UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI-KANSAS CITY
LIBRARIES

ANNUAL REPORT
2017-18
The University Libraries focused on its mission with three strategic themes in 2017-2018: creating an informed citizenry; committing to diversity, equity and inclusion; and broadening access to research. Our annual report demonstrates our efforts and achievements around these themes, and how these collected activities empower success in our UMKC community.

The long-standing commitment of the Libraries to diversity, equity, and inclusion deepened this year, namely through the creation of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee to advance the Libraries’ goals to create a welcoming workplace and place of learning; expansion of our DEI Reading list with generous funding from the Friends of the Library; and the addition of several collections increasing our knowledge of underrepresented groups.

I am proud to recognize the excellent library employees who dedicate their careers to libraries and higher education. Two UMKC librarians received national recognition this year in service to librarianship, and two UMKC library employees received Chancellor’s awards. Let us also sing the praises of all the library employees who contributed to several key accomplishments. These include the merger of the Dental Library into the Health Sciences Library to consolidate services in keeping with the interprofessional education goals of the UMKC Health Sciences District; the launch of a new library website; promotion of preservation needs for physical and digital resources though a variety of presentations, interviews on KCUR, and projects; and re-structuring of the library liaison program to be more functionally focused to improve service and capacity.

And I am most grateful to all of our library supporters who have donated generously, creating impactful results for UMKC students and researchers.

“As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them.” - John F. Kennedy
Chris Le Beau, Librarian IV Emeritus, received the 2018 Business Reference and Services Section of the Reference and User Services Association Excellence in Business Librarianship Award. Chris currently serves as President of the Reference and User Services Association.

Fu Zhuo was elected president of the Chinese American Library Association.

UMKC Friends of the Library awarded Miriam Maqsood a $1000 scholarship towards Fall 2017 and Spring 2018 tuition and fees.

Liz Johnson, Library Information Specialist Sr., received the Chancellor’s Education First Award for significant contributions to higher education by supporting and/or promoting student learning.

Scott Curtis, Teaching and Learning Librarian, won the 2017 Chancellor’s Award for Embracing Diversity, which recognizes and celebrates UMKC faculty, staff, and registered student organizations engaging in UMKC Strategic Plan Goal 5: Embracing Diversity – To celebrate diversity in all aspects of university life, creating inclusive environments, culturally competent citizens, and globally-oriented curricula and programs.

The Miller Nichols Charitable Foundation funded much needed landscaping improvements around the Miller Nichols Library & Learning Center complex.

The Friends of the Library donated $35,900 as their annual gift to the Libraries.

A total of $85,252 in cash donations were received in FY18 from several donors.

In-kind gifts valued at $177,479 were received as collections into the Marr Sound Archives.
Graduates of UMKC are critical thinkers and lifelong learners who are prepared to contribute to their communities as informed citizens. This educational journey spans their entire college experience and the University Libraries play an important role along the way. The Libraries contribute to student success by providing opportunities for students to learn information seeking skills that will prepare them to locate, evaluate, and synthesize the information they need to perform academically, as future employees, and as democratic citizens.

The waters of our modern information environment are increasingly muddy, and students need tools to find clarity as they share and consume news and research. Librarians Mardi Mahaffy, Dani Wellemeyer, and Jess Williams facilitated a session at the UMKC Educate-Organize-Advocate conference for social justice to show students that our own histories and frames of reference influence our exposure and approach to news. The session explored how confirmation bias, privilege, and filter bubbles shape our information habits and our participation in the news cycle, and shared strategies for being responsible and critical information consumers and advocates against fake news.

Students making their way through Miller Nichols Library in Fall 2017 could stop and peruse a Fake News book display that featured books from the library collection about selecting credible sources of news, that provided a curated list of relevant eBooks, and that offered an interactive experience with the Factitious app to test their judgment of real versus manipulated news stories.
CIVIL DISCOURSE WITH AMERICAN PUBLIC SQUARE

The community organization American Public Square (APS) often relies on UMKC librarians to serve as fact checkers at their events, which are purposefully civil, fact-based conversations about national, regional, and local issues. This year librarians fulfilled this role in facilitating discussions on topics such as “NATO: Truman to Trump,” and political candidate forums. The mission of APS in the Kansas City community is similar to that of the UMKC Libraries—supporting people as they engage with evidence and form opinions, and offering services that, we hope, ultimately result in a more informed citizenry.

Learning from a librarian

Librarians provide instruction for all kinds of UMKC classes, giving students opportunities to interact with information right at the source. In health sciences and engineering courses, library instruction introduces students to online research tools containing up-to-date research in their field of study. In history and music courses, students experience primary source materials up close and personal, guided by a Special Collections librarian as they examine maps, diaries, or original scores. In writing and humanities courses, the focus is on learning how to search for literature that helps students understand social or cultural phenomena. In 2017-18 UMKC undergraduate enrollment averaged 12,786 and the libraries provided instruction to 5,819 of them.

Below: Teaching & Learning Librarian Scott Curtis moderates a book discussion in the Miller Nichols Library IX Theatre, October 4, 2017
“THE ORDINANCE PROJECT”
At the Kansas City LGBT Film Festival on June 21, 2018, filmmaker, UMKC iPhD student, and Martha Jane Starr Research Award winner Austin Williams debuted his documentary film on the 1993 passage of the wildly contentious Kansas City ordinance that prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation. The majority of Williams’ research was drawn from the Gay and Lesbian Archives of Mid-America (GLAMA), housed at UMKC Libraries and curated by Stuart Hinds, Assistant Dean for Special Collections. The materials created during the process of making the documentary were donated to GLAMA, bringing this project full circle as the archive that birthed it became richer with new descriptions of the Kansas City gay and lesbian experience.

“PRAY FOR THE LIGHTS TO GO OUT: THE PORTRAYAL OF BLACKS IN KANSAS CITY PUBLISHED SHEET MUSIC”
This thesis in musicology by UMKC Conservatory student AnnaMarie Lois Ogunmola examines sheet music from LaBudde Special Collections at UMKC Libraries. Without descriptions of the sheet music cover images included by Special Formats Cataloger Garth Tardy, Ogunmola wouldn’t have found them, and this fascinating addition to the scholarly conversation about Black portrayals in early twentieth century music and Kansas City race relations in the same time period would not have been possible.

STUDENT-CREATED EXHIBIT: “JAY MCSHANN’S KANSAS CITY”
Jay McShann was one of the great pianists of the Kansas City jazz style, leaving a lasting impact on Kansas City jazz history. Through a semester long class project, graduate students in the UMKC Conservatory’s Advanced Research and Bibliography course utilized the LaBudde Special Collections archives to create this exhibit. The students had the unique opportunity to learn more about jazz, connect with McShann’s family, and collaboration with library team members to create the exhibit that showcases his life and legacy.

Background: Supports of the civil rights ordinance gather outside the Kansas City council chambers, 1990.
UMKC Libraries have long joined the university in prioritizing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in the ways we work and the ways we serve our users. This year, the Libraries were able to demonstrate their commitment in the clearest possible terms by creating a permanent Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee. This committee is charged with assessing the Libraries’ efforts in these areas, and with recommending ways to embed DEI initiatives within the culture and practices of the organization. Some of the committee’s most important work this year will be the development of our Inclusive Excellence Plan. Along with the UMKC-wide focus on diversity, the plan will inform the Libraries’ decisions as we continually improve our responsiveness to our diverse communities of faculty, staff, and students.

CONCENTRATING ON DIVERSITY IN THE LIBRARIES

A well-educated staff that is sensitive to the many issues facing our users is crucial for the Libraries as we provide student and faculty support for teaching, learning, and research. This year we participated as a team in workshops on unconscious bias, microaggressions, and communicating respectfully.

Choose a book to check out or read online from our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Reading List. The library continuously updates the list, and the UMKC Friends of the Library funded new purchases this year.

Library employees began work this year to make the Hermann and Dorothy Johnson Collection accessible to researchers. Together, the Johnsons were civic leaders working in Kansas City and beyond against racism and discrimination. Their collections promise to be a rich resource for future student and faculty research.
Teaching and Learning Librarian Scott Curtis led a book discussion on the UMKC 2017 social justice book “They Can’t Kill Us All” by Wesley Lowry.

“Celebration of Self: Women Creating Identity with Beads, Brushes, and Dung”, with Dr. Adrienne Walker Hoard, Professor of Fine Art and Black Studies at UMKC. This event was part of UMKC Founders’ Week and UMKC Black Alumni Weekend and was co-sponsored by the University Libraries.

The interdisciplinary panel discussion “Conversations about Cuba” was hosted in conjunction with the photographic exhibit “Capturado” and was well attended by campus and community members.

The UMKC Libraries were proud to offer their ninth annual African American Read-In. The event was full of performances from students, staff, faculty, and community members and featured fantastic readings, many of which were original pieces.

International Students Day: Experience Africa. There were 65 students, faculty, staff, and community friends who enjoyed the celebration. Thanks to the Friends of the Library, UMKC Law Library, University Libraries, the UMKC Multicultural Student Affairs Office, and the UMKC African Student Association for making this event possible.

The University Libraries partnered with KCUR to host a forum “Reaction or Riot? Understanding 1968 in Kansas City.” KCUR recorded the event for broadcast, and made it available as a podcast. As part of the Libraries’ project to diversify our collection of materials relating to the 1968 events, KCUR and UMKC’s Department of History captured oral histories of people who experienced the events. The oral histories collected across the Kansas City area are now a part of the Marr Sound Archives.
2018
APRIL 9
Featured “Chavela”, a documentary film screening focusing on iconic Mexican songstress Chavela Vargas. The following partners worked together to co-sponsor this screening, ensuring that Chavela’s story was shared with the Kansas City community: UMKC University Libraries, UMKC Friends of the Library, UMKC LGBTQIA Programs & Services, UMKC Department of Women’s, Gender and Sexuality Studies, UMKC Latinx & Latin American Studies, UMKC Latin American Student Organization, UMKC Division of Diversity and Inclusion, and Kansas City FilmFest.

LIBRARY EXHIBITS THROUGHOUT THE 2017-18 ACADEMIC YEAR:

JANUARY-AUGUST
“April 1968: The Battle Between Us.” Exhibit of the most complete photographic collections owned by LaBudde Special Collections of the 1968 riots surrounding the funeral of Martin Luther King.

APRIL-DECEMBER
“Jay McShann’s Kansas City.” A reception and short program featuring members of the McShann family opened the exhibit.

APRIL 19-APRIL 13
“Making History: Kansas City and the Rise of Gay Rights.” An exhibit about Kansas City’s surprisingly pivotal role in the early gay rights movement, created by UMKC public history students.

AUGUST-DECEMBER
“Capturado: Faces of Cuba.” Photographs by Dr. Jimmy Adegoke, UMKC Professor of Geosciences.

Milton Gómez received the Martha Jane Starr Student Research Award to help complete his research on the use of heteronormativity as a rhetorical strategy in gay and lesbian publications to reclaim social and political spaces, and to create a sense of community among homosexual men and women during the 1950s-60s. This award was made possible by the Libraries’ 2016 National Endowment for the Humanities Challenge Grant. Gómez, now a UMKC PhD student in English, presented his research at the 27th Annual Milton Plesur Conference at the University at Buffalo. He has interest in sharing his research with women’s & gender studies programs and promoting the use of the UMKC Libraries’ Gay and Lesbian Archives of Mid-America, which formed the foundation of his research.
Broadening access to research

Everyone—regardless of education, demographics, or socioeconomic status—has the right to access information. Libraries are committed to open access to knowledge and to championing the rights of their users in the interest of inclusion, and we recognize that without access to information individuals do not have the same opportunities for success. This applies to our students as well as to the larger community of global library users. The UMKC Libraries demonstrate how we value access to information through a variety of activities. In the 2017-2018 academic year we made significant strides toward greater affordability of required reading materials for UMKC students. Working to create better access to research saves students money, and it also helps the Libraries to address our budget challenges in a time when the cost of resources is rising much faster than university budgets.

UMKC students spent on average $1,002 for course materials during the 2017-2018 academic year; in some majors students spent much more. Nationally, about two-thirds of students decide not to purchase a textbook due to its cost during their education. Along with UMKC Bookstores, UMKC Libraries is leading campus and UM System “Affordable and Open Educational Resources Initiatives.” These efforts provide faculty with opportunities to explore affordable textbook options for use in their courses, including open educational resources and freely available, open-licensed materials. The cost of textbooks—and the decision not to purchase them—represents a major barrier to student success and graduation rates. The adoption of affordable, UMKC Bookstore-negotiated texts or open educational resources reduces the costs of education for our students as well as the university’s dependence on for-profit textbook publishers.
Strategic borrowing & buying for better access

The price of access to the information sources our students, faculty, and community require for their research needs is growing far too quickly to keep up, forcing libraries to make careful decisions about what to purchase, what to rent, and what to borrow. UMKC Libraries’ strategies include:

- Purchasing large eBook and journal packages that give us more for our money.
- Increasing our reliance on borrowing materials from other libraries; this costs more, but we only pay for what we need.
- Giving preference to online resources, which serve our users no matter where they are located.
- Advocating for change in the pricing environment by encouraging faculty to publish their research in places that allow for free access.

RESOURCE USAGE

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EMPOWERING STUDENTS, FACULTY, AND COMMUNITY

The UMKC University Libraries work with our partners within UMKC and community to inspire and empower individuals performing research, making discoveries, providing service, and producing creative works. As our information environment rapidly evolves, we are responding by advancing initiatives in diversity, equity, and inclusion; developing an informed populace; and improving access to research. Libraries around the world are focused on these three big ideas, but our work in these areas also has an immediate impact on the success of UMKC students and faculty. When we engage with students and faculty on these issues they are more likely to stay at UMKC, teaching and learning together, and contributing to the collective success of our wider community.