



UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES  
*The UNIVERSITY of OKLAHOMA*

# IMPACT REPORT

2023-2024



**Friends and Colleagues,**

This year, the University of Oklahoma Libraries has celebrated a transformative period of strategic growth, innovation, research impact, and expanded commitment to student success.

Our library continues to grow as a cornerstone of academic excellence by expanding educational resources and reshaping our infrastructure. This year, we upgraded key areas, including the circulation desk and repository platforms, enhancing access and efficiency for our students and faculty. With visitor numbers reaching pre-pandemic levels, we are thrilled to see the library bustling with activity—a testament to our role as a vibrant hub for learning and collaboration.

In support of cutting-edge research, we have amplified our resources and services to better meet the needs of the OU scholarly community. Initiatives like HELIOS Open exemplify our dedication to open access, removing barriers to information and ensuring that the knowledge created at OU reaches scholars worldwide. These efforts reflect our commitment to advancing innovative scholarship and broadening the reach of academic publishing.

Our workforce has evolved to meet the changing needs of our campus, bringing in new expertise and fostering a dynamic environment focused on student success. Through strategic recruitment and development, we have reshaped our teams to provide tailored support for teaching, research, and academic development.

As you explore this report, I hope you will be as inspired as I am by the collective impact of our efforts. Together, we are building a library system that not only serves the needs of today but anticipates the opportunities of tomorrow.

With gratitude,

Denise Stephens  
Peggy V. Helmerich Dean of University Libraries

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# Accelerate Open Scholarship with **HELIOS** Open

In 2023, the University of Oklahoma advanced its commitment to open scholarship by joining the Higher Education Leadership Initiative for Open Scholarship (HELIOS Open). Stemming from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine’s 2019 initiative to align incentives for open science, HELIOS aims to accelerate innovation by increasing access to research across disciplines. Within just two years of joining, OU has made strides in key areas, including faculty engagement, resource development and institutional support.

A major achievement in 2023 was the establishment of the HELIOS Advisory Council at OU. The council is a strategic body that helps to inform the university’s open scholarship initiatives and is composed of academic leaders, including representatives from the Provost’s Office, the Vice President for Research and Partnerships and the colleges.

“The HELIOS Advisory Council was created to ensure that our efforts in open scholarship are well-informed by diverse perspectives across disciplines. It plays a critical role in raising awareness and identifying faculty concerns about the resources and infrastructure needed for participation in open access,” said Denise Stephens, Peggy V. Helmerich Dean of University Libraries and OU’s representative to HELIOS Open.

Throughout 2024, the council has worked to build a strong framework for open scholarship, focusing on communication, education and collaboration. One of its continuing goals is to provide OU faculty with the information, tools and support needed to engage in open scholarship while addressing challenges they might face along the way.

Sponsored by the advisory council, a key event in 2024 was the first virtual forum on open scholarship, held in the spring. The forum featured national panelists from HELIOS Open and was designed to engage OU faculty in conversations about the benefits and challenges of open access. Stephens says that attendees raised important questions about incentives for open scholarship and the practicalities of balancing open access with traditional publishing.

“We were really encouraged by the turnout and the level of engagement,” Stephens said. “It showed us that there is a genuine interest in open scholarship and real concerns about how it fits into the existing academic system. This forum was a first effort to discuss those concerns and start shaping a more open research environment at OU.”

OU Libraries plans to host other outreach efforts in spring 2025, using survey data and feedback from faculty to refine the events and address specific concerns that emerged from the first forum.

OU will soon conduct a survey to better understand faculty on open scholarship. The survey aims to identify barriers to participation, gauge faculty familiarity with open-access practices and explore what resources would help ease the transition to a more open scholarly system.

“Our goal is to make sure that those who want to participate have the support they need and to help those who are uncertain feel more confident about the process. The survey results will guide us in developing more targeted resources and outreach programs that speak directly to faculty needs,” Stephens said.

To support these efforts, OU Libraries launched a dedicated resource page on its website, offering faculty information on open access, best practices and opportunities for participation.

As OU looks to 2025, the focus remains on expanding its open scholarship initiatives. One of the key challenges identified in 2024 was the perceived lack of incentives for faculty to engage in open scholarship, particularly regarding how it fits into the tenure and promotion process. While federal agencies like the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health now require publicly funded research to be openly accessible, many faculty members still question how this will impact their career progression.

“These are critical discussions that need to happen,” Stephens said. “It’s not just about making research accessible to the public; it’s also about recognizing the value of openness within academic systems.”



## PRESENTATION CONSULTATIONS PROVIDE STUDENTS **REAL-WORLD EXPERIENCE**

Several years ago, University Libraries created the service Presentation Consultations program at the Learning Lab events. These consultations provide students with real-world experience and create an environment where oral presentation skills can be cultivated.

Now, these events and services have been integrated into classes with the expertise of University Libraries and through a partnership with the Michael F. Price College of Business. The partnership now marries the research resources of Bizzell Memorial Library and the work of Price students who now have the opportunity to gain valuable experience for their future careers.

Ashley Smith, the student success and engagement librarian within the Department of Research and Learning Services, originally met with the program’s founder, Tom Hooper, the director of finance placement and outreach at Price College, during the spring 2024 semester to give her presentation to his real estate class. The experience was the catalyst for what would ultimately become the Presentation Consultations program.

“The basics of this presentation are about how to give a good presentation that follows a narrative story to keep the audience interested,” Smith said. “Some things to do and not do when creating their presentation slides, as well as things to think about when they are presenting that will help them understand that they will always be a little bit nervous.”

Giving presentations is a skill that does not come naturally to everyone. Some fields require little public-speaking situations compared to others. The business and financial world’s success relies upon interpersonal relationships and group speaking engagements. Presentation Consultations program



was conceived to provide a platform for Hoopers’ students to be able to develop their skill sets and find the confidence to flourish.

“For the majority of the students, they were all willing to do the work needed to make every Presentation Consultation worth their time and mine,” Smith said. “They were learning their parts of the presentation, and they actively asked questions and sought out solutions for things they were unsure of how to do for certain parts of their presentations.”

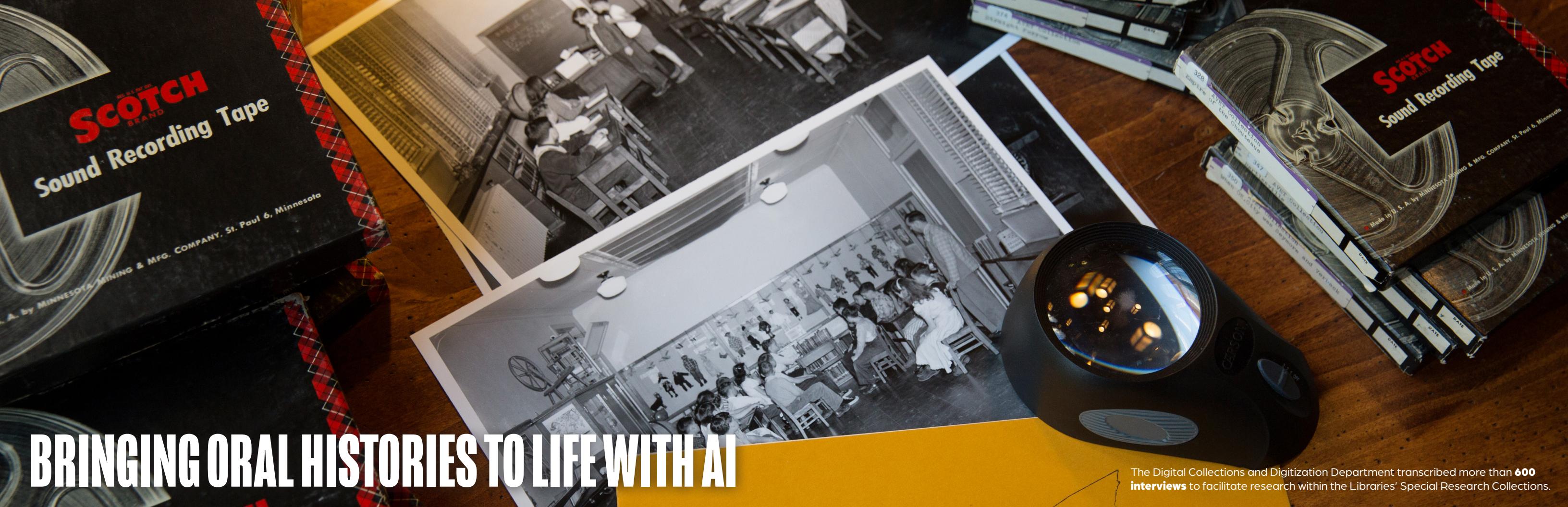
Smith spoke of two of the student groups meeting more than the amount required within Hooper’s project outline. Each group wanted more practice to perfect their speaker transitions and rid themselves of any nervous jitters.

“I do think most, if not all of them, have found out how important giving presentations is,” Smith said. “Several of them have also stated their gratitude after their final presentations, saying that they wouldn’t have felt half as ready if they hadn’t been to see us throughout getting ready for this project.”

While the program is not set up to create the perfect presentation, it does provide students with the opportunity to build their skills to give even better presentations in the future.

“They know that a lot of what makes a good presentation, at any stage, is practicing the actual skills,” she added. “That is something I and Tom made clear to them during this project, is that they will continue to get better at giving presentations, in general, the more they give presentations.”

Photos: Michael F. Price College of Business students present to industry leaders. Students utilized the libraries’ Presentation Consultations services to perfect their presentations and skills. (Photo by Noah Bryan Media)



# BRINGING ORAL HISTORIES TO LIFE WITH AI

The Digital Collections and Digitization Department transcribed more than **600 interviews** to facilitate research within the Libraries' Special Research Collections.

The Doris Duke Collection of American Indian Oral History exists to provide a bridge to the past. By providing access to typescripts of interviews with hundreds of Indigenous Peoples over their histories and cultures, the Doris Duke Collection is the quintessential spot for research within the field.

The collection's interviews were conducted over five years from 1967 to 1972. Of the more than 600 interviews, the Libraries' Special Research Collections sought improved transcriptions to help facilitate research within a year. For this, they reached out to the Digital Collections and Digitization Department and their director, Barbara Laufersweiler.

"When the Libraries' Special Research Collections asked for help transcribing these oral history interviews, my department knew from previous experience that transcription with a wholly human transcription process would be impossible within the desired time frame," said Laufersweiler.

The problem was simple: A lot of interviews to transcribe in so little time. Fortunately for Laufersweiler and her team, she had attended an open discussion Zoom meeting that

would prove vital to the plan moving forward.

"A few months earlier I had attended an open discussion of text and speech (audio) transcription, jointly organized by two Digital Library Federation (DLF) interest groups," Laufersweiler said. "The discussion touched on a variety of [artificial intelligence] tools."

The discussion's content proved vital months later when Laufersweiler was tasked with the transcribing project.

"Basically, thanks to a Zoom meeting discussion, I knew AI assistance could be really helpful by creating a rough transcript. That might be very good," Laufersweiler added.

One of the breakthroughs the Department of Digital Collections and Digitization experienced was finding a way to use AI while protecting the data. The AI tool created a rough transcript for each interview from the audio file. Then the Digital Collections and Digitization team edited, corrected and formatted it. Content experts, including Western History Collections staff and tribal partners, are reviewing the transcript for further corrections.

The process of AI integration within the transcription

process provided the desired results within the timeframe. All this is a part of the University Libraries' and the University of Oklahoma's mission of access and accessibility of resources.

"Making audio recordings available online makes it possible for many more people to easily access the content," said Laufersweiler. "It removes the need to visit the physical location holding the materials."

These materials provide researchers and tribal partners with a wealth of once inaccessible knowledge and information. As Laufersweiler puts it, cultural heritage materials are available for those interested in exploring and better understanding the heritage. However, the main goal of this project is to provide copies of the recordings and their transcripts to the tribal nations whose members shared their knowledge and memories for their descendants. Each of the represented tribes are being asked to review their recordings to determine if certain interviews contain sensitive information and should be restricted for cultural privacy. After this review, the Libraries anticipates that the majority of the recordings will be made publicly accessible through the Libraries' digital collections repository.

**"From listening to diverse recordings connected by a topic, to exploring connections in the descriptive information, to using software tools to analyze the text of an entire collection of all transcripts, researchers can explore and make many connections that would be very difficult or impossible with non-digital materials," Laufersweiler added.**

Some of the major impact to come lies with the sharing of the resulting information with tribes whose members were interviewed decades ago. Their descendant communities, as well as historians and other researchers at OU and abroad, will no doubt find great value in this new bridge to the past, thanks to the integration of artificial intelligence along with expert work.

# LEADING TECHNOLOGIES THAT INNOVATE ACCESS

The Digital Strategies and Innovation Team at the University of Oklahoma Libraries provides technical leadership for the Libraries' major initiatives. Its goals encompass ensuring systems, platforms and workflows support the discoverability, access and use of the libraries and their resources.

As the senior director of library technology operations, Danica Leslie is focused on ensuring that access. Supervising the Cloud Infrastructure and Development Team, Libraries Information Technology Team, and the Discovery Services Team, Leslie's influence has helped University Libraries achieve its goals.

"I think that providing access to information and resources is the core mission of libraries," Leslie said. "Here at the University Libraries, our desire to improve

access to research and resources is wound through everything we do."

Access to research is also a key component of the university's Strategic Plan and the university's intent to launch OU to the forefront of public research institutions in the country. Leslie and her teams work to ensure that researchers, faculty and students have access to resources to bridge the gap to the university's desired future.

Born in Huntington Beach, California, Leslie has made Oklahoma her home. After earning her M.B.A in business administration from Southern Nazarene University, Leslie gained experience in a range of industries before joining the University Libraries.

Photo: Danica Leslie



"After coming out of my M.B.A. program and working for a start-up software company (as senior director at RxSense), I quickly realized that I liked the immediate impact that change management and process improvement can have on an organization," she said.

Leslie found joy in making a real-time impact at an institution like OU. From streamlining work processes or mapping out workflows to be used in certain areas, Leslie found her place of belonging. She says doing her job means much more at the University of Oklahoma.

"Over the past four years with the UL, I've learned so much and have been inspired by the mission of the libraries and the real drive and passion that my coworkers have for helping our users through their academic/research journeys. I was excited to get a chance to do that in Norman, for OU," Leslie said.

A library system of the magnitude of the University Libraries has challenges—opportunities to implement new technologies and innovative solutions. Such as ensuring students have the necessary technologies to pursue their education when some may not have access to resources or finances for laptops.

To counter this, the University Libraries bought and set up a laptop vending machine for students to borrow laptops to support their academic success. Making those real-time impacts has been rewarding for Leslie.

"I think that being a part of that incremental-solutions, always-getting-better environment has made me happy to come to work every day and makes me excited about the rest of my career here," said Leslie.

One of the major challenges Leslie faces is lowering the technical debt of the libraries. Technical debt is accrued when platforms or processes are set up, but not properly

invested in or improved on. These process footprints are, as Leslie describes, inevitable due to technological advancements, but the act of lowering the debt could allocate valuable resources to ensure the libraries stay on top of innovation and access.



**"Lowering the amount of technical debt we have means that technical owners can redirect their time from maintenance and rework to focusing on platform improvements that focus on user experience and other projects that are needed for the mission of the organization," said Leslie.**

Streamlining processes and removing technical debt allows for less time spent on out-of-date scripts or patching network systems and more time focusing on adding new user-friendly features to assist in research and study.

For Leslie, University Libraries and the Digital Strategies and Innovation Team are integral to the OU mission. "The libraries are a pivotal resource for the OU community, and we provide a ton of resources, tools and expertise," said Leslie. "My hope is that the work that I do, and that my team does, makes the tools, resources and information that UL must provide to our community more discoverable and accessible."

In fiscal year 2023–2024, more than 5,500 laptops were checked out from Bizzell Memorial Library.

# ACCESS TRAVELS: TECHNOLOGY LENDING

The University of Oklahoma strives to provide its students with all the necessary tools to achieve their academic goals. One of the ways University Libraries echoes this mission is through its laptop lending program.

Starting in 1999, the issue was simple: not every student comes to college with access to all the tools and resources needed for their curriculum. Bizzell Memorial Library, with its access to resources, answered this issue by allowing students to check out computers to students for their studies.

As the years went on and technologies grew, the need for borrowed computers grew. Classes became more integrated with computers and students with access to them was becoming less of a luxury, but a need.

Some of the problems that have evolved with time is that not every laptop computer has the capability to download certain software.

“A lot of students come to school with Chromebooks,” said Kelly Thompson, billing, media and reserves supervisor at Bizzell Memorial Library. “Those computers can’t download every app you’d need for school. So, we help provide the tools that can.”

University Libraries currently has 12 Dell Latitude 5540 laptops, two Dell Precision 5550 laptops and six Macbook Air laptops. The stock is typically increased every few years by the library.

To accent this program, the senior director of library technology operations Danica Leslie and her team added to the overall program last year. Leslie’s team bought and set up a laptop vending machine in the Loveridge computer lab so students could borrow.

“I think that being a part of that incremental solution, always-getting-better environment has made me happy to come to work every day and makes me excited about the rest of my career here,” Leslie said.

Leslie cites one of the libraries’ strategic priorities as being to, “Build and develop a robust offering of information resources and tools enabling affordability and accessibility.” As an extension of that priority, the laptop lending program helps those words become actions.

“A laptop lending programs ensures that all students have access to essential technology, regardless of their personal circumstances,” Leslie added.



# ADVANCING RESEARCH PRODUCTIVITY WITH PROJECT NAUTILUS

When University Libraries launched the Nautilus project in December 2021, the reasoning was simple: to facilitate hands-on instruction and connect students, researchers and faculty to technology in the field.

Launched by UL employees Tyler Pearson and Mark Lauferweiler, the cloud computing resource acts as a gateway to supercomputing processes and methods that are unavailable on commonly used computers. Accessed via the computing cloud minus a large instillation process, this resource lets anyone access the tools they need in their field of study.

“We have been running this as a pilot program,” said Pearson, the director of digital scholarship and data services. “Targeting to promote this as a fully supported service for all of OU.”

The first year of the resource saw immediate success with over 200 individual users during the 2023 fiscal year. That number has increased to 634 as of July 2024. The 634 range from OU to non-OU users, showcasing the University Library’s ability to accommodate OU students and faculty, as well as helping the university be a beacon of resources for researchers abroad. There are plans in place to increase the number of users.

“We have already started working with faculty within the communications department on lessons that include web scrapping and web archiving,” Pearson said. “This is a topic that fits well within the Nautilus environment for research and instruction.”

Faculty members have begun to familiarize themselves with the resource. Integration with Nautilus will vary depending on the field of study, but the scope of the resource relative to a diverse array of faculty is not a disadvantage.

“University Libraries has been instrumental in setting up and maintaining a configuration for the OU community,” said Andrew Fagg, associate professor of computer science and bioengineering at the Gallogly College of Engineering. “In some cases, they offer custom configurations for individual faculty.”

Initially funded by the National Science Foundation, the Great Plains Network recently purchased a new server for the resource. Additional funds and

resources have come from the Office of the Vice President for Research and Partnerships in the form of file storage software. With more funding in the future, the resource will only grow in its abilities and access.

The resource’s local users have STEM spaces like meteorology, mathematics and physics. Pearson wished for the resource to adopt digital humanities but knows that future integrations will take time.

“Most of this increase has been by word of mouth,” said Pearson. “We are looking to expand beyond the current departments that we have already on-boarded by securing funding for local computers and storage capabilities for more local access.”

What started as an answer to the question of accessibility of expensive resources has become a success that continues to grow.





University Libraries Dean Denise Stephens highlights the importance of the Alternative Textbook Grant during the 10th anniversary celebration of the grant.



Morgan Briles thanks the 2023 Alternative Textbook Grant awardees during the 10th anniversary celebration of the Alternative Textbook Grant. Briles is an Open Educational Resources librarian within the Open Initiatives & Scholarly Communication unit.



Morgan Briles shares how Alternative Textbook Grant applicants may receive up to \$2,500 to help reduce the cost of course materials through the adoption of Open Educational Resources and other materials free to students. Briles, an open educational resources librarian, attended the 10th anniversary celebration of the Alternative Textbook Grant.

## OU LIBRARIES NAMES OPEN EDUCATION RESOURCES GRANT RECIPIENTS

OU Libraries is pleased to announce the recipients of the 2024 ATG. Open Educational Resources Librarian Morgan Briles estimates that the 2024 awards will save students almost \$55,000 in the first semester.

OU Libraries thanks the Dodge Family College of Arts and Sciences and the Gallogly College of Engineering for contributing matching funds to grantees from their respective colleges.

“The Alternative Textbook Grant centers on students’ needs,” Briles said. “Not only are the course materials free to students, but instructors are also able to create and curate custom resources for their students that better fit their pedagogical needs. Pillar 3 of OU’s Strategic Plan is, ‘making OU’s excellence affordable and attainable.’ The ATG is just one of OU Libraries’ initiatives to support this Pillar.”

Earlier this year, OU Libraries celebrated the 10th anniversary of the Alternative Textbook Grant (ATG). In the past decade, alternative textbook grants have saved OU students over \$4 million. The ATG from OU Libraries incentivizes instructors to switch from costly course materials to those that are free to students. The grants are designed to encourage instructors to adopt open educational resources (OER) and other no-cost resources to ease the financial burden associated with course materials for students. Alternative textbooks also empower instructors to customize content specifically for their courses.

Successful applicants may receive up to \$2,500 to help reduce the cost of course materials through the adoption of OER and other materials free to students. Supplemental funds may also be available through instructors’ academic units.



Open Educational Resources Librarian Morgan Briles shares how Alternative Textbook Grants have saved OU students over \$4 million in 10 years.

### 2024 ALTERNATIVE TEXTBOOK GRANT AWARDEES

#### College of Atmospheric and Geographic Sciences

Dr. Amanda Kis, lecturer in the School of Meteorology, will be taking advantage of the university’s new enterprise license with Top Hat to create an interactive Introduction to Climate and Weather course for her students.

#### Dodge Family College of Arts and Sciences

Dr. Yuanning Feng, assistant professor of chemistry and biochemistry, will be developing resources for his graduate level advanced organic chemistry course.

Dr. Janette Habashi, professor of human relations, is redesigning her Social Strategies course to use only OU Libraries licensed resources, ensuring there are no course materials costs for her students.

Dr. Paulo Moreira, associate professor of Portuguese in the Modern Languages, Literatures, and Linguistics department, will be creating an online, multi-media textbook for the second semester of Intermediate Portuguese, following up on his 2023 ATG project for the first semester of Intermediate Portuguese.

#### Gallogly College of Engineering

Dr. Rebecca Scott, assistant professor in the Stephenson School of Biomedical Engineering, will be creating her own materials for Introduction to Biomedical Engineering, a course for students interested in studying and creating careers in this burgeoning field.

#### Jeannine Rainbolt College of Education

Dr. Kelly Feille, associate professor of science education in the Instructional Leadership and Academic Curriculum department, will be transitioning from expensive textbooks to a combination of OU Libraries licensed e-books and journal articles as well as open educational resources for her Teaching Elementary School Science course.

Dr. Julianna Lopez Kershen, assistant professor of English education within the Instructional Leadership and Academic Curriculum department, will be updating her Teaching English course with resources free to students.



# Delaware Nation Partners With OU Libraries to Digitize Tribal Artifacts

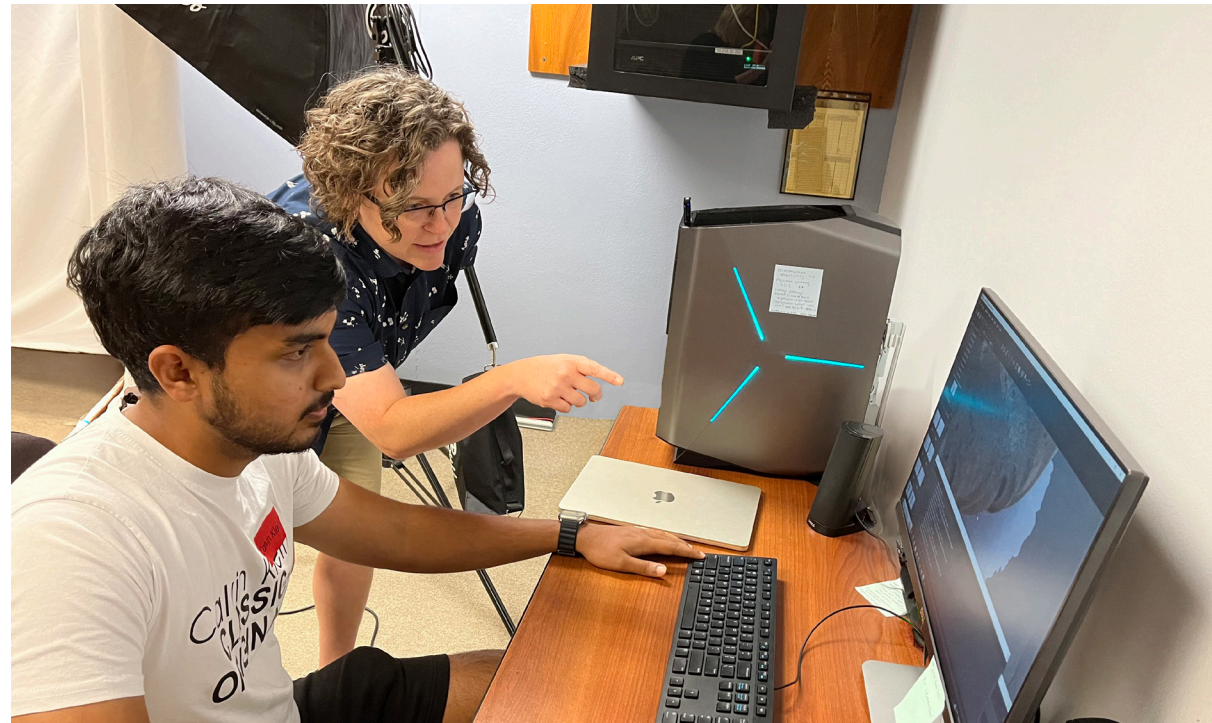
The Delaware Nation, a federally recognized tribe based in Anadarko, Oklahoma, has received a \$75,000 grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services through its Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum and Library Services program. The grant will fund a partnership with the 3D Scanning Lab at the University of Oklahoma Libraries to digitize the tribe’s archival and museum artifacts.

The project, titled “Delaware Nation – Digitization of Delaware Nation Collections,” will involve the creation of high-quality, high-resolution 3D models of the tribe’s artifacts using photogrammetry, a 3D scanning method. The digital models will be stored in a cloud-based system, making them accessible to Delaware Nation citizens, researchers and the public through an online digital catalog. Visitors to the Delaware Nation Museum and Library in Anadarko will also be able to view the digitized artifacts onsite.

The collaboration ensures the preservation and accessibility of cultural history for future generations, says Kristi Wyatt, emerging technologies librarian at University Libraries. “By creating these 3D models, we make the collection more accessible online.”

The grant helps buy equipment used in photogrammetry, a process that uses photos to measure and interpret features on a surface, enabling the creation of precise 3D models and maps from 2D images. It is widely used in fields such as engineering and geography to document and analyze spatial data.

Along with Wyatt, two graduate students are responsible for 3D scanning the artifacts, handling them with care, recording metadata and configuring camera and lighting setups. “Our student employees will play a part in helping preserve cultural history, which is awesome. Once the project is complete, the students will have one more set of skills to take with them wherever they move on to next,” Wyatt said. The digitized collection reduces risks of physical degradation and provide global access through an online platform. The



Delaware Nation hopes the effort will encourage younger generations to engage in digital preservation, says Carissa Speck, director of historic preservation for the Delaware Nation.

“With this partnership, we are not only able to extend the life of preservation by creating a digital copy of the object, but we can also use the digital model to increase access and interaction with the object via an online repository.”

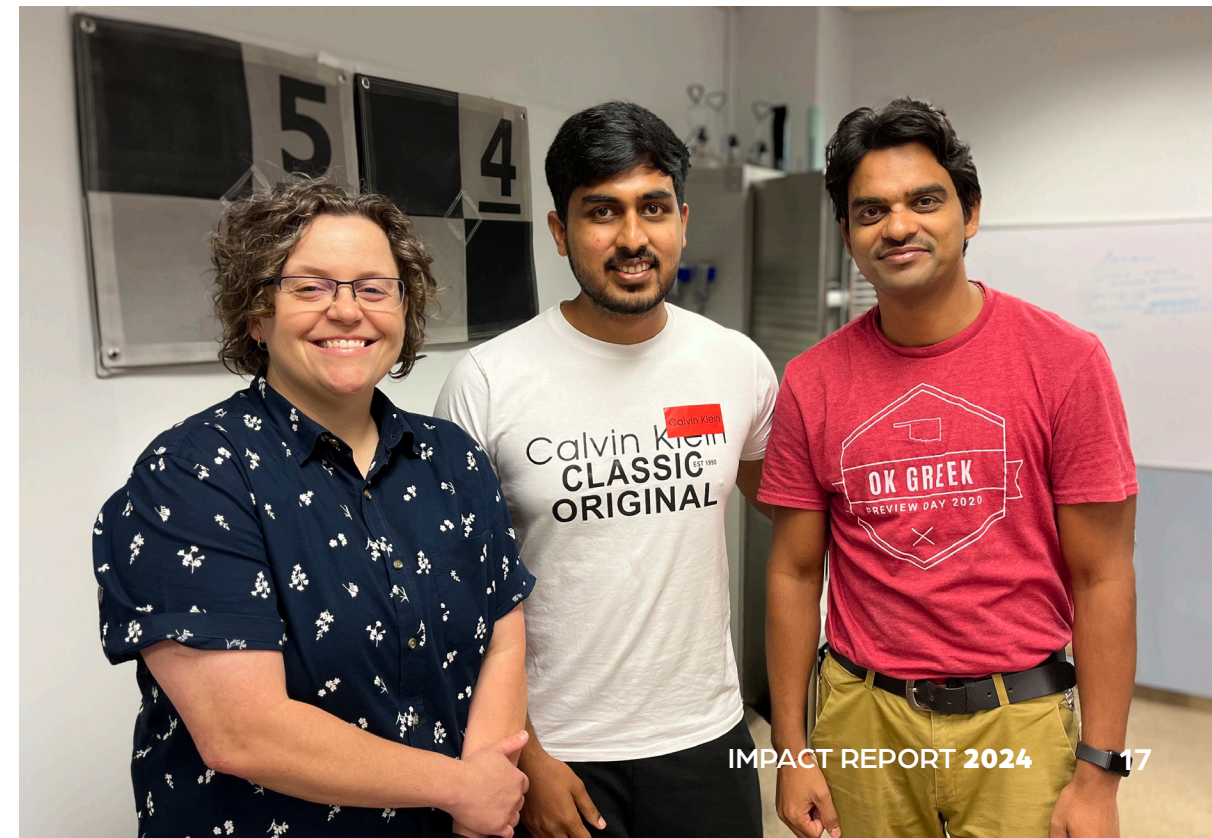
“This fosters the Delaware Nation’s mission of revitalizing and perpetuating our cultural heritage for future generations,” Speck said.

Right: Graduate research assistant Subhash Chandra scanning a drumstick and part of the Delaware Nation/IMLS grant project.



(Above Left): Emerging technologies librarian Kristi Wyatt (standing) and graduate student Omkar Reddy Tallapally will help preserve artifacts for the Delaware Nation.

(Right): Emerging technologies librarian Kristi Wyatt, data science & analytics graduate student Omkar Reddy Tallapally (center), and computer science graduate student Subhash Chandra (right).





Nicholas Wojcik and team, in partnership with the OU Weitzenhoffer Family College of Fine Arts, launched *The Alexander Journal* as an online open access publication in 2024.

# Library Adds New Online Open Access Journal in Digital Publishing Program

The University of Oklahoma Libraries, in partnership with the OU Weitzenhoffer Family College of Fine Arts, has launched *The Alexander Journal* as an online open access publication. The journal highlights the commitment by OU Libraries to providing a diverse array of open access journals that cover unique fields and topics.

"The Alexander Journal is distinct for its pluralistic approach to exploring a transformational method for altering one's health and well-being, and provides an avenue for joyful, reflective, educational science in the form of quantitative and qualitative research, case studies, personal essays, and more," said Nicholas Wojcik, scholarly publishing librarian at OU Libraries.

The journal itself is multidisciplinary, focusing on the therapeutic F. Matthias Alexander Technique, its theory, principles and applications across various disciplines. It has been in continuous print since 1962 and has provided insights, ideas and historical findings to promote productive discourse.



Nicholas Wojcik, scholarly publishing librarian at OU Libraries, and team work diligently to ensure open access publications grow and continue under the leadership of OU Libraries.

"Launching *The Alexander Journal* as an open access publication is not only exciting for the OU Libraries' Publishing Services program but demonstrates the important shift in research towards an open access model and the fundamental principle of building partnerships on campus and beyond," Wojcik added.

Known for its positive wellness benefits, the Alexander Technique is based on the idea that poor posture

is the root cause of a range of health problems. The National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health classifies the Alexander Technique as a psychological and physical approach to improving health, like tai chi or yoga. The Alexander Journal is the 10th faculty-driven, peer-reviewed open access journal supported by OU Libraries since beginning the effort in 2016.

# UL SPECIAL COLLECTIONS ATTRACT TOP-TIER RESEARCH FELLOWS

As a flagship public research institution, the University of Oklahoma is committed to both enhancing educational outcomes within the state and pursuing a transformative impact on scholarship globally. OU Libraries' distinctive collections serve as critical vehicles for achieving both goals, supporting researchers on campus and from across the world in producing and disseminating new knowledge informed by library resources.

Four fellowship programs offered by OU Libraries support these outcomes, funding expert researchers and emerging scholars to commit two to eight weeks to focused study in Special Research Collections. The Mellon Fellowship Program in History of Science Collections and the Masterson, Haley, and Dale Society Fellowship Programs in Western History Collections provide researchers the resources needed to produce dissertations, articles, books and other projects based on rare primary sources held at OU.

Michael Szajewski, the associate dean for special research collections, knows the value of the relationship between the program and the collection is incalculable. "Expanding access to our distinctive collections is our primary objective in offering fellowships to meritorious scholars," Szajewski said. "Funding offered by these programs provides fellows with the necessary resources to plan substantial, in-depth research experiences at OU, studying rare books, manuscripts and archives available only on our campus."

Nesrin Conker reads Charles Darwins "L'Origine Des Espèces" from the History of Science Collections.

Past Mellon Fellows have achieved success across multiple disciplines. The research produced by the fellows benefits not only the individual scholars or the institution providing the resources but also the community at large.

Christopher Blakely, a fellow in April 2023 who earned his doctorate from Rutgers, worked on his project "Sensing Race and Manifest Destiny in Scientific Expeditions" with the History of Science Collection. His work culminated in the publishing of his book *Empire of Brutality: Enslaved People and Animals in the British Atlantic World*, which "explores how material relationships between enslaved people and animals bolstered the intellectual dehumanization of the enslaved."

"What stood out to me about the History of Science Collection's materials is the wealth of resources related to military-scientific expeditions in the late 19th century like the Pacific Railroad Surveys and the U.S. Naval Astronomical Expedition to the Southern Hemisphere," Blakely said. "My time in the collection was invaluable!"

Nesrin Conker, who received her doctorate at Bogazici University in Istanbul, Turkey, came to the History of Science Collection in February 2023 to work on what would ultimately result in her work, *Translating Darwin's On the Origin of Species (1859) in the Turkish Context*. Her Mellon Fellowship project concerned "retranslation as a tool of discourse on the theory of evolution in Turkey."

The History of Science Collections was established in 1949 with a major gift from business executive and

geologist Everette Lee DeGolyer. A generous endowment from Andrew W. Mellon to the collection and the Department of History of Science, Technology, and Medicine established the Mellon Fellowship Program.

The Western History Collections' impact is no different. Like the History of Science Collections, this collecting area provides access to resources and materials to scholars from OU and all over the world.



JoAnn Palmeri, History of Science librarian and acting curator, helps Nesrin Conker with research materials

The Western History Collections traces its history to 1927 when OU history professor Edward E. Dale and attorney Patrick J. Hurley worked to build a western historical collection as a library resource for graduate students. After gaining additional support from oilman Frank Phillips, the Frank Phillips Collection was born on April 5, 1927. In 1967, history professor and curator of the Phillips Collection and the Manuscripts Division Arrell M. Gibson merged the collections into the Western History Collections.

OU offers three unique fellowship programs that advance research in Western History Collections: The Masterson Fellowships (a visiting scholar fellowship like the Mellon Fellows program), the Jack Haley Fellowships (for OU graduate students studying history), and the Dale Society Fellowships (for OU graduate students in other disciplines).

In 2024, Western History Collections hosted two visiting fellows, Abby Gibson from the University of Southern California and Emma Herman from Harvard University, and two OU graduate student fellows, Tom Kahle and Adam Krejčí, through these programs.

Researchers conclude their fellowship periods by presenting their findings to the campus community, providing scholars from across OU the opportunity to learn from their research. Additionally, graduate student fellows engage in a professional practice project in Special Research Collections that complements their research in the collections.

Beyond facilitating access to collections, fellowships also provide scholars the opportunity to work closely alongside expert faculty and staff within University Libraries. Led by Kerry Magruder, curator of the History of Science Collections, and Todd Fuller, curator of the Western History Collections, the Special Research Collections team provides in-depth consultation services to fellows throughout their time on campus.

Thanks to their deep familiarity with the resources they steward, OU's archivists and librarians play a crucial role in recommending fruitful collections to explore, allowing fellows to either hone or expand their research. "Intersecting with additional collections creates unanticipated moments research impact," Fuller explained. "That's one of the most fulfilling aspects of our fellowship programs."

For the OU students, a research fellowship can often serve as defining point in their graduate school careers.

"The opportunity to produce a major research work informed by special collections research and the skills gained from this experience help make our student fellows exceptionally well-positioned for success after graduation," Szajewski said. "The experiences that our student fellows gain sharpen their skills as researchers and would-be information professionals."

These fellowship programs act as a bridge between the University of Oklahoma and the outside scholarly world. And thanks to donors whose contributions are critical to keeping these fellowship programs alive, local scholars and those from abroad can look to OU to conduct their research.

The Masterson Fellowship program is endowed by Conrad and Ellen Masterson of Cee Vee, Texas. The Haley Fellowship program is endowed by Fred and Patricia Schonwald of Oklahoma City in honor of Jack Haley, former associate curator of Western History Collections. The Dale Society Fellowship program is supported by the Association of Western History Collections Endowment.

"Their (the donors') vision and commitment have provided for many OU students to enjoy transformational experiences in the libraries," Szajewski said. "Furthermore, their generosity has elevated the visibility and scholarly impact of OU's distinctive scholarly and cultural heritage assets."

# PRIDE OF OKLAHOMA CELEBRATES 120 YEARS WITH EXHIBIT AT BIZZELL MEMORIAL LIBRARY

The University of Oklahoma's marching band, the Pride of Oklahoma, is celebrating its 120-year legacy with a special exhibit at Bizzell Memorial Library. This exhibit is a result of a collaborative effort with University Libraries and the Weitzenhoffer Family College of Fine Arts. The exhibit, which runs through May 2025, showcases the band's history, from its beginnings with just a few community players to its status as a band composed of over 325 students.

The exhibit spans over 2,500 square feet and features memorabilia that includes band jackets dating back to 1904 and a collection of both current and historic band photos. Visitors experience the band's history through multimedia displays, including videos and physical artifacts such as buttons, pins, tickets, programs, trophies and uniforms.

"The multimedia approach will immerse visitors in the Pride of Oklahoma's storied past. The physical items, such as the historic jackets, bring the history to life, turning it into something personal and tangible," said University Libraries senior exhibits coordinator James Burnes, Ph.D.

Burnes highlights a display featuring two old photos of a band director choreographing marching band moves on a scale model football field. The exhibit includes tiny army figures, about an inch and a half tall, arranged on the field in a display case next to the drill charts. The display contrasts this historical approach

with modern-day band students using cell phones, illustrating the evolution from physical drill charts to the digital era, Burnes says. "The juxtaposition is really neat."

Another part of the exhibit highlights the prestigious Sudler Trophy for Marching Bands, considered the Heisman Trophy of marching bands, Burnes says. The Pride of Oklahoma was awarded the trophy in 1987 under the leadership of band director Gene "Coach" Thrailkill.

Today, the band is led by Brian Britt, associate dean of the Weitzenhoffer Family College of Fine Arts. Under his leadership, the Pride of Oklahoma has performed in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York City, twice in the Tournament of Roses Parade in Pasadena, California, and at 21 bowl games. This year, the Weitzenhoffer Family College of Fine Arts celebrates its centennial at



the University of Oklahoma. The college produces over 300 concerts, recitals, dramas, musicals, operas and dance performances each year.

"The continued qualitative and quantitative growth of the Pride of Oklahoma over the past 120 years is a direct result of the unparalleled efforts of Pride alumni and its generous friends and supporters. Our hope is that everyone who loves the Pride enjoy this special exhibit that celebrates its history and its unique place in the culture of our beloved alma mater," Britt said.

**Library hours are noon to 6 p.m. on Sunday; 7:30 a.m. to midnight, Monday through Thursday; 7:30 a.m. to 9 p.m., Friday; and 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., Saturday, except holidays. The exhibit can be found on the library's first floor at 401 W. Brooks St., Norman, Oklahoma.**



Photo: Travis Caperton

# OU Libraries Recognizing Personnel Excellence

The University Libraries' Employee Recognition Program seeks to recognize significant contributions to the mission, strategic initiatives and overall operations of University Libraries. Awards given through the program recognize individuals who embody library organizational values and exemplify OU excellence in all aspects of their job performance.

## Bridge Builder Award

**Awardee:**  
**Ashley Smith**

The Bridge Builder Award recognizes an individual who builds partnerships to engage others in library initiatives. Recipients of this award advance University Libraries' mission, strategic initiatives, and/or organizational values through their engagement with others in the library and our OU and professional community.

Student Success and Engagement Librarian Ashley Smith receives the Bridge Builder Award from Dean Denise Stephens.



## Collaborative Spirit Award

**Awardees:** Cari Davis, Todd Fuller, Kristina Grimsley, Britni McGuire, Lina Ortega, Jackie Reese, Fred Reiss, Michael Szajewski, Logan Thompson, Jenny Watson

The Collaborative Spirit Award recognizes a work team or volunteer group that successfully works together to create a product or result that was strengthened by the effort of the team. Teams that win this award use teamwork and collaboration to further the mission of University Libraries and its strategic initiatives and embrace the organizational values as a method of relating to one another to accomplish goals.

The Collaborative Spirit Award recognizes a work team or volunteer group that successfully works together to create a product or result that was strengthened by the effort of the team.



## Customer Commitment Award

**Awardee:**  
**Amanda Palmer**

The Customer Commitment Award recognizes exemplary commitment to serving customers, either internally to University Libraries or externally to the broader OU community. Recipients of this award advance University Libraries' mission, strategic initiatives and/or organizational values through their service to customers.

Bizzell User Services Team Supervisor Amanda Palmer received the Customer Commitment Award. The award recognizes exemplary commitment to serving customers.



## Dean's Special Recognition Award

**Awardee:** Becky Holladay

## Extra Mile Award

**Awardee:**  
**Jordan McClain**

The Extra Mile Awards recognizes an individual who goes above and beyond in the performance of their job responsibilities.

Dean Stephens awarded Jordan McClain the Extra Mile Award.



## Hidden Hero Award

**Awardee:**  
**William Wilson**

The Hidden Heroes Award recognizes an individual that works behind the scenes to improve library operations. These employees' efforts may not always be visible, but they are the ones who keep the organization running smoothly.



## Innovation Award

**Awardee:**  
**Bennie Stoll**

The Innovation Award recognizes innovative ideas that result in improved service to our customers, enhanced efficiency of operations, or a cost savings to the library. These ideas may be of benefit internally to the library or externally to our community.



## Library Partner Award

**Awardee:** Matt Hamilton

The Library Partner Award recognizes a person, business or institution not employed by University Libraries that has demonstrated outstanding support and encouragement for the University Libraries. Recipients of this award advance University Libraries' mission, strategic initiatives and/or organizational values through their service or support.



## Thomas & Catherine Luccock Library Award of Excellence

**Awardee:**  
**Logan Cox**

The Thomas & Catherine Luccock Library Award of Excellence is the highest honor awarded by the University of Oklahoma Libraries. This award is sponsored through the generous support of the Luccocks, long-standing members of the Bizzell Library Society board of trustees. This prestigious award will be presented annually to recognize and commend an individual for superior performance and contributions to the University of Oklahoma Libraries.



## Thomas & Catherine Luccock Outstanding Student Award of Excellence

**Awardees:** Harrison Dooley, Hayley Robinson, Sarah Trolinger

The University Libraries' Outstanding Library Student Employee Award recognizes the outstanding performance and contributions to the services and programs of the University of Oklahoma Libraries by student employees. This award is sponsored through the generous support of the Luccocks, long-standing members of the Bizzell Library Society board of trustees.

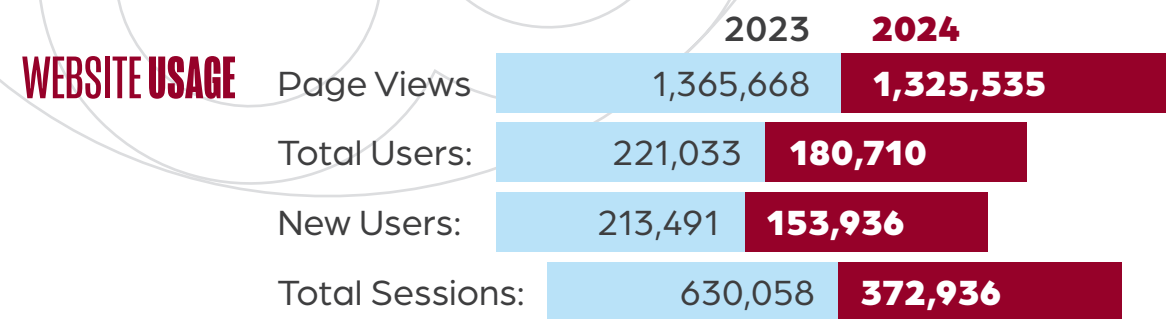
The Thomas & Catherine Luccock Library Award of Excellence and Thomas & Catherine Luccock Outstanding Student Award of Excellence and Graduate Student Award of Excellence awardees with the Luccocks.

# BY THE NUMBERS

## 2023-2024



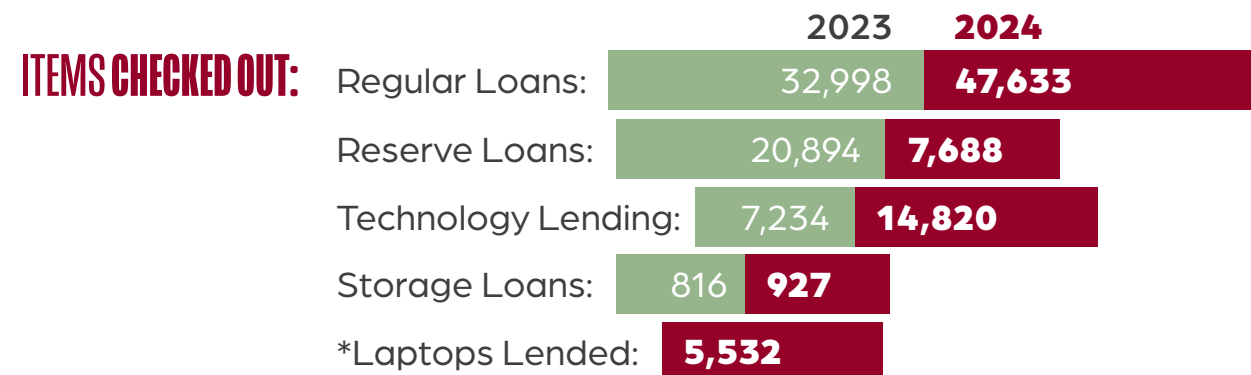
(July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024) On the first day of the fall 2024 semester (Aug. 19, 2024). Bizzell Memorial Library had **8,630 visitors**. \*Gate Counts only include Bizzell Memorial Library and do not include branch libraries.



\*Website redevelopment affected 2023 and 2024 website metrics.

### TOP 10 COUNTRIES VISITING/WHERE PEOPLE ARE VIEWING THE WEBSITE:

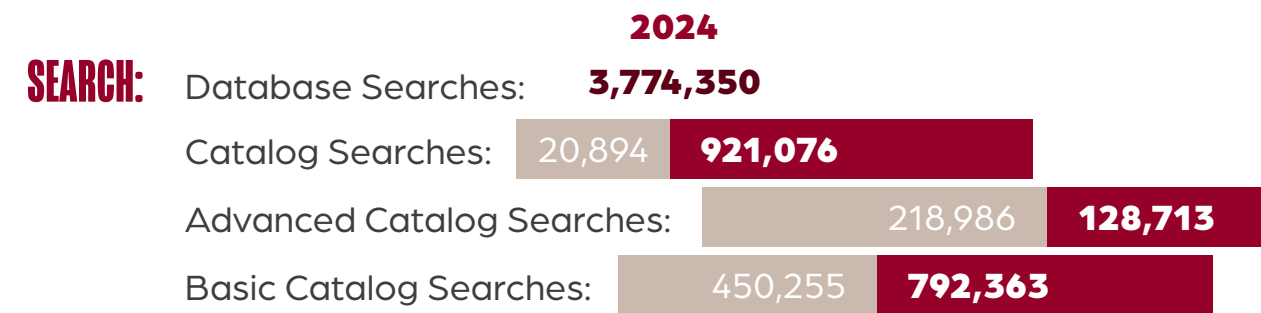
- |                   |                |               |
|-------------------|----------------|---------------|
| 1. UNITED STATES  | 5. CHINA       | 9. INDONESIA  |
| 2. INDIA          | 6. PHILIPPINES | 10. AUSTRALIA |
| 3. UNITED KINGDOM | 7. GERMANY     |               |
| 4. CANADA         | 8. NIGERIA     |               |



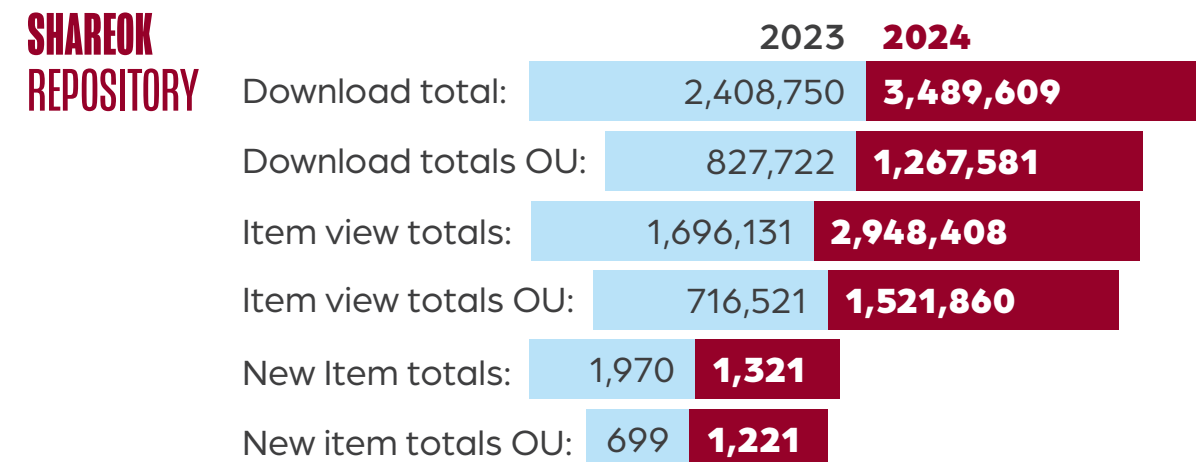
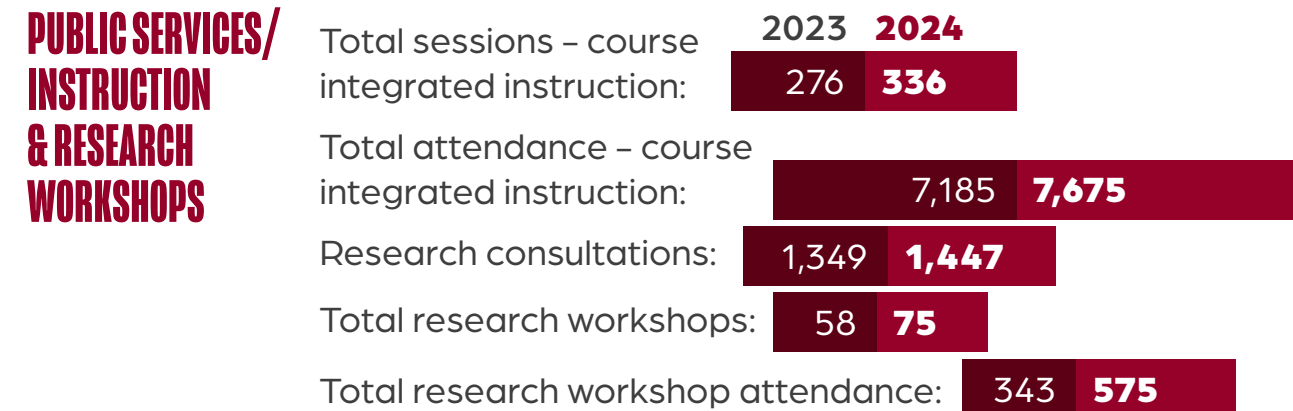
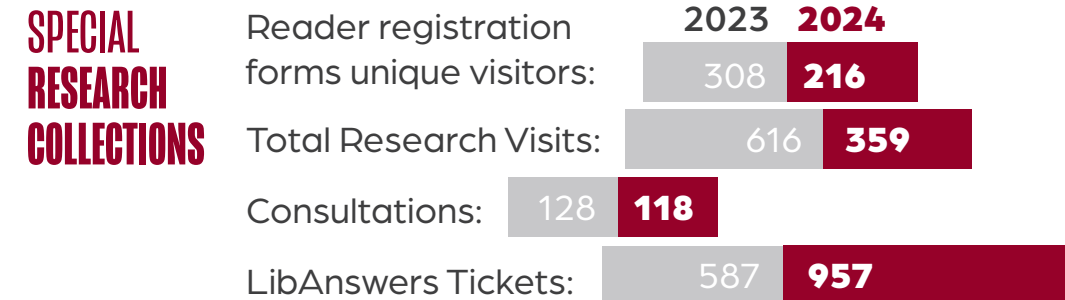
\*Notes about technology lending and laptops: Laptops lended are not included in the technology lending numbers.

\*\* Regular loans include physical object and not eBooks.

\*\*\* FY 2023 data counted reserve loans as technology loans. Reserve loans are now categorized as regular loans.



\*Website changes improved basic catalog searches in FY 24.



Bones on Loan created for health science courses: **440**

3D print submissions: **2,761**

Personnel at the Bizzell Memorial Library support critical needs of student, faculty and staff to ensure success outcomes are met.

