurred in 2001 nearly doubled the size of the Library providing several computer labs and our highly appreciated group study rooms. The 2019 renovation also changed things up, with our new Academic Commons partners establishing themselves in the building. I've also watched the purchasing of online materials exceed the hard bound as the demands of the digital age hit higher education, not to mention the total shift to online learning at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## ***What would you say has been your key to success?***

My Sagittarian nature and spell check.

## ***Any goals or plans for your retirement?***

When I win the lottery I'll be traveling to the Serengeti but until then I'm looking into volunteering at the Beardsley Zoo and/or an animal rescue organization.

# Kudos to the Winners of the 2022 Library Research Prize

Caroline Timmerman '22 and Rev. Dious Joseph '22 were each awarded the 2022 Library Research Prize of \$1,000 and were honored at a reception in the Library on May 3, 2022. Two honorable mentions and \$250 were also presented to undergraduate students Molly Lamendola '22 and Nikki Koval '22. Attendees had the opportunity to hear the students, and their faculty, speak about their exceptional projects as well as ask questions. A plaque displaying all the undergraduate and graduate winner's names, since the prize started in 2009, has been updated and can be viewed in the Library lobby.



## *Undergraduate Winner* *Caroline Timmerman, '22*

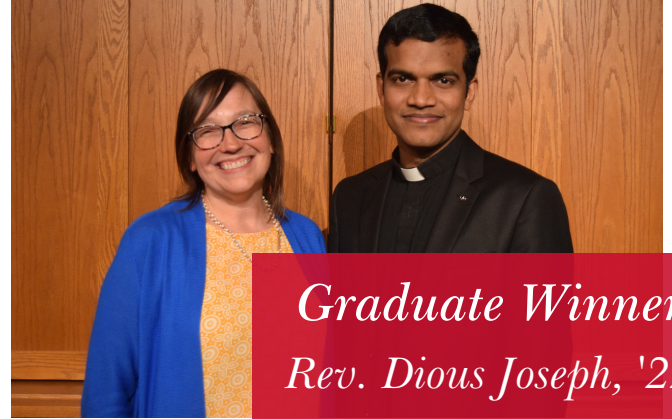
*Dr. Janie Leatherman & Caroline Timmerman, '22*

Major: International Studies, with Anthropology minor  
 “The Language of Discrimination: Accentism and Multicultural London English”  
 INST 4999 (Spring 2022), Dr. Janie Leatherman

Caroline’s research traces the emergence of a multicultural dialect in London over the past 40 years among diverse immigrant youths and raises questions about the social effects of accents, substantiating why accentism is a form of discrimination that deserves human rights protection. Her work spans fields of sociolinguistics, phonetics, globalization, migration and integration studies, multiculturalism, the study of discrimination and also human rights protections and gaps therein."

Caroline utilized a breadth of library resources including databases from the International Studies Course Guide to find articles, books, and streaming media, as well as the program Zotero to manage citations. "My 166 and counting source bibliography is evidence of the import and impact the library has had on my work...The ample research resources and accessible digital library allowed me to complete a nearly 50-page research project that has enriched me as a student and helped to solidify my decision to study linguistics at the post-graduate level."

Caroline is pursuing a Master’s in Linguistics at the University of Manchester in England, with a focus on sociolinguistics.



## *Graduate Winner* *Rev. Dious Joseph, '22*

*Christina McGowan, Dean of the Library, & Rev. Dious Joseph, '22*

MA Communication  
 “Anointing of the Sick: A Form of Final Conversation from a Priest's Perspective”  
 COMM 6971 (Fall 2021), Dr. Sean Horan

Rev. Dious Joseph's study, with data collected from 200 priests in the U.S. and India, was designed to better understand Anointing of the Sick, a Catholic sacrament often administered at the end of life, and to provide guidance to train priests. Dr. Horan shared "It should be noted that communication in the Catholic Church is incredibly under-researched. Thus, his contributions fill an important void."

The judges were struck by his extensive interdisciplinary research from fields such as Communication, History, Religion, Dogmatic Theology, Psychology, Spirituality, Palliative Care/Medicine, Survey Statistics, and more. "I had to access maximum library collections and seek assistance from librarians. However, due to the COVID situation, I had to work remotely and utilize the entire virtual potency of the Library." He also gave special thanks to the Interlibrary Loan service to obtain access to materials from the other libraries and "all the librarians for assisting and molding me in the journey to become the first Communication researcher Priest in Catholic Interpersonal/Organizational Communication".

Rev. Dious Joseph began his PhD in Communication at Ohio University this fall, receiving full funding. *Page 7*



# Enhancing Study Spaces

The Library building is continuously evolving. The librarians and staff, ever curious and resourceful, strategize how to optimize building space to better serve the students. This is achieved by:

- listening to feedback provided by students
- observing the ways visitors engage with current spaces and learning from other academic and public libraries
- collaborating with campus partners to obtain needed funding, supplies, and expertise
- gifts from donors, designated to the Library

Here are images of two recently renovated study spaces this year.



This open space on the lower level of the Library was recently renovated with fresh paint, new carpeting, and furniture, which added 42 additional study seats. Previously there had not been adequate furniture, in terms of comfort or quantity, and the appearance of the space overall was not inviting. Immediately after the renovation there were students filling the space, taking advantage of the natural light and quiet location.



At the request of numerous students, Apple TVs and Airplay were installed during the summer in all of the 15 study rooms and five workstations in the collaboratories, helping to modernize the spaces for students to conduct more efficient group work. This was possible thanks to recent donations made to the Library during STAGiving Day. Students shared this suggestion in an anonymous survey conducted in December 2021.



## Fairfield University

DiMenna-Nyselius Library

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