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Merrill-Cazier Library, Utah State University

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As the fall semester settles into the final stretch, University Libraries continues to strive to help students succeed at Utah State University. Student success, our number one priority at both the library and university, occurs in many ways—through excellent instruction and consultation, wonderful physical space in which to study and collaborate, emphasis on scholarly dissemination for students and faculty, and events such as exhibits and public lectures.

The information that students, faculty, and librarians must learn to navigate, access, and assess in order to be successful at Utah State University and in today’s world is mind-boggling. Two areas of librarianship that work to address these needs are information literacy and scholarly communication. By the time a USU student graduates we insist that they be “informationally literate” and that they understand the value of scholarly communication. In this issue, we give a short primer about these important areas of librarianship.

Along with helping students hone their intellectual skills, we realize the importance of having a wonderful space to study and hang out. This summer we spruced up part of the library with new carpet and furniture, plus added rooms to make school more convenient for students with families and infants. The latter was accomplished by fulfilling student requests for a family-friendly study room and a solely dedicated lactation room.

As the university embarks on a new capital campaign, we thank our Friends of the Library for their continued support and ask that they invite others to join the Friends. We also hope that you will continue to partner with us in making many of our wonderful library projects achievable.

Brad Cole
Dean of Libraries

Students enjoy pizza from an opening reception of a library exhibition.
At USU’s Day on the Quad in August, I had the opportunity to invite those who stopped by the library’s booth to join the Friends of the Library. Among all the friendly people I interacted with, it was especially exciting when students came quickly up to the table and proclaimed, “I love libraries!” before we had even said hello!

When giving out information about joining the Friends, I explained simply that we are library supporters—we too love libraries! That strong feeling leads us to help the Merrill-Cazier Library by making an annual financial contribution to the Friends.

I’m proud that we stand up together for our library. If you’re reading this, you are likely a Friend. On behalf of the Trustees of the Friends, I thank you for your continued support.

Joseph N. Anderson
President, Friends of Merrill-Cazier Library
Shannon Smith
*Scholarly Communication Librarian*

Shannon received her MLIS from the University of Washington Information School and worked at the University of Wyoming Libraries in Laramie, Wyoming before joining us. She will manage Open Access publishing efforts, the development of Open Educational Resources, the institutional repository, and advocate for open access considerations among campus stakeholders. She is looking forward to finding intersections of interest and opportunities for collaboration both within and outside of the library. She’s a great knitter, does yoga, and loves being outside in the mountain air.

Chris Lee
*Electronic Resource Librarian*

Before joining us, Chris worked for six years at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo in California in Resource Sharing. Chris was a former student worker for Resource Sharing at Merrill-Cazier Library during his undergraduate degrees (English and Journalism). He is looking forward to gathering resource materials and being able to work with computers. He likes to spend time with his wife and two daughters. He also enjoys reading, Marvel movies, and video games.

Jessica Sandberg
*Library Teaching Assistant*

Jessica is teaching English 1010 and 2010 and serving as a liaison between the library and the composition program. Originally from Cache Valley, Jessica received her Master of Arts degree in English with an emphasis in Literature and Certificate in Women and Gender Studies from Utah State University. She became interested in this position after working for the English department as a graduate instructor. She’s excited to still do research, teach, and learn new skills. Jessica loves to read, paint, be crafty, travel, spend time outdoors, and spend time with the people she loves.
Old Ephraim’s New Home

*If you have visited USU Libraries’ Special Collections and Archives,* you may have missed the skull of Old Ephraim, a local legend. The display was unremarkable—a small, dark case with a bed of green velvet to cradle the charred and broken bones of a bear that terrorized livestock across the Bear River Range almost 100 years ago. USU Libraries finally changed that.

Old Ephraim’s new home is well-lit, has a life-size cutout of the bear, and a display that weaves the epic tale of man versus grizzly bear. Preservation Lab Coordinator Devin Greener built a museum-inspired metal mount that provides a better view of the bear’s skull. Skull and mount are now protected with an ultraviolet light-filtering glass vitrine.

Old Ephraim fed on Bear River Range livestock in the early 20th century. In 1922 (or 1923, depending on who you ask), local sheep herder Frank Clark hunted the grizzly down and shot him an estimated 10 times. Old Ephraim was one of the last grizzly bears in Utah.

“We aren’t a museum and we aren’t really equipped to have artifacts displayed,” Old Ephraim Exhibit Curator Clint Pumphrey said, “but we wanted to make sure that we did something really special for Old Ephraim.”

Pumphrey worked with student worker Alyson Griggs to create both a physical and digital exhibit. Griggs researched the tale and selected the material for most of the exhibit. Visit the digital exhibit at exhibits.usu.edu.
Arrington Mormon History Lecture

This semester USU Libraries hosted the 2019 Arrington Mormon History Lecture featuring Margaret Byrne Professor of American History at Stanford University, Richard White.

In his talk “What the Railroad will Bring: The Promise and Reality of the Transcontinental Railroads,” White discussed the impacts of the landscape-altering trans- continentals—both positive and negative. The lecture took place at the historic Logan Tabernacle to the accompaniment of a full audience.

“Social calculators only have pluses. We see the jobs that were created, the advances in technology and communication. However, if we look at the minuses like the effects to the environment, the deaths of indigenous people, the near extinction of many wildlife et cetera, the railroad was not always a good thing.”

- Richard White

(Bottom & left) Richard White speaks at the 2019 Arrington Mormon History Lecture.
New Furniture & Rooms

Well-used furniture throughout the library received a face-lift this summer thanks to the efforts of several library committees. The Space Planning Committee and the Space Implementation Team worked extra hard to find furniture that would fulfill the needs of students, hold up to constant use, and look great at the same time. Three spaces were transformed by the new furniture and the feedback has been great!

In addition to new furnishings, this summer the library partnered with the USU Inclusion Center and launched a fundraising campaign to create a clean, dedicated space for infant care and lactation. Previous lactation spaces at the library were single-stall bathrooms with a chair. After raising $1,400, a room next to the elevators on the first floor was renovated and completed in mid-October as part of our initiative to be a more inclusive space for all students and faculty.

Students with families are now able to study at the library as well with the completion of a dedicated child-friendly space. The Family Study Room is located by Course Reserves and serves as a space for students with young children. The room is loaded with books and toys for every age, as well as a small table for kids to play at. This room is noise-friendly and is available for group study, as well. This space was largely funded by the generosity of Student Affairs.

(Top) New furniture on the library’s second floor. (Middle) The Infant Care/Lactation Room on the library’s first floor. (Bottom) The Family Study Room by the library’s Course Reserves.
Scholarly Communication 101

Scholarly communication encompasses the entire life cycle related to development, publication, dissemination, and preservation of any piece of scholarly output related to research (ACRL, 2016).

Scholarly communication is an ongoing part of the work the library engages with throughout the Utah State University community. This includes everything from building meaningful collections, exposing students to the research cycle and copyright understanding, and increasing open access publishing of USU research output. The libraries are committed to thoughtful stewardship of scholarly communication needs and committed to considering the impact of researchers and students, as well as the public good of our campus community.

Scholarly communication has supported the following:

- Open Educational Resources (OER) has saved students at USU over $1 million since 2014
- The libraries’ Open Access (OA) Fund has supported more than 100 authors including 40+ students
- The institutional repository (DigitalCommons@USU) has had more than 2.5 million downloads in the past year from around the world
- Data management support and consult with faculty and students on digital project creation
- Maintain transparency in building the library collections, seeking faculty input on how decisions will impact the research and curriculum at USU

The publication and sharing of scholarly and creative works are a vital component of USU’s land- and space-grant mission, and the USU Libraries’ staff are proud partners in this mission.

Panel participants respond to audience questions at an Open Access Week event hosted by the library.
At its simplest, information literacy is sometimes defined as “research skills,” but most information professionals define it more broadly and with more nuance. For example, can an information literate person be “duped” by fake news or misinformation? If an individual possesses information literacy skills, then they demonstrate effective behaviors relating to information—the former Information Literacy Competency Standings for Higher Education defined these as the ability to “recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information.”

Because the landscape we inhabit has changed dramatically and requires new skills to traverse it, the new Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education suggests these literacies are more complex. Its six frames emphasize the concepts that underlie and inform someone’s ability to define, evaluate, use, and cite information. These concepts include understanding that authority is constructed and contextual, that information creation is a process, information has value, research as inquiry, scholarship as a conversation and searching as a strategic exploration. When viewed through these lenses, an information literate person has the ability to shift in particular contexts and adapt as technologies, needs, and information changes.
C. Blythe Ahlstrom returned to Utah State University as a History Department faculty member in the fall of 1964. Seven years later, he went with Dr. Stan Cazier to Chico State in California as an assistant to the president. They returned to Utah State in the spring of 1979 when Cazier replaced Glen Taggart as president of USU. Blythe and Anne as well as their children, Susan, Jon, and Evelyn, epitomized commitment and love of the world of Aggies.

The Ahlstroms served the university and Logan community continually until his death this past August. In spite of years as an administrator, Blythe’s true love was teaching and he worked diligently to provide his students with exceptional classes. In retirement, the Ahlstroms chose the USU Merrill-Cazier Library as the focal point of their service. Blythe believed strongly in the significance of a university’s library and understood the dynamic of change as the academic world moved toward an electronic knowledge base.

A kind, compassionate, caring man, Blythe used his time and resources to enhance the library as the campus’ physical center of learning. When he came back to USU, I was one of his advisees, and then when he returned from Chico, we became colleagues and forged a professional and personal relationship that like USU’s library stood the test of time.

- F. Ross Peterson
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1. Visit usu.edu/giving
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3. Select Friends of Merrill-Cazier Library

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