Marginalia

Spring 2022
Dear Friends,

This winter Utah State University received the exciting news that we had joined the highest level of research institutions in the country by earning the prestigious R1 classification from the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education.

Achieving the R1 status is one of the most well-known markers of academic excellence and research impact that universities strive to achieve, designating those institutions as sustaining the very highest level of research activity. USU was one of only 9 new universities to gain this recognition during this cycle, and now joins a group of 146 of the most prestigious U.S. universities. USU and the University of Utah are the only two institutions in our state to earn this designation.

What does this mean for the Library?

Of course, the Library is foundational to the success of our faculty and students’ ability to conduct high-level research, supporting this mission through strong collections and services. The Merrill-Cazier Library provides access to almost 2 million print books, 70,000 electronic journals, and over 400 research databases. When we do not own books or journals required for a specific project, our acquisitions and interlibrary loan teams are right there to make sure researchers obtain those materials as quickly as possible. Of course, our Special Collections & Archives provides access to unique and rare materials and serves as a laboratory for scholars engaging in primary source research.

Our team of instruction librarians actively works with individual students and classes to grow the skills needed for beginning researchers, both at the undergraduate and graduate
level, continuing to support USU’s long history as a pioneer in undergraduate research. And our Digital Initiatives team supports faculty through research data management services and managing our institutional repository, which provides electronic access to the scholarly output of the university.

This is such an exciting time to be a part of Utah State University as we continue to grow as an excellent research institution!

Jennifer Duncan, Interim Dean
Michael W. Harris holds degrees in music performance (bassoon and chamber music) from Truman State University and the University of Missouri–Kansas City, a PhD in musicology from the University of Colorado Boulder, and a MS-LIS from Simmons College. He has previously worked as an instruction and research librarian at CU Boulder in the Special Collections & Archives department, a visiting instruction librarian at the College of William & Mary, and as the graduate student outreach librarian at the University of Memphis. He has taught a number of music related classes on topics such as: Asian music, rock history, and film musicals. He is excited to be back out West and working at USU Eastern at a job where all of his skills and interests can be utilized, including working with students across USU’s Statewide Campus system. He is also looking forward to exploring all of the outdoor recreation activities that living in Utah provides!

Brittany Bertazon holds a MLIS degree from Syracuse University and a certification in Digital Curation for Information Professionals from University of Maryland. As the new Digital Projects Manager at Utah State University Libraries, she will oversee projects with campus and community partners to create digital collections and exhibits that support the Libraries’ and University’s mission. Because this is a new position, Brittany is looking forward to collaborating with staff, faculty, students, and other stakeholders to contribute to the planning, development, and expansion of digital initiatives at USU. Her interests outside of work include going new places, meeting new people, and decorating her mid-century home.
NEW EMPLOYEES

Erica Finch
Scholarly Communication Librarian

Stephanie Western
OER Program Manager

Erica Finch received her MLIS from Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Once torn between working in galleries, libraries, archives, and museums or pursuing a law degree specializing in copyright, Erica has found her natural home in scholarly communications where she can be a vocal advocate for open access. Erica is looking forward to exploring a community-led approach to scholarly communications at USU and is excited to be starting in her role during the 10-year anniversary of USU’s open access policy. When she’s off the clock, Erica procrastinates over her various art projects by binge-reading books and going for long hikes.

Stephanie Western earned her MLIS in Leicestershire, England at Loughborough University. Her dissertation focused on the global Access 2 Knowledge movement, which links access to knowledge goods with equity, innovation, and economic development. Before joining the OER Team, Stephanie worked in distance education, public libraries, and as a freelance writer and editor. She now works with instructors and stakeholders to increase adoption and creation of OER (Open Educational Resources) at USU, reducing course materials cost, and improving student learning outcomes. Stephanie looks forward to highlighting the innovative instructors who create and adopt OER to benefit their students and the Open Education community. Outside of work, Stephanie enjoys traveling, reading, knitting, and walking her dog. Cache Valley has been her home for over 10 years, and she loves having adventures here and elsewhere with friends and family.
Research Week Returns to the Library

After a two-year shift to virtual-only events, USU’s bustling Research Week was held in person at the Merrill-Cazier Library this year—just in time to commemorate our new R1 classification! The Library and the Office of Research collaborated to hold a series of events celebrating student and faculty research at USU, including the Faculty Author Exhibit, Student Research Symposium, D. Wynne Thorne Lecture, and the Student Research Awards Ceremony.

For the first time in Research Week’s history, the Student Research Awards Ceremony was held in the main atrium, an organizational feat accomplished thanks to the Library’s amazing circulation team!
Spring Friends Lecture Explores the Life and Crimes of Infamous Forger and Bomber, Mark Hofmann

Prominent historian, archivist, and author Richard E. Turley Jr. presented “From Utah State University to Utah State Prison: The Rise and Fall of Mark Hofmann, Forger and Bomber” on March 30th as the spring Friends of Merrill-Cazier Library Lecture.

A showcase of Special Collections & Archives materials, including the notorious “Mark Hofmann chair,” was on display for attendees to experience. The event was standing-room-only with many students and members of the public crowding to learn about the topic.

Turley, who appeared in the Netflix miniseries Murder Among the Mormons, broke the lecture into two sections. The first detailed Hofmann’s rise to fame as he “discovered” rare documents which were later found out to be forgeries. The second part of the lecture focused on Hofmann’s crimes and downfall—including the three bombs he planted in the Salt Lake Valley, ultimately killing two and injuring himself.

Alongside the repercussions of Hofmann’s actions, Turley explored how personal biases allowed forgeries to enter the document dealing world in the first place. He also discussed how Hofmann’s ultimate plot to sell forged copies of the missing 116 pages of the Book of Mormon was cut short with his crimes.
The notorious “Mark Hofmann chair,” (a chair Mark Hofmann often sat in while visiting the Library) housed in the USU Libraries’ Special Collections & Archives.
The Library hosted the traveling exhibition *Returning Home: The Art and Poetry of Intermountain Indian School, 1951-1984* in the lower level gallery this semester. The exhibit displayed works created by young Native American students during their time at Intermountain Indian School in Brigham City and was very well-received by faculty, students, and the public during its time at USU.

Author, historian, and exhibit co-curator Farina King stated that she hoped the exhibit would “serve Diné former boarding school students and their respective families and communities, while educating a wide public of their journeys, experiences, and voices.”

“The underlying argument of *Returning Home* is that the creative works of Native American boarding school students, specifically those of Diné students at the Intermountain Indian School (1950-1984), present the complex agency and ability of Indigenous youth to maintain cultural continuity within colonial spaces designed to separate Native children from their home communities and cultures,” King said.

While King, Michael Taylor, and James Swensen curated the exhibit, many of the creative works are housed in USU Libraries’ Special Collections & Archives.
Don't Judge a Book by its Cover

The Library had an extra special Valentine's Day this year! After Online Learning Librarian Niki Fullmer suggested hosting Blind Date with a Book, an event where recreational books are wrapped in paper to conceal their titles, students flooded the atrium to get their hands on a "date."

The event was almost too successful; we ran out of books, wrapping paper, and treats and had to end the event early.

Students fell in love with the Library's Blind Date with a Book event held in the atrium this Valentine's season.
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Marginalia © 2022
Published by: Friends of Merrill-Cazier Library
Issue Coordinator: Trina Shelton
Graphic Designer: Shay Larsen
Photographers: Devin Greener, Kellianne Gammill
Contributors: Kellianne Gammill, Shay Larsen

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