

## Cheng Library Continues Voting 101 & Civic Engagement Programs

In November 2019, the Cheng Library hosted the first Voting 101 program to support informed voting decisions and acclimate students to the voting process. That first program included an in-person event complete with a mock voting booth and a hands-on smartboard to discover voter assistance resources. With the success of the initial Voting 101 program in 2019, the Library planned to expand the program in 2020 for the presidential election cycle. COVID-19 threatened those plans. However, the Voting 101 program expanded and flourished in 2020 with the help and support of several student groups and campus partners.

The voting process during the pandemic was an entirely new experience for all voters. In response to the challenges presented by the pandemic, the Library held three virtual Voting 101 events during the fall semester. The first event was co-sponsored by Phi Sigma Sigma Sorority Inc. and Tau Kappa Epsilon Fraternity Inc. The event introduced students to the Library's Voting 101 Guide, outlined the voting process and various methods for casting ballots in NJ, and responded to student questions concerning obtaining ballots and ensuring their vote counted. A follow-up event provided participants with specific instructions on completing mail-in ballots and researching candidates and ballot questions.

The final program consisted of a webinar coordinated with the Office of Alumni Relations aimed toward William Paterson Alumni. The webinar provided alumni with voter information and resources as part of their continued journey as



lifelong learners and civic participants. Thanks to the significant student support, partnerships with the Office of Campus Activities, Service and Leadership, the American Democracy Project, and the Alumni Relations Office, over 100 students and alumni attended the events. Attendees left equipped to make informed voting decisions and with confidence in their knowledge of the voting process.

Voting 101 was just one way the Library supported the University's Civic Engagement mission in the fall. As part of the Pioneer Day of Service event in September, led by the Office of Campus Activities, the Library partnered with the American Democracy Project to host the program *The Presidential Election: The Power of Your Vote*. The session engaged students in discussions about why voting matters, the role individual voters have on the Electoral College, and resources on informed voting and historical elections.

To conclude the fall semester Civic Engagement efforts, the Library launched a pilot program called "Pod-Talks." In the Pod-Talks program, participants listen

to a selected podcast episode then join a virtual event to participate in a guided discussion. The first Pod-Talk was held in coordination with the Pioneer Football team and was part of Coach Dustin Johnson's efforts to encourage student-athletes to learn about and understand social justice issues. The initial event was titled *Social Justice and the Power of Athletes* and focused on the University of Missouri football team, who in 2015 launched a player boycott, where they refused to play until the university addressed the challenges of racial and social justice on the campus. The discussion was enlightening and engaging, with over 60 student-athletes participating. The Library has scheduled a series of Pod-Talks for the spring semester, focusing on racial, gender, and social justice topics.

Information about Library Civic Engagement events can be found on Pioneer Life, and students can earn low-level Civic Engagement credit for their attendance and participation.

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## Alandria Moore Appointed Principal Library Assistant

Alandria Moore (pronounced Uh-Lawn-Dree-Uh) joined the Cheng Library staff in November 2020 as the new Principal Library Assistant in the Lending Services Department. Alandria is responsible for training and managing student and part-time employees in the department. She also participates in stacks maintenance activities and general library operations in the Lending Services department.

Alandria received her Bachelor of Arts in Literary Studies with a Concentration in Fiction from Eugene Lang College of Liberal Arts (aka The New School) in 2020 and has plans to pursue a master's degree in Library & Information Science and a master's degree in Creative Writing or possibly Fashion Studies in the future.

Alandria began working in a li-

brary while attending college as a student employee and ultimately fell in love with the job. She is always happy to be helping people while also enjoying the independent responsibilities and teamwork that aid in the library's operations.

Alandria's dream is to settle down in the South of France or Savannah, GA, and open a library or eclectic bookstore. She also aspires to author and publish a few collections of short stories and novels. In her free time outside of the library, Alandria enjoys making playlists, watching movies and television, *Femme Fatales*, scouring the internet for fantastic clothing pieces and knick knacks and creating unrealistic scenarios.

Asked about joining the Cheng Library, she responded,



Alandria Moore  
Principal Library Assistant

"I'm so excited and honored to have joined a team that is so welcoming and helpful. I can't wait to meet and become acquainted with everyone, hopefully, sooner rather than later!"

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## Information Literacy In Unusual Times

Information literacy – or the ability to effectively locate, explore, and use information – is a cornerstone of the work that Cheng librarians do to support students' success at William Paterson. During the previous year, librarians taught nearly 300 sessions for courses across campus and at all levels. These sessions did more than show students how to find books or use a database; instead, the focus shifted to introducing new approaches to searching and a deeper understanding of how information is organized. They provided students with skills to be successful in their courses and beyond. And then the world changed.

In March 2020, the university responded to the pandemic by moving classes and student support entirely online. The Library didn't miss a beat; immediately transition-

ing research consultations to our chat reference service, identifying alternatives to print materials for faculty, and shifting information literacy instruction (also known as library instruction) fully online! As librarians and educators, we have a history of exploring new technologies and offering virtual instruction. The Library elevated these efforts through a summer 2020 training program, which prepared all librarians to teach in Zoom and Blackboard Collaborate.

We returned to campus in the fall, although many courses continued in an online or hybrid/HyFlex mode. We were pleased to see how many faculty colleagues reached out, demonstrating their commitment to information literacy. With sessions provided to students of all levels, across all

five colleges, and local schools, the majority took place synchronously online with Zoom as the preferred platform. So far, the feedback from students and instructors has been glowing.

The Library understands the challenges presented by shortened semesters and new methods of teaching and learning. Our mission outlines our goal to contribute to the success of the university's educational and co-curricular programs. As we advance our collective efforts, we are excited to continue offering virtual instruction as an added option, especially with the recent rollout of WP Online. With a successful fall 2020 under our belts, we look forward to seeing you all again – virtually or otherwise!

# The Academic Library in the Era Before, During, and After COVID-19

## *A Message from Dean Edward Owusu-Ansah*

I am often asked how dramatically the pandemic has changed the course of libraries. In contemplating the question, I find myself returning to the history of librarianship in the United States, its driving aspirations, and where those have led the profession since the early days of Melville Dewey's publication of his classification system (1876), contribution to the founding of the American Library Association (1876), and establishment of the world's first library school at Columbia College (1887). These achievements captured the essential elements that would define the profession: knowledge organization and curation, advocacy, and the educational and disciplinary underpinnings that would formalize librarianship as a profession and preserve its renewal for generations to come. Therein lay the genius of Dewey. The journey from 1876 to 2021 has been a fast-paced one for libraries, accelerating further with the official launching of the Internet on January 1, 1983, when the Transfer Control Protocol/Internet Protocol (TCP/IP) communications standard was established, allowing for networks to be connected by a universal language.

The knowledge collection and organization function of the library has remained a mainstay from its very beginnings in antiquity, some five thousand years before Dewey. The advocacy role of American libraries is now best articulated in the professional defense of unfettered access to information, information equity, and unyielding work as the guarantor of knowledge preservation and dissemination in support of



Dr. Edward Owusu-Ansah  
Dean of Cheng Library

knowledge acquisition, use, and creation. The American Library Association enshrined in its constitution the mission "To provide leadership for the development, promotion, and improvement of library and information services and the profession of librarianship to enhance learning and ensure access to information for all." It adopted as its motto, "The best reading, for the largest number, at the least cost." It would also assert in reinforcing these principles that "Free access to the books, ideas, resources, and information in America's libraries is imperative for education, employment, enjoyment, and self-government."

Lyman Ross and Pongracz Sennyey ("The Library is Dead, Long Live the Library! The Practice of Academic Librarianship and the Digital Revolution") provide a concise and provocative analysis of the developments and current challenges of academic librarianship. They conclude that "The internet has made a significant shift in the environment in which libraries find themselves

and is making our professional assumptions seem as foreign as a medieval manuscript in chains." The transformations undergirding the shift are discussed in relation to library services, collections, and spaces, which the authors see as the fronts on which "the library's role and value were maximized in the analog environment." They note that services provided by the library catalog have lost much of their utility. The electronic version, the online public access catalog (OPAC), while it may be more precise than most web search engines, still fails as a resource discovery tool, a fact not lost on the profession with the ever-increasing deployment of additional discovery solutions designed to provide more comprehensive search outcomes than the OPAC. Ross and Sennyey note that another critical service affected by the transition to a digital environment has been reference, which has seen a decline in engagements due to the success of library websites in lowering the barriers to access and the ease of use of electronic databases and full text content improving the self-sufficiency of patrons. Email and chat services have not succeeded in making up for the decline in reference interactions.

Their observation on collections is prescient: "...the library's traditional mission of warehousing collections, around which so many of the library's services and operations revolve, is challenged as the physical collection is subsumed by the digital one." With documented patron preference for digital over print formats, library spaces are freeing up for repurposing. Solutions include more



individual and group study spaces, incorporation of student support activities and services, and the addition of social spaces such as cafés. Acknowledging the trend, Laura Krier (*Library Curriculum outside the Classroom: Connecting Library Services to Student Learning*,") argues that the changes in the role of academic libraries over the last fifty years reflect changes in higher education and information technology brought on by "the birth of the internet, the large-scale shift to electronic resources, and the ease of access to all kinds of information. These have pushed librarians "to almost completely reinvent our work, the organization of our libraries, our budgets, and the very foundation of knowledge on which our profession is based." Krier concludes that the changes "have moved academic librarianship away from an access and service-focused paradigm and toward an educational and learning-focused one."

The developments motivated by these changes are in motion here at Cheng Library, where the primacy of digital resources is an ongoing recognition, and acquisitions and collection development solutions, service models, and workflows are being designed and implemented to embrace the evolving paradigm in academic libraries. To do so, we are guided by professional standards such as the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) "Standards for Libraries in Higher Education," which identifies nine principles that academic libraries are encouraged to align with: 1. Contributing to institutional effectiveness; 2. Advancing intellectual freedom, intellectual property rights and values, user privacy and confidentiality, collaboration, and user-centered service; 3. Part-

nering in the educational mission of the institution to develop and support information-literate learners; 4. Enabling users to discover information in all formats; 5. Providing access to quality collections that are diverse, current, and support the institution's research and teaching missions; 6. Providing spaces that act as intellectual commons for users and ideas to interact in physical and virtual environments to expand learning and facilitate new knowledge creation; 7. Engaging in decision-making to inform resource allocation to meet the library's mission effectively and efficiently; 8. Providing sufficient number and quality of personnel to ensure excellence and to function successfully in an environment of continuous change; 9. Engaging the campus and broader community to advocate, educate, and promote the value of libraries.

While the transition to digital resources in libraries across the nation began far before the pandemic, and significant strides have already been made toward serving remote clients wherever they may be and whenever they may need library resources, COVID-19 nonetheless reinforced and added greater urgency to the importance of digital collections that are widely and readily available and accessible. The need to develop discovery solutions that empower users to operate independently in their information discovery, construction of robust user education and support solutions that are appealing, effective, widely diffused, and adequately publicized, and the building of virtual collaboration and communication channels are now no brainers. Librarians anticipated these needs as the digital age dawned upon us and have worked on many successful

solutions to address them. A profession that had hitherto worked tirelessly to create independent and efficient information seekers and users was ready when maintaining physical distance between its users and their virtual access to needed information and knowledge became an imperative. This liberation of the library user and the enrichment of the discovery experience is an ongoing professional charge. It started before COVID-19, remains relevant in the pandemic, and will continue to be an important commitment of libraries in the future.

The lessons of COVID-19 in higher education also reminds us of the challenging economies within which we operate. We cannot be oblivious to such critical ACRL performance indicators like library contribution to student recruitment, retention, time to degree, and academic success, clean and adequate spaces, convenient hours, access to collections properly aligned with areas of research and curricular foci of the institution as well as institutional strengths, and the continuous examination and transformation of personnel roles to meet the needs of an evolving organization. It is incumbent upon librarians to ensure that libraries serve their publics in ways that those publics appreciate and can afford.

We look forward to your input as we work on positioning your library to do that.

Happy New Year, and welcome back!

## Cheng Library Supports Paterson Schools With New Professional Development Program

With education at all levels facing unprecedented teaching challenges in online environments, several librarians at the David and Lorraine Cheng Library formed a partnership with the Paterson School District to support virtual instruction and learning. Led by Education & Curriculum Materials Librarian Neil Grimes, the program provides virtual professional development opportunities for educators in the Paterson Public School system hosted by Librarians at the Cheng Library. In September, Grimes and Reference & Outreach Librarian Gary Marks offered the first in a series of virtual professional development programs of the 2020-2021 school year. The session provided over 50 educators, primarily library media specialists and technology instructors, with online resources and tools, enabling greater collaboration with teaching faculty and integrating innovations into their teaching and learning portfolios. Grimes & Marks also developed a comprehensive research guide that outlines the resources and tools and can be periodically updated to support educators' ongoing professional development efforts.

The initial program was well received and led to the Paterson Schools' requests for additional professional development opportunities. A second program, where Electronic Resources Librarian Richard Kearney joined Grimes, provided over 70 participants, including all the Social Studies educators in the district, with resources supporting their students' National History Day preparation. Many students in the community participate in the National History Day competition, and this session aided their instructors by introducing new resources specific to this an-



Neil Grimes, Curriculum Materials & Education Librarian (L), Gary Marks, Jr., Reference & Outreach Librarian (Top R), and Richard Kearney, Electronic Resources Librarian (Bottom R)

nual event.

Following the first set of district-wide virtual professional development sessions, International High School Principal Catherine Forfia-Dion requested specialized programs focusing on research and project-based learning. Grimes developed two sessions addressing project-based learning, collaborative teaching, research across the curriculum, online teaching resources, and culturally responsive education resources in response to the request. The International High School faculty's feedback was positive, and Principal Catherine Forfia-Dion is looking forward to continuing the collaboration with the Cheng Library in the future.

The collaboration aims to strengthen educators' online teaching by developing their portfolio of instructional resources. One International High School teacher, Christopher Wirkmaa,

expressed, "I plan on using many of the resources shared during the virtual professional development session to help me right now with my online teaching with students." Building upon the partnership with the Paterson School District, the Library hopes to connect with other school systems to expand the virtual professional development initiative. Deputy Director of Accelerated & Innovative Programs for the Paterson Schools, Rita Route, recently joined Grimes at the annual VALE Users' Conference. They co-presented details of the initiative and discussed how the program's virtual element aids schools in providing broader professional development opportunities for educators. Their presentation offered other academic librarians in the state with a framework to explore similar initiatives with schools in their region and to broadly enhance the collaboration between K-12 school systems and higher education institutions.

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## Your Library in Action

**Cara Berg (Reference Librarian & Co-Coordinator of User Education)** is currently serving as the Past President on the NJLA-CUS/ACRL-NJ Executive Board. Cara also served on the VALE/ACRL-NJ/NJLA-CUS Users' Conference [VALE] Planning Committee and co-presented "*The Resilient Journey to Planning the VALE Conference*" along with colleagues at the conference who shared their experiences on the planning committee.

**Neil Grimes (Curriculum Materials & Education Librarian)** recently became a member of the NJASL Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee and attended the committee's virtual training seminar in September. Joined by **Dr. David Fuentes (Elem & Sec Ed.)** Neil co-presented a workshop at the NJASL annual conference "*Creating Google Classrooms Using Bitmoji and Google Slides: An*

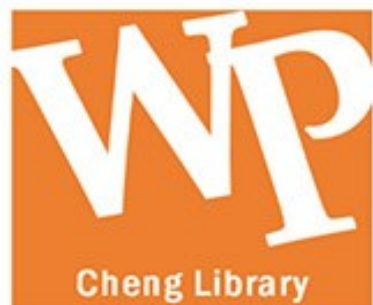
*early Pandemic Pedagogical Response*". At the VALE conference Neil co-presented "*Cheng Library and Paterson School District – Virtual Library Outreach to Support the Virtual Teaching and Learning Experiences of Faculty and Students*" with Rita Route, Deputy Director of Accelerated & Innovative Programs with the Paterson School District. Neil also presented a poster "*Real Men Read - A Library Led Reading Initiative*" at the PaLA Virtual Conference and attended the SITE Virtual Interactive Conference.

**Gary Marks, Jr. (Reference & Outreach Librarian)** presented "*The Civic Literacy Initiative at the David & Lorraine Cheng Library*" at the ACRLNY Annual Symposium and authored "*The Civic Literacy Initiative at William Paterson University*" in the NJLA-CUS/ACRL-NJ Fall Newsletter. Gary attended the ACRLNY Symposium as the recipient of the Barbara Bonous-Smit Scholarship for a Veteran Librarian, selected by the ACRLNY Symposium awards & scholarships committee. Gary continues to serve as the NJLA-

CUS/ACRL-NJ Legislative Representative and as the Social Media Coordinator for the Politics, Policy, & International Relations Section of ACRL.

**Linda Salvesen (Systems Librarian)** co-presented "*The Path to Flexible Loading of Patron Records into Alma*" with **Ray Schwartz (Head of Library Information Systems)** at the ENUG 2020 conference. Linda also co-presented "*Technology Speed Dating*" with other members of the NJLA-CUS/ACRL-NJ Technology Committee at the 2021 VALE Conference. In the NJLA-CUS/ACRL-NJ Fall Newsletter Linda authored "*Growing Professionally as an Academic Librarian in a Pandemic.*"

**Dave Williams (Digital Initiatives & Special Collections Librarian)** authored "*Digital Institutional Repository Management at William Paterson University: Planning and Staging a Seamless Migration*" in the NJLA-CUS/ACRL-NJ Fall Newsletter.



### CONNECTIONS

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## News & Announcements

### Library Introduces New Self-Checkout System

Pioneer students, faculty, and staff can use our new meeScan self-checkout machine for quick, easy contactless checkout and renewal of books. A receipt is sent to the borrower's email within seconds after checking out their items.

### New QR Code Feature Now Available in Library Catalog!

You can now share or send library website search results and library item locations directly to your phone using QR codes! Just use the camera app on your mobile device to scan the code, which now appears at the top of the search results page and on individual item records when searching the library online catalog.