2021 Annual Report

The University of Texas at Austin
University of Texas Libraries

From the Vice Provost

Hello, Friends.

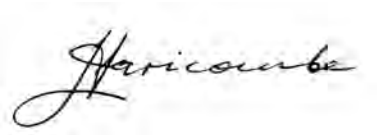
As we take a moment to reflect on last year's successes in the midst of a growing sense of promise for the year ahead, let's recognize the additional weight that was carried through the work that was done, and the challenges met in 2021.

Last year opened with much hope – an improved trajectory in the health crisis buttressed by the availability of vaccines to broad swaths of the population – but the obstacles to a return to normalcy lingered and intensified, and the resilience we held for what was thought to be the final leg of the pandemic was challenged by a persistent uncertainty and unmet expectations.

Despite the obstacles, though, we persevered, and even prospered. Our staff remained focused on our objectives, and supported the full return of our students in the fall; we carried with us a better sense of our strengths and an adapted understanding of our role and capabilities. We embarked on innovative new projects, reflected on our responsibilities to the concepts of IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity & Accessibility), and celebrated our storied history. I have to recognize what a gift it is to be surrounded by people who bear hardship with grace and dedication and continue to serve so selflessly for the unique good that libraries represent.

As the way forward sharpens in focus, we are excited about a new and better year ahead. Thank you for continuing on this journey with us.

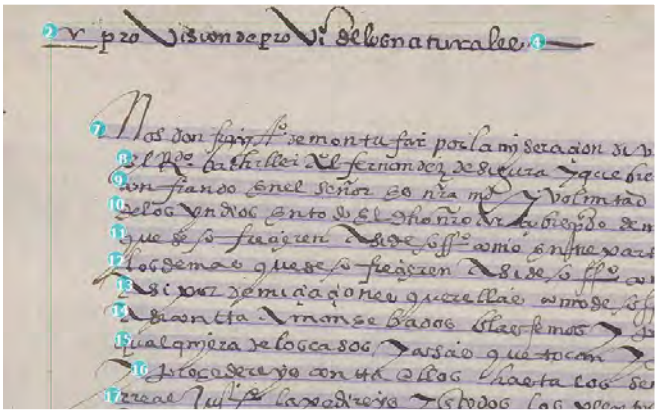
Dr. Lorraine J. Haricombe
Vice Provost and Director, University of Texas Libraries



It's been a while since these Libraries felt like the center of community and connection to which we've grown accustomed. But for the first time in two years, that feeling has begun to reemerge, and there's a palpable energy returning to our stacks and spaces.

The Road To Recovery

NEH, UK Grants Fund AI Transcription Project



Game-changing innovations that use artificial intelligence (AI) tools will improve access to Indigenous and Spanish colonial archives. "Unlocking the Colonial Archive: Harnessing Artificial Intelligence for Indigenous and Spanish American Historical Collections" is a collaborative project led by LLILAS Benson Latin American Studies and Collections at The University of Texas at Austin, the Digital Humanities Hub at Lancaster University, and Liverpool John Moores University. The work will transform "unreadable" digitized Indigenous and Spanish colonial archives into data that will be accessible to a broad spectrum of researchers and the public.

The project is funded by a $150,000 collaborative grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) as well as €250,000 (approx. US $304,000) from the UK's Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) through the joint New Directions for Digital Scholarship in Cultural Institutions program. Kelly McDonough, associate professor in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese, and Albert A. Palacios, digital scholarship coordinator at LLILAS Benson, will manage the project at UT Austin.

The Benson Latin American Collection at The University of Texas at Austin possesses one of the world's foremost collections of colonial documents in Spanish and Indigenous languages of Latin America. Yet even when digitized, such documents are often neither searchable nor readable because of calligraphy, orthography, and the written language of the document itself. In tackling this problem, the collaborators propose to employ and develop interdisciplinary data science methods with three goals in mind: to expedite the transcription of documents using cutting-edge Handwritten Text Recognition technology; to automate the identification and linking of information through standardized vocabulary ontologies using Linked Open Data and Natural Language Processing techniques; and to facilitate the automated search and analysis of pictorial elements through Image Processing approaches.

The research is based on three digital collections under the aegis of LLILAS Benson and one from the National Archive of Mexico. The LLILAS Benson collections are digitized Benson Collection colonial holdings, including the Relaciones Geográficas, 16th-century painted written and pictorial documents describing the geography and peoples of New Spain; the Royal Archive of Cholula at the Archivo Judicial del Estado de Puebla (Mexico), which was digitized through a Mellon-funded post-custodial grant; and the Primeros Libros de las Américas, a digitized collection of books published in the Americas before 1601.

McDonough and Palacios say that the project will further colonial Latin American studies not only at UT, but beyond, significantly facilitating the discoverability and interpretation of these materials. "While the work will begin with collections at the Benson and its Latin American partners, the technology developed will be accessible to libraries and archives worldwide, who can use it to automatically transcribe their digitized manuscripts," Palacios said. In addition, "through the public workshops that are part of this project, we will train humanists on new innovative approaches that leverage the potential of machine learning to facilitate research," McDonough added.

The geographical diversity among the project's leadership and collaborators reenforce its global reach. The PIs are McDonough and Palacios of UT Austin, Patricia Murrieta-Flores of Lancaster University (UK), and Javier Pereda Campillo of Liverpool John Moores University (UK). Other collaborators hail from Germany, Mexico, Poland, Portugal, Spain, and Switzerland. Among the numerous participants from Mexico is Lidia García Gómez, history professor at the Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla, who was involved with the digitization of the Royal Archive of Cholula.

Bye, Bye, Fines

The University of Texas Libraries are no longer imposing daily overdue fines, a policy that has been shown to have an inequitable impact across the community of library users.

Libraries have traditionally used fines as a revenue-generating measure and a method to encourage timely returns of library materials. In addition, research conducted in recent years at peer institutions has found that fines do not actually affect user behavior in the way intended – instead of encouraging timely return of library materials, such policies have the impact of discouraging use of libraries, especially by patrons of color and economically disadvantaged groups at both academic and public libraries.

The policy change was the result of a staff proposal and was approved after the Libraries initially suspended fines in 2020 as a response to the current health crisis. Previously, fines were only assessed for undergraduate and graduate students – not for faculty and staff – and, if unpaid, resulted in restrictions that prevented class registration and on the ability of users to receive official transcripts.

Manager of Borrower Services Margaret Alvarado has been a leading advocate for the policy change. "The burden of daily overdue fines disproportionately affects students from lower-income families and underrepresented communities," she says. "In our department, we see firsthand the distress that overdue fines cause students already facing the high cost of living in Austin. They worry about the effect that fines will have on their ability to register, graduate, and send transcripts; no student should have to make the choice between eating and graduating."

"Additionally, a negative experience with fines may discourage future use of the libraries by the very students who most benefit from free and equitable access to the materials they need for academic success."

The new fines policy only applies to daily fines for overdue general collection materials. Replacement costs and processing fees for lost items remain unchanged.

Libraries Change the Subject

The Libraries joined an effort among libraries to revisit and replace outdated and derogatory terminology in the subject headings for collections materials.

The movement, documented in and coined from the 2019 film "Change the Subject," was begun by students and librarians at Dartmouth College, who lobbied the Library of Congress to change anti-immigrant language in subject headings.

The movement originated in 2014 when students and librarians at Dartmouth College initiated a collaboration with the American Library Association (ALA) and the Library of Congress (LC) to formally change LC subject headings that contain the terms "illegal aliens" and replace them with terms that recognize the humanity of migrants and are less racially insensitive.
The Library of Congress put forth a plan to formally change subject headings containing "illegal aliens," but members in the U.S. House of Representatives (led by representatives from Texas) intervened in 2016 by applying conditions to a funding bill and requiring the retention of the term "Illegal aliens" in authorized Library of Congress subject headings. This effectively ended Library of Congress's participation in the project.

Despite the change in course for Library of Congress (LOC), libraries across the U.S. joined in support of this project in various ways. Some have removed the authorized LOC heading from their bibliographic records and replaced it with less biased local subject headings. Others have retained the authorized subject heading in their bibliographic records but have changed the rules in their discovery interfaces to replace the term displayed with a less biased one.

Access Systems staff reviewed participation by other institutions (most notably the State University of New York as well as the California State University system) and investigated various options for the Libraries to participate. Based on this review and given the Libraries' infrastructure, the most effective option was to modify the display of subject terms in Primo, the Libraries' discovery interface. Normalization rules in Primo were then created to display local, alternative terms such as "undocumented immigrants" as opposed to the existing Library of Congress subject terms (e.g., "illegal aliens," "illegal immigrants," etc.) in the brief display.

The Libraries retained the authorized LOC subject headings (e.g., "illegal aliens," "illegal immigrants") in our local bibliographic records. This allowed the authorized LOC terms to continue to be indexed and searched in our system. However, rather than display those authorized LOC terms, the brief record results that users now see in Primo display locally determined alternative terms in their place. Again, this was done without altering the underlying bibliographic records. While it is important to note that this alternate display only impacts our local records, we are pleased to say that nearly 2,000 local records have been positively impacted with this change. Sadly, we are unable to change the display for records that are managed by ExLibris in the Alma Central Discovery Index.

Prior to implementing the alternative subject headings, principals on the project worked with the Diversity Action Committee to make sure that choices fostered values of diversity, inclusion, equity and accessibility, as put forth by IDEA platform.

In the middle of February 2021, reports surfaced that the Biden administration directed the Department of Homeland Security to refrain from using dehumanizing language like "illegal aliens," and in November, the LOC confirmed that it was officially replacing the cataloging subject headings "Aliens" and "Illegal aliens" with the more accurate—and non-offensive—terms "Noncitizens" and "Illegal immigration."

Diversifying the Collections

As the diversity and inclusion work done on UT campus continues to grow and gather steam, it has been helpful to have UT Libraries commitment to inclusivity, diversity, equity and accessibility (IDEA) as a guiding star for our work in the Scholarly Resources Division (SRD).

The liaison librarian team in SRD recently had the opportunity to talk with library colleagues about how IDEA informs our collection development work, and how we support others in their collection development work. Our team members are Carolyn Cunningham, David Flaxbart, Corinne Forstot-Burke, Bill Kopplin, Susan Macicak, Katy Parker, and Shiela Winchester. The team is committed to using an IDEA lens in all of our work, beyond special projects or short-term initiatives. This means that we approach every request for a book, every new product offer, and every decision about how to use collection funds with the frame of mind that we will strive to include diverse voices in our collection and orient ourselves toward finding and making available resources that include the many experiences and perspectives of our campus community and beyond. The team describes this work as a group effort, and we continuously learn from each other.

This embedded IDEA orientation is important because the academic publishing landscape does not necessarily represent all the voices that we want to include. The team recently looked at the results of the 2019 Diversity Baseline Survey together. This survey looked at diversity in the publishing industry, which included academic publishing participants. The respondents to this survey were 76% white, 97% cisgender, 81% heterosexual, and 89% non-disabled. For a quick point of comparison, 38.9% of UT students and 75.7% of UT professors are white. As the creators of the survey point out, "If the people who work in publishing are not a diverse group, how can diverse voices truly be represented in its books?"

Publishers are not the only influencers of what we add to our collections. User requests and emerging research areas are an important source of data for us. One exciting area of focus this past year has been strengthening our holdings related to the Black Lives Matter movement, civil rights, and anti-racism topics. Bill Kopplin, social sciences librarian and coordinator, has compared our collections against peer libraries, kept an eye on campus reading clubs and resource lists, and worked directly with vendors to do a wide-ranging scan of publications in these areas to consider adding to our collection. I can also point to the strong interdepartmental work of facilitating selection and discovery of important resources via catalog notes and subject headings. Folks from across UT Libraries work together to select and make available the U.S. Latinx LGBTQ Collection and Black Queer Studies Collection with local notes in our library catalog. This kind of focused attention is found throughout the work of our subject librarians, and our team is here to

help get new efforts off the ground.

One programmatic aspect of collection building that our team works on closely is the major approval plans. These plans are arrangements with large vendors to automatically send us certain types of books published by essential publishers. We keep an eye on those plans to make sure they are bringing in the right material. By describing this process with words like "arrangements," "large," and "automatically," I want to illustrate that it is easy for up-and-coming authors and small publishers to get left out. This is where the expertise of our knowledgeable subject librarians, as well as input from our users, comes in. While we aim to collect books that our researchers expect us to have from major publishers, we pay close attention to the requests we get from users through interlibrary loan, through our Suggest a Purchase form, and via our library colleagues. Those data tell us which things are missing from the collection. We also use these requests to update ourselves on new terminology, new classes being offered, and new and enduring research topics that are finding an audience on campus.

This work takes a village, and we will continue to learn from each other and respond to new opportunities to make our collections meet the needs of our current and future users.

Building on Black Lives Matter

At their core, library collections have an intention to reflect the values of society and to represent the resources that the community most needs to advance those values. Historically, though, the lack of diversity in the realm of scholarship and publishing disregarded the promotion of certain voices, and so collections have been somewhat carelessly conceived and built without adequate attention to, or equity for, all points of view.
Part of the strategic focus for the Libraries is the concept of IDEA – Inclusion, Equity, Diversity and Accessibility – and making a conscious effort to permeate organizational work within its framework. Libraries are by nature democratic institutions, but as we've come to recognize over the recent years – and more poignantly in the last twelve months – there is much work to be done to improve the fairness and justice of our systems, and how we operate them. Taking a hard look at how and why we gather the resources we do is low-hanging fruit for redressing past practices, and for beginning to recognize and atone for those shortcomings.

A recent effort by the Libraries' Scholarly Resources Division to consider ways to apply IDEA concepts to their work resulted in a significant project to begin diversifying the Libraries' collections practices. The effort was holistic in approach, but work on specific subject areas bears special notice for the initial success of outcomes. One of those areas which is of currency to recent history is the collections related to the Black Lives Matter movement.

Social Sciences Librarian Bill Kopplin took up the project in part because of its current social relevance, but also because of its interest to campus communities.

"At its heart the BLM movement is an extended anti-government protest, so it seems like it was already by definition an integral part of my subject purview," explains Kopplin, "but it was also obvious that there was a great deal of interest in this subject on campus."

"There was both individual research interest, and classroom use going on," says Kopplin. "And I have checked the circulation records for some of our older print books on the civil rights movement and those check out numbers are very high. Of course, the BLM movement fits into the much larger social, political, and historical context of the civil rights movement, which is an extremely interdisciplinary subject area, so as a

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Cambridge Press Agreement Lowers Cost Barriers

The University of Texas expanded a partnership with Cambridge University Press that has resulted in global open access to research published by authors and researchers across the UT System.

The three-year extension of a contract – referred to as a "Read & Publish" agreement – provides system-wide institutional access to all Cambridge University Press journals, and offsets the costs of open access publishing of all works authored by University of Texas experts.

The Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC) defines "open access" as "the free, immediate, online availability of research articles combined with the rights to use these articles fully in the digital environment."

The contractual enhancement means that faculty and researchers of the UT System do not have to pay Author Processing Charges (APCs) when they publish with Cambridge University Press journals in order to make their articles open access.

Vice Provost and Director of the University of Texas Libraries at The University of Texas at Austin Lorraine J. Haricombe has long championed open access initiatives.

"The out-of-pocket costs to faculty members and departments have long been an impediment to creating momentum for the expansion of open access at public institutions of higher education," says Haricombe. "Through this innovative approach with Cambridge Press, we're able to mitigate those costs while also allowing copyright to be maintained by creators instead of publishers."

University of Texas System authors publish roughly 70 articles a year on average. Using a Cambridge Press estimate of an average APC cost of almost $3,000 per article, that represents a potential savings of over $200,000/year for all System-authored open access publication costs.

"This model also creates an opportunity for worldwide access to the rich research of the University of Texas, which will help to accelerate related innovation," notes Haricombe. "The expansion from our previous agreement helps move beyond the previous publishing model, which was unsustainable, and increases readership and scholarly impact. It's a win/win."

The contract went into effect beginning January 2021, and extends through December 2023.

HRDI Gets a Redesign

The Human Rights Documentation Initiative (HRDI) is a collaborative archival project focused on preserving and promoting the use of fragile human rights records from around the world, in order to support human rights advocates working for the defense of vulnerable communities and individuals.

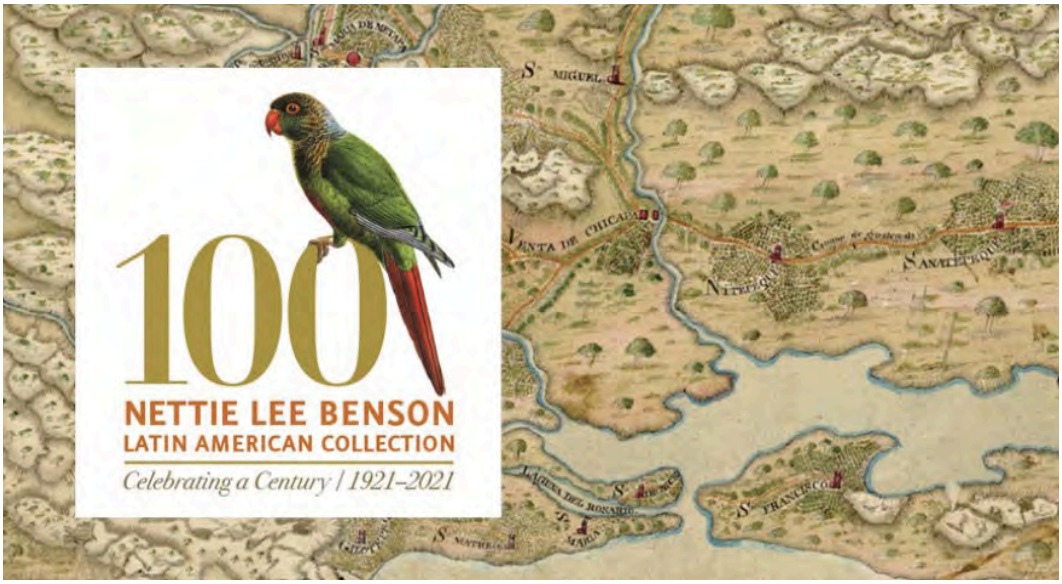
The HRDI was established at the University of Texas Libraries with a generous grant from the Bridgeway Foundation in 2008. Additionally, the Human Rights Documentation Initiative has partnered with the Bernard and Audre Rapoport Center for Human Rights and Justice to identify key strategic issues for the initiative as well as provide relevant programming to the UT Austin community and beyond.

The HRDI preserves and provides access to paper-based collections, as well as digitized and born-digital audiovisual collections that are global in scope. Recognizing the importance of online human rights advocacy and the fragility of web content, the HRDI also maintains an archive of websites related to human rights issues, which is updated quarterly.

HRDI partners and collections page in Spanish. Many pages on the new site are available in both Spanish and English. This page lists all current members and their contributed collections.

A number of the collections found on this site have been preserved and made available through post-custodial archival collaborations between the HRDI and partner organizations and repositories. Post-custodialism is a collaborative approach to providing access to archival collections that preserves physical archives within their original contexts of creation while also creating digital copies for wider access.

Through these collaborations, the HRDI aims to support the development of partners' archival capacity, particularly in the areas of digitization, preservation, arrangement, description, and access.



The Benson Turns 100

After witnessing the inauguration of President Álvaro Obregón in Mexico City in December, 1921, two representatives of The University of Texas – Regent H.J. Lutcher Stark and Chair of Latin American History Charles Wilson Hackett – stumble upon an amazing find as they walk down Madero Street.

As described by historian and head librarian Nettie Lee Benson, "Hackett, spying a copy of the first edition of Bernal Díaz del Castillo's True History of the Conquest of New Spain in the window of a bookstore, excitedly remarked: 'That is a book that should be in the library of the University of Texas,' to which Mr. Stark responded: 'Let's purchase it.'"

The discovery of this book, written in 1576 by a Spanish conquistador and colonist, and printed in Madrid in 1632, would lead to the eventual acquisition, in Mexico, of the Latin American library's seminal collection – the private library of the late senator, historian, and bibliophile Genaro García, purchased by the University of Texas in 1921.

The Libraries began a centennial celebration of the Benson in 2021 and continue into the new year, with exhibitions, events and the launch of a podcast.

The transport of the monumental García collection from Mexico City to Austin, Texas, was thrilling in its own right. Comprised of 11,000 volumes, 15,000 pamphlets, 200,000 pages of manuscripts, numerous files of newspapers, and more, the collection weighed in at 17 tons. According to Benson's account, librarian E.W. Winkler and a member of the García family sat guard on wagons containing the materials for a week before the collection was loaded on a freight car bound for Austin. Winkler and the late García's son then rode in the train's caboose all the way to Austin.

Although Mexico had ratified its constitution in 1917, fighting associated with the revolution of 1910 continued for many years. (Obregón himself would be assassinated in 1928 following a re-election bid.) It is within this context that some Mexican scholars and bibliophiles sought to protect items of cultural importance outside of the country, contributing to the now-notable Latin American collection. Among the most significant of these was the rich manuscript and book collection of Mexican bibliographer and historian Joaquín García Icazbalceta, which arrived in 1937 and contains the Relaciones Geográficas, rare and exquisite hand-painted sixteenth-century maps and associated documents.

Many of the Latin American library's prized materials, however, were rescued from destruction

by quick-thinking people: In 1967, former UT student Louise Wheless recognized the signature of Mexican revolutionary Pancho Villa on a large mass of papers that were about to be burned in Torreón, Mexico. In 1973, William S. Callaghan, a doctoral candidate in Brazil's economic history, rescued the complete archives of the St. John d'El Rey Mining Company of Brazil from the sub-basement of a London warehouse. Both of these archival collections, and so many more like them, ended up as part of the Benson.

Stories of the collection's early days evoke the sense of being in the right place at the right time. This is also true of the scholars and librarians who guided the library during its growth.
Mexican historian, archivist, and educator Dr. Carlos E. Castañeda was invited to UT Austin, his alma mater, in 1927 to take stewardship of the García collection. His contributions to the foundational years of the library, and to scholarship on the early history of Texas, are essential chapters in the intellectual history of the university and in the story of the library. An advocate of equal treatment for Mexican Americans and other ethnic minorities, Castañeda left in 1943 for a position at the Fair Employment Practices Commission. In 1975, the Board of Regents unanimously voted to name the Perry-Castañeda Library in his honor.

Dr. Nettie Lee Benson would serve as director of the Latin American library for 33 years, retiring in 1975. As a professor of history at the university, she was both admired and feared for her scholarly rigor. It is her storied tenure as a librarian with vision and tenacity that led to the transformation of the collection that bears her name.

"Benson transformed the collection into an instrument capable of supporting research and teaching at the University of Texas," writes former head librarian David Block. "She did so with a mix of innovation, collaboration, and chutzpah."

Through a partnership with the Teresa Long Institute of Latin American Studies (LLILAS) and its interdisciplinary faculty, the Benson has pursued collaborations with organizations throughout Latin America, placing emphasis on the preservation of vital archival collections in their place of origin, as well as the sharing of technology and training for digitization of these materials. This pioneering work in digital scholarship has ensured that more and more resources will be openly available to anyone with access to a computer, while partnerships with sister organizations in the Americas have strengthened ties to Latin America in a horizontal way.

Along with the launch of a centennial website – https://www.benson100.org/ – Benson staff produced a bevy of new online exhibits for the centenary, all of which can be found on the Libraries' Exhibits page at https://exhibits.lib.utexas.edu/. A New Spain, 1521–1821, was curated by LLILAS Benson Digital Scholarship Coordinator Albert A. Palacios, and traces the cultural, social and political evolution of the Viceroyalty of New Spain, a royal territory in the Spanish Empire formed soon after the invasion and conquest of the Aztec Empire in 1521. It features materials from the Benson Latin American Collection as well as C. L. Sonnichsen Special Collections at UT El Paso. Celebrating Eric Williams, curated by Black Diaspora Archivist Rachel Winston, is a retrospective on the intellectual and political life of the longtime prime minister of Trinidad and Tobago, who was also visionary the leader of the country's independence movement. In Nuestra América (1891), the exhibition A Hemisphere of Knowledge: A Benson Centennial Exhibit explores the implications of Cuban poet and philosopher José Martí's call for a pan–Latin American identity that grounds itself in the need to value indigenous knowledge.

The Benson also launched a new bilingual podcast featuring the library's head of collection development, Daniel Arbino, and historian and senior lecturer at the Teresa Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies Pilar Zazueta. The Benson at 100 is an audio series designed for listeners interested in Latin American history and culture. Episodes are released monthly, and explore the region through the Benson archives and books.

TARO Gets a Facelift

The University of Texas Libraries and a consortium of partner institutions completed a multi-year project to update the web portal for Texas Archival Resources Online (TARO), the principal reference site for discovering the contents of special collections and archives across the state of Texas.

TARO provides researchers and scholars worldwide with access to collection descriptions of archival primary sources in libraries, archives and museums by hosting up-to-date finding aids – tools that help a user find information in a specific record group, collection or series of archival materials – for resources included in the collections of member institutions.

The administrators of TARO received an implementation grant for $348,359 from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) in 2019 to fund the modernization of the site, which was established with a research grant from the Telecommunications Infrastructure Fund (TIF) Board of the State of Texas in 1999. The University of Texas Libraries spearheaded the initial effort to build the resource in the early 2000s, with project partners including the Texas Digital Library Alliance, Rice University, Texas A&M University, Texas State Library and Archives, Texas Tech University, University of Houston and the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas at Austin.

With the original grant funds, the Libraries and its collaborators established the TARO website, outsourced encoding of several hundred finding aids and provided training to member repositories. Repositories began contributing their own hand-coded finding

aids in 2002. The UT Libraries continued to support TARO after the site's initial launch, and in June 2018 TARO formalized the UT Libraries as the institutional home of the project.

The redesign of TARO includes public site improvements to provide a modern web experience on both desktop and mobile and enable users to better access the collections of the member repositories to browse or limit their search by geographic area, language, subject or date.

The redesign also includes a new administrative site that allows the members to update and manage their repository and finding aid data, with improved finding aid publishing and indexing that places their publishing process into their control.

Additionally, repository account creation has been streamlined and can be done by TARO administrators without the assistance of developers, and the addition of a Content Management user type allows for editing repository information for associated repository accounts.

Project development occurred at The University of Texas at Austin with substantial effort contributed by the TARO steering committee and its subcommittees, as well as in coordination with the staff at all of the TARO member institutions. Collaborators worked to remediate the entire finding aid collection in order to enable the new browse and search methods by ensuring consistent adherence to a base set of criteria.

"TARO is essential for unearthing the treasures held by archiving institutions across Texas," says Vice Provost and Director of the University of Texas Libraries Lorraine Haricombe. "The enhancement of this resource will make discovery of primary resources throughout the state more efficient and effective for researchers, and will accelerate scholarship that originates from their work."

TARO currently supports 70 repositories, representing collections content measuring in the millions of individual items.

First in Class
Open Educational Fellows

Last fall, the Libraries announced the cohort in the Open Education Fellows pilot program. A competitive application process yielded many high impact proposals, and a selection committee narrowed the outstanding crowd to officially name three Open Education Fellows who are converting their courses to zero-cost required materials through the adoption of existing open educational resources (OER) and one team of Open Education Fellows who are developing their own OER to serve students at The University of Texas at Austin and beyond.

The Adoption / Adaptation Fellows are Dr. Joel Nibert (Department of Mathematics), Dr. Diane McDaniel Rhodes (School of Social Work), and Dr. Amy Kristin Sanders (School of Journalism and Media), as well as the team of Authorship Fellows, Dr. Joshua Frank, Dr. Delia Montesinos, and Mina Ogando Lavin (Department of Spanish & Portuguese).

The average price of a new, print textbook is a little over $65 at UT, per the University Co-op, but electronic resources and access codes can often cost students much more.

Open Education Fellows aim to cumulatively save students enrolled in their courses thousands of dollars each semester by switching from commercial textbooks and other materials to OER and other freely available resources. The open licenses assigned to OER allow students to access course content immediately and at no cost. Beyond this benefit, these open licenses also permit instructors to make copies and customize materials in ways that better serve students' interests and their learning outcomes. Authorship Fellows will apply open licenses to the works they create and contribute them back to the OER ecosystem for other instructors to discover, adopt, and adapt.

The Libraries are providing Fellows with professional development opportunities to support their activities in finding, evaluating, and/or creating OER as well as stipends to offset the time and effort that we recognize these activities take. In addition to OER adoption and creation, Fellows will share their experiences by participating in Libraries' events and collect anonymous student perceptions or outcomes data to understand the impact of adopting OER and other no-cost materials in their courses.

The Libraries hopes that the work undertaken by the Open Education Fellows will serve as a model to other instructors who are interested in reducing the financial burden of course materials costs for their students. Vice Provost and Director of the University of Texas Libraries at The University of Texas at Austin Lorraine J. Haricombe has been a longtime advocate for open education and OER adoption. "When faculty remain informed of OER initiatives at their institutions, there is an increased awareness of these resources and an increased reported likelihood of consideration of future OER adoption," says Haricombe. "I am delighted to see UT's first cohort of Open Education Fellows and Authors who will work with UT Libraries to unleash their creative endeavors to innovate how we educate our students."

BLM, cont. from p. 9

social sciences liaison librarian, it was all good."

Kopplin suspected that the BLM collections needed attention, but to begin the process of building out the BLM collections for the Libraries, he needed to get an idea of what was "on the shelves." "I actually have a fair amount of experience comparing collections dating back to my days as the computer science bibliographer," he says, "and since I knew that the Black Lives Matter movement was a relatively recent phenomena, I realized the number of entries in various library catalogs under a BLM subject heading would be both very specific and relatively low in absolute number.

"Comparing them would be doable and hopefully informative as to the relative amount of recent collection activity that was going in at various campuses by our peer institutions," he continues. "So last summer I looked at the BLM catalog entries, and while it was a bit hard to make definitive statements, it was clear to me that we didn't have as many titles as some of our other fellow libraries."

That proved to be a generous characterization. UT and state peer Texas A&M were on the low end of subject area collections for BLM materials nationwide among research libraries. The topic was relatively emergent, with terminology still significantly in a developmental period, and a lot of work needed to be done on targeting resources that were useful to the field of study and traversed the various facets of the subject. The Libraries had a pretty meager 11 titles that could be considered in the area; to contrast, Kopplin discovered that Penn State had 44.

But the comparative infancy of the subject area had the converse effect of somewhat simplifying the solution to the deficit in the collections. "If I was considering collections in a large subject area like chemistry I would obviously have to target a small subset of that to do any interesting collecting, but the BLM movement is so far a pretty small subject area when looked at as part of the overall book publishing industry, so I didn't really do much targeting," explains Kopplin. "Basically, if a title showed up on a published list of 'best BLM books' and it was available to us as an orderable ebook in GOBI (the Libraries' main book vendor), I would try to order it. And there were scores of these 'best books' lists to go on."

"So, if someone somewhere recommended a BLM title on a published list, I treated that like a favorable book review and I would try to order it."

Since the inception of Kopplin's work on the project, the Libraries has acquired more than 100 titles, and that collection continues to grow to support increased interest in Black Lives Matter and related subjects around social justice, systemic racism and police brutality. Scholarly Resources Division staff are reviewing approval plans – arrangements with a large vendors to automatically get needed resources from major publishers – to improve processes and ensure that historical homogeneity in publishing doesn't impede the Libraries efforts at diversifying the collections.

"My upcoming summer project is to go back and re-examine our holdings in comparison to our peers to see if we have made any progress," says Kopplin "But I'm not too worried, the

project itself has been the reward and it is really pleasing to know that our collection is now stronger in this specific area."

The work Kopplin is doing is just a small part of the much larger effort at collections diversification, though. As head of collection development, Carolyn Cunningham is involved in oversight of the various efforts, and views it as a new part of normal practice for the Libraries going forward.

"Of course, there are many other librarians working to make our collections relevant to our students and researchers," says Cunningham. "All of the subject librarians use their expertise to monitor the publications coming out in their areas and make sure we get important resources."
"The team is committed to using an IDEA lens in all of our work, beyond special projects or short-term initiatives," she continues. "This means that we approach every request for a book, every new product offer, and every decision about how to use collection funds with the frame of mind that we will strive to include diverse voices in our collection and orient ourselves toward finding and making available resources that include the many experiences and perspectives of our campus community and beyond."

For his part, though, Kopplin has taken away a greater appreciation for the subject. "I can't tell you how rewarding this project has been to me personally."

Kopplin relates a significant discovery from his research to explain.

"I'm a car guy, love everything about cars. How do cars relate to BLM, you ask? Interstate 375 –the Walter P. Chrysler Freeway in downtown Detroit –is a little-known example of the little-known phenomena of infrastructure racism. It is a 1-mile long highway that held the distinction of being the shortest interstate in the national system. It was not needed as a transportation solution. It was built to level a historically African-American communitycalled Black Bottom that was sort of Detroit's answer to Harlem."

"The BLM movement has brought increased awareness of police brutality, it has brought increased awareness of things like Confederate-era statues, it has brought increased awareness of the larger civil rights movement, and it has brought increased awareness of hidden things like infrastructure racism, which I knew very little about before this project. There are now proposals being considered to demolish I-375.""I have learned so much," says Kopplin.

2021 BY THE NUMBERS

PCL OCCUPANCY

177,422
Total visits

16x
The occupancy of the same period in 2020

HATHITRUST TO THE RESCUE

36,356
Digital items received through HathiTrust September 2020 through August 2021

REMOTE TECHNOLOGY

5,336
Virtual computer lab sessions using Libraries PCs, Macs and software

DIGITIZING THE COLLECTIONS

36,619
Number of pages published to the Collections Portal September 2020 through August 2021

957
Books published to the Collections Portal September 2020 through August 2021

UNIQUE DESKTOP USERS

8,736
Unique users logged into UTL computers from September 2020 through August 2021

INSTRUCTION SERVICES

408
Online course-integrated instruction sessions taught September 2020 through August 2021

RESEARCH CONSULTATIONS

1,645
Research consultations September 2020 through August 2021

FINES ELIMINATED

$0
Amount of fines collected on overdue items since a moratorium in 2020 became permanent in 2021

ASK A LIBRARIAN

3,243
Chat sessions

PICK IT UP

25,317
Material requests fulfilled since Pick It Up service resumed last fall

The University of Texas at Austin

WHAT STARTS HERE CHANGES THE WORLD

WWW.LIB.UTEXAS.EDU