

2020

## Annual Report, 2019-2020

University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. Libraries

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### Citation

University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. Libraries. (2020). Annual Report, 2019-2020. *University Libraries Annual Report*. Retrieved from <https://scholarworks.uark.edu/libar/13>

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## University of Arkansas Libraries Annual Report 2020

### Personnel

The new Dean of Libraries, Dennis T. Clark, began on Aug. 1, 2019. His first year as dean was focused on restructuring library administration and building donor relations. Lori Birrell and Joel Thornton were [appointed](#) as associate deans in Sept. 2019.

### Awards

Martha Anderson, head of Digital Services, was among 24 selected as fellows of the Association of Research Libraries' [Leadership and Career Development Program](#).

### Construction

The Libraries dealt with two major issues during fiscal year 2020: construction and COVID-19. Construction disruptions began in fall 2019 with the closing of floors three and four in Mullins Library and the removal of asbestos from those floors. The original asbestos abatement and renovation plan was expanded several times to include unforeseen extensions into levels 1 and 2, especially in the mechanical and plumbing systems, and an addition of a fire suppressant system to the original 1968 portion of the building. The asbestos abatement was completed on schedule and on budget. The second phase of renovation, demolition, followed the asbestos abatement and is also proceeding on schedule and on budget. The renovation phase, rebuilding the interiors of levels three and four, however, has budget challenges due to a lack of funding, especially for furnishings.

### COVID Closure

The second major disruption to library processes began as the university closed due to the pandemic on March 19, 2020. Libraries staff and faculty continued to work from home after a period of adjustment during which equipment was transferred to some personnel's residences. Challenges remained due to the lack of staff on site to assist patrons with the retrieval or scanning of requested materials. Whenever possible, materials placed on course reserves were purchased in electronic format so that they could be accessed by students who had computer equipment and internet access. All due dates for the return of materials were suspended until the fall semester of 2020. This included items borrowed from other libraries through interlibrary loan. Closing the university affected our Media Services Department as well, as faculty made many requests for streaming video materials than a typical year. The summer semester allowed Course Reserves staff to work in conjunction with campus faculty to ensure materials were available in electronic format for the fall semester 2020, which included retrieving and scanning materials and placing them in an electronic format accessible through Blackboard.

Special Collections and Arkansas Folk and Traditional Arts documented the personal COVID-19 experiences of U of A students, faculty and staff with the [Documenting COVID-19](#) project.

Several Libraries events were canceled or postponed due to the campus closure, including the Art+Feminism [Wikipedia Edit-a-thon](#), a [summer seminar](#) for faculty, the second [Open Education Southern Symposium](#), and an event to facilitate the creation of the U of A's first [zine](#).

Please see Appendix A for a list of selected Libraries accomplishments during the COVID-19 campus closure.

### **Open Educational Resources**

Faculty members Mostafa Elsaadany, Ches Jones, Kit Kacirek and Karl Schubert were [selected](#) during the fall 2019 semester to participate in the paid Open Educational Resources Course Conversion Program. Faculty members Jennifer Beasley, Myra Haulmark, Lynn Meade, Laurie Apple, Clareth Hughes, Sheila Smith and Jonathan Marion were [selected](#) during the spring semester to participate.

The Libraries and Global Campus provided funding and support for Russell L. Sharman, assistant professor of practice of Communication, to publish an [open textbook](#) for the Film Lecture course on campus, saving students more than \$100 each. In addition to Sharman's text, [three textbooks](#) by U of A faculty — Open Technical Writing, University Physics I: Classical Mechanics, and Astronomy for Educators — became openly licensed.

The September 24 [Open Textbook Network Workshop and Paid Review](#) offered a unique opportunity for faculty to learn about Open Educational Resources and the Open Textbook Network with the option for them to provide a review of an open textbook in their discipline for \$200 compensation.

The Libraries, in collaboration with the Global Campus and the Teaching Innovation and Pedagogical Support Center, hosted several [events](#) featuring faculty speakers and an OER Petting Zoo for Open Education Week March 2-6.

### **Collections**

The Libraries added around 270,000 volumes during the year, which increased our holdings to 3 million volumes for the first time. This includes a large bump due to approximately 275,000 e-serials and e-media volumes that were not previously counted in our annual statistics.

Expenditures on library materials was down from fiscal year 2019, from \$7.9 million to \$7.6 million. Total library expenditures were down as well, from \$18 million in fiscal 2019 to \$17.3 million in 2020. Library personnel dropped from 160 in 2019 to 149 in 2020 with an

administration-led effort to realign and streamline existing duties when vacancies were open rather than re-filling positions. As expected, the number of library presentations, participants in learning sessions, and number of reference transactions all dropped sharply after the university closed for in-person classes on March 19. Initial circulation of materials was lower than the past year, but renewals and e-book retrievals both increased, all likely attributed to the close of the physical building on March 19 through the remainder of the fiscal year. The downward trend in circulation of physical materials continues as it has for the past two decades. In 2008, 91,912 books were checked out or renewed; in 2020, 36,008 books were checked out or renewed, only one third of 2008 checkouts.

The [Gordon Morgan Papers](#) document the life of the first African American professor at the U of A.

The Libraries [added online access](#) to historical magazines and newspapers including *LIFE*, *Time*, the *Baltimore Afro-American*, the *Chicago Defender*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *New York Amsterdam News*, and the *New York Times*.

## Grants and Funding

The Libraries were the recipients of an award and a grant during the 2019 fiscal year. The Center for Research Libraries awarded \$7,500 for the digitization of the Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station Annual Reports. CRL has in previous years funded the digitization of the Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletin, the Arkansas Extension Circulars, and the Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service miscellaneous publications. The National Endowment for the Arts [awarded](#) the Arkansas Folk and Traditional Arts program a \$35,000, which was used to sponsor an Apprenticeship Program.

The Libraries successfully completed a crowd-funding drive to ensure the completion of two digitization projects before the University of Arkansas's Sesquicentennial—the [University of Arkansas Yearbooks](#) and the [Arkansas Traveler Newspapers](#). Work on both projects has been ongoing for several years and will continue with metadata clean-up projects intended to increase the usability of the digitized images with more accurate search results.

## Outreach

Catherine Wallack, architectural records archivist, hosted the [gallery conversation](#) 'Benton and the Buffalo River' July 27, at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art.

Lori Birrell, then head of Special Collections, presented the [workshop](#) 'Becoming History Keepers: Organizing and Storing the Records of Your Family, Organization, or Yourself' Aug. 21 at the Fayetteville Public Library.

Amy Allen, university archivist and author, [signed copies](#) of her book, *University of Arkansas (Campus History)*, Aug. 22 at the Barnes & Noble in Fayetteville.

Melody Herr, head of the Office of Scholarly Communications, presented the [free webinar](#) 'Research Misconduct: Definitions, Causes, and Responses' Sept. 11.

The Office of Scholarly Communications offered three virtual [open house](#) events April 9, 28 and 29 to help students submit their honors theses to the institutional repository.

## **Libraries Events**

The Graduate Student Speaker Series continued with the following students and presentations:

- Will Teague, [Deportation as Diplomacy: Carter and the US-Iranian Relationship](#), Oct. 10
- Airic Hughes, [Through the Heart of the City: I-630 and the Re-segregation of Little Rock](#), Nov. 7
- Marie Totten, [Political Outcast: 'Justice Jim' Johnson and Massive Resistance in Arkansas](#), Dec. 5
- Samuel Ownbey, [The State of Arkansas vs. Tee Davis: Race, Politics, and National Publicity, 1943-1949](#), Feb. 4
- Samuel Binns, [To Labor for Justice: Arkansas and Socialism](#), March 4

Special Collections hosted a [Spotlight on Student Media](#) exhibit and event during October 2019 for Archives Month. A drop-in viewing of the Digital Services department's work on digitizing the *Razorback* yearbook and *Arkansas Traveler* newspaper was followed by a [panel discussion](#) with campus media leaders.

During the Nov. 19 [Student Showcase](#), students Megan York and Samuel Ownbey presented on the exhibits and projects they had completed using Special Collections materials.

To say farewell to the part of Mullins that would be undergoing renovation, the Libraries hosted [The Un-Quiet](#) Nov. 22.

The Libraries collaborated with partners across campus to present [Study Breaks](#) for students during finals Dec. 9-18.

The Libraries sponsored a night of [free jazz music](#) with the Mingus Dynasty Quartet to honor the late John Stubblefield, whose materials are housed in Special Collections, Feb. 6 in the Jim and Joyce Faulkner Performing Arts Center.