

UNIVERSITY HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY ANNUAL REPORT FY2020

Unit Narrative

1. Major activities and accomplishments



Teaching

Instruction and collaboration with teachers is a major component of library services at Uni High. The librarian meets with teachers to discuss learning goals of assignments and, when appropriate, to help design research-based units that embed information discovery, synthesis, and evaluation skill-building activities. Class project LibGuides (<http://www.library.illinois.edu/uni/classprojects/index.html>) were developed or revised, most notably: Model Congress, Earth Science Topic Paper, Zines for Sophomore English, Social Justice, and Subfreshmen Banned Books Project. The Computer Literacy 1 and 2 curricula undergo frequent revision, particularly for the librarian-led units on website evaluation, social information and communication tools, computer programming, and cybersecurity. Both classes include a heavy emphasis on “managing your digital footprint.” As a school without filtering software, Uni is in the unique position of engaging in direct discussion with students about managing their privacy and personal online interactions. Several of the librarian’s assignments for Computer Literacy 1 can be found at <http://www.uni.illinois.edu/library/computerlit/index.php>. CodeHS was utilized for the computer programming portion of the class; example curricula for teaching Python can be found here: <https://codehs.com/>.

The Computer Literacy 2 teaching team continuously refines the requirements for the 10-week independent group projects. We have recently taken more time to help students not only with their project proposals, but with the formation of healthy group dynamics. Students groups design, research, and execute a project, culminating in an end-of-semester presentation to the class and invited guests. They use the computer software and skills covered in Computer Literacy 1 and 2 and must also learn a new piece of software or a technique that was not taught in class. Evaluation of student work is based heavily on how the groups organize their work, conduct and document their research, cooperate with others in the group, and how members teach and learn from one another. Each teacher supervises and grades a share of the student groups, using forum software to read and comment on required weekly progress reports. A course overview can be found at <http://www.library.illinois.edu/uni/computerlit/description2.html>. This year, the librarian directly supervised projects involving creation of a short cartoon, creation of current events podcast (focused on COVID-19), creation of a light-up LED dress, and an interactive game created on the popular Discord platform. Teaching

continued into the lockdown measures caused by COVID-19 virtually, and Uni High School was one of the few institutions locally that continued to deliver classes and limited resources.

Collaborations with other Uni High teaching faculty:

ARCHIVE DEEP DIVE

A collaboration between the library staff (in particular, Paul Kotheimer) and the subfreshman social studies teacher, Ms. Schoeplein has persisted over the past two years. In Fall semester 2019, Ms. Schoeplein once again brought her students to find suitable materials in our news clippings collection, building and history collection, back issues of Gargoyle newspapers, performance programs, yearbooks, and other school publications. They also again did an Agora Days class, entitled Archive Deep Dive.

ZINES

In Spring semester 2020, English teacher Dr. Ernstmeyer planned to do another zine collaboration with the library. Complementary events had been planned with Zine Librarian Kathryn La Barre. However, due to the events of COVID-19, that has been indefinitely postponed.

Mentoring

This past year, the librarian, along with the subfreshmen Social Studies teacher, co-sponsored the subfreshmen class. This builds a high level of trust and community with the subfreshmen class, and as the year progressed, the unit saw an increase in the number of subfreshmen coming to library-sponsored programming. This also proved to be a critical connection following the lockdown measures caused by COVID-19. These weekly virtual meetings facilitated connection with the subfreshmen, who were going through a variety of challenges.

Programming (activities led by/actively participated in by librarian)

- Weekly meetings of UniCode, along with a one-time coding competition, as well as occasional coding craft sessions
- Monthly meetings of SLAC'ers (the Student Library Advisory Committee)
- Ugly Sweater Contest
- Guest speaker on the topic of Peer Mediation
- Sasha Velour visit day + party
- Escape Room collaboration (cancelled due to COVID-19)
- Uni Reads collaboration with MPAG (Multicultural Parent Advisory Group)

NB: Additional programmatic information can be found in the graduate assistant section.

The librarian and the graduate assistant worked well this year in ensuring that a commitment

to diversity showed throughout most programming, display making, and in the area of collection development. For signage for events, we made sure that not only one type of student was portrayed and engaged. In SLAC'ers group meetings, we encouraged them to think about programming that matched the themes of the month (National Latinx and Hispanic heritage month, LGBTQIA+ awareness, #WeNeedDiverseBooks awareness campaigns, and so forth). We always strive to make our programs as student-driven as possible.

Technology

During 2019-20, the loanable tech collections continued to be in high demand, which continued to present some challenges. We suspect that the any decline in tallied circulation of laptops, headphones, and other accessories results not from a decrease in demand, but from students not returning loanable tech same day as stipulated. In Spring 2020, due to COVID-19 lockdown precautions, we were not able to meet demand for in-home tech support.

In general, library staff act as go-to people for help with laptop questions and miscellaneous tech equipment is needed (particularly when the shared services IT support staff member is not available). Circulation statistics are listed in the statistics section below.

In the last fiscal year, the library was gifted an Arduino Uni kit, a light-weight gimbal, and a second DSLR camera, a Canon T7i. We also added some equipment for use in producing audio recordings: A Behringer 2-channel USB audio interface along with a Shure SM58 microphone, plus accessories. These pieces are designed to be loaned out as "the podcasting kit," but occasionally items are needed separately. Statistics collected under the heading "podcasting kit" cover both these pieces.

In a busy and dynamic environment like ours, some portion of these transactions will always be impossible to tally. Because our equipment circulation is largely self-service, these numbers should be regarded as being on the low end. Also, the numbers do not reflect the many times that accessory items are circulated (e.g., external microphone, adapter cords, video signal connectors for external VGA monitors, audio output connectors for computer audio, etc.). And, of course, the closure of the school building during 4th quarter due to COVID-19 represented an unprecedented departure for all loanable tech usage patterns.

The library staff have all been trained to use the new Wordpress website. The website has become much easier to update, and we currently have continued to make regular reading blog posts, which are accessible on the website. This was especially useful when the school went all-virtual in the Spring.

Collections

This year, as was the case last year, a continuing effort is being made to order books that reflect the diverse interests and identities of the students at Uni High. The collection of fiction was already strong in terms of reflecting diverse interests, but there is always room for growth for collecting works that reflected diverse identities.

Committee work within Uni High School and the University Library

During the 2019-20 academic year, the librarian served on the following committees/regular standing meetings: Curriculum Committee, Technology Committee (as needed), Subfreshman Teacher meetings, Freshman Teacher meetings, Makerspace Committee, Library Committee for Academic Professionals, and Central Public Services Division meeting (when able). The librarian was also the chair of the search committee for a new Computer Science instructor (a search that was paused in large part to the COVID-19 disruption). Library also served as a faculty sponsor for the Subfreshman class, UniCode, the Latinx and Black Student Coalition (LBSC) and SLAC'ers (Student Library Advisory Committee).

2. Major challenges faced

COVID-10 Update

In March of 2020, the Uni Library, along with so many other organizations, had to quickly adapt to the changing conditions brought by the pandemic. We stopped the circulation of books for the most part, except for a limited time during Uni High's finals week where students were given the opportunity to request books for the summer and pick them up at the larger school drop-off event. We also ramped up our online presence via social media and online availability. We held weekly Librarian Office Hours via Zoom. And we considered how to maintain the emotional connection with the student body and the faculty—the benefits of serving on these student-centered groups became quite apparent in this context.

Physical facility

Space constraints (as well as pedagogical demands) require ongoing assessment of the library space and collections in light of patron needs.

3. Significant changes to unit operations, personnel, service profile, or program

Cynthia Medrano Torres was hired for this school year, and she did an amazing job working with the high school students and the Uni High faculty. Additionally, due to the shift to virtual services, her expertise in navigating social media platforms was incredibly valuable.

We also hired Cynthia as a Graduate Hourly for the summer, and were able to offer virtual summer programming. This is quite a pivot from the approach in recent years, which has been to cease programming in the summer. However, due to the emotional distress of many of our students, it was an investment of time and energy that was worthwhile.

4. Contributions to Library-wide programs and public engagement

We participate in public engagement in a number of ways. We are constantly considering various programs that will not only engage high school students, but also connect to either the University of Illinois community, or the wider Champaign-Urbana area.

- There was a presentation scheduled to be at Uni High Library to focus on pedagogy and zines that would have been in collaboration with a local IPRH research group (cancelled due to COVID-19).
- The Uni Reads program, which seeks the active involvement of Uni High parents and community members, focused on the book *Internment*, and touched on issues surrounding immigration and xenophobia.
- In early March, the librarian worked with Sarah Christensen to deliver a zine workshop to the READ program located in Champaign.
- During the fall semester, the librarian delivered a zine workshop to DREAAM program participants (middle school aged children).
- The librarian routinely responds to e-mail questions from other school librarians and school technology personnel requesting permission to use or adapt elements of the website, particularly from the Computer Literacy instructional material and the library's policy documents.
- The library continued with its participation in the Preservation Office's Integrated Pest Management program. Biology teacher Dave Stone contributes his expertise and labor in helping library staff identify specimens.

5. Progress on last year's goals:

- With the success of the Sophomore English collaboration, as well as the librarian joining a zine research cluster on campus, for the 2019-20 school year, it seems more than possible to implement a fully functioning Zine Library in the main space, as well as encouraging more pedagogical uses of the format.

Update: While the plans to fully update our Zine Library did not come to fruition, we did build a portable Zine making station that was often used before the shift to virtual learning. More teachers had been becoming excited about using zines in their classrooms as well.

- With the input of the Student Library Advisory Committee, as well as the collaborative efforts of the Multicultural Parent Advisory Group, we are planning to have more dialogic programming this year.

Update: The Uni Reads program was an attempt at this goal. It had limited success, and much of the momentum was disrupted due to the shift to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- We've had successful collaborations with many departments, including English, Social Studies, and occasionally Foreign Language. Another goal for this year will be to have more collaboration with the Science and Math departments.

Update: There was a minimal increase in collaboration with Math and Science. However, we did manage to maintain our current collaborations and build on some of those.

- There have been occasional issues addressing issues surrounding coverage of the library through the school day. Due to our secondary school setting, it is crucial that a supervising adult be in the library at all times (beyond just check-out needs). Conversations will take place with both the administration of the Undergraduate Library as well as the Uni High administration to devise a more long-term solution to this issue.

Update: These conversations had been successful, and with the supportive administration we had for FY2019-2020, we were not struggling as much with supervision. This point was rendered moot with the move to virtual school, but will be relevant again when school shifted back to in-person.

6. Unit annual goals for FY21

The Uni High Librarian advises the following for 2020-2021:

- Due to the shift to virtual learning, the decisions made this year are going to impact education for years to come. It has become imperative, more than ever, for our electronic resource collection to grow, especially considering the age of our population (for instance, acquiring more databases that have been designed for 8th and 9th graders).
- Uni High School has also shifted to block scheduling. Teachers are feeling the effects of having less class time, and the library should respond with the appropriate resources. We should plan to develop more modules and asynchronous tools for teachers to use in the upcoming year.
- Implementing engaging library programming on virtual platforms has presented various challenges—over the course of the next year, the goal will be to navigate these challenges

and document our approaches.

- We hope to expand on our existing collaboration with other library units, in terms of both programming and instruction.
- We also need to develop appropriate metrics to measure success in a virtual environment.

7. Number of GAs

One .50 FTE graduate assistant

8. Funding source for GAs

State funds

9. Major responsibilities of the GA and an overview of contributions made

The Uni High Library graduate assistant essentially acts as an assistant librarian. A unique requirement of this particular library is that undergraduate students cannot staff the position because the supervision of minor children is involved. Students form strong personal bonds with the graduate assistant, who serves as a role model and mentor.

The major responsibilities and contributions made by GA Cynthia Torres were as follows:

Library Administration

- Assisted with collection development—researching new acquisitions
- Maintained circulation of books in and out of new books section
- Maintained the Uni High Library Blog

Instruction and Instruction Support

- Class projects and reserve cart
 - Assisted with LibGuides; Pulled relevant materials from collection
- Reference services to faculty/staff and students
 - Reader's Advisory
 - Scholarly materials—searching and retrieval (books and articles)

Publicity

- Publishing a monthly newsletter (in close collaboration with the librarian).
- Advertising for events on the library's social media

Events & Programming

Programming from the past year: Subject specific Trivia days (for example, Marvel); Stranger Things Watch Party; Halloween Scary Movie Marathon; Libro Lotería (similar to Bingo) game; Banned Books craft; Sugar Skull decorating (with real sugar skulls donated by La Casa Cultural Latina); Origami Animal Making activity; Frozen movie screening; Relaxation Station for fall finals period; Hot Chocolate bar; Afterschool Poetry Reading; Vision Board making; Valentine Candy Grams (partnered with NAHS club); To All the Boys I've Loved Before: P.S. I Still Love You screening; Art and Activism Trivia; March Madness (with prizes for those with the most accurate picks); 2020 Primary Info Session

Bulletin Boards, Displays, & Promotions

- Promotions/Campaigns
 - Book recommendations for National Latinx/Hispanic Heritage Month; Inktober Display and day-by-day prompts; NaNoWriMo; Day of Silence prompt as well as 'what does your school library mean to you?' in the Community Forum (students answer via post-it); Countdown to Winter Break (with chances to win prizes); Find Pickles (the library mascot)!
- Displays
 - New Books Wall—updated all year around; National Comic Book Day; 'If you like this book, then try this!' book displays; LGBTQIA+ History Month; What Would Lizzo Read; Horror/Thriller/Spooky Reads; Heist Reads; Learn about Contemporary Native American Leaders; Warm Up with a Good Book; Star Wars Character Recommendations; TV/Book pairings; Best Books of 2019; Notable Black Figures From Around the World; Graphic Novels By/About Black People; Blind Date With a Book; Oscar Ballots; Books by/about the trans and gender nonconforming experience; Women We Look Up To; Women In Science Fiction; Astro Reads

Statistical Profile

• Facilities

Total user seating:

4 circular tables that accommodate 4 people each

2 rectangular tables that accommodate 5 people each

1 rectangular table that accommodates 8 people

1 square table that accommodates 8 people

4 study carrels that accommodate 1 person each

1 individual desk that accommodates 1 person

4 public workstation or index tables that accommodate 1 person each

10 informal, individual chairs

Number of hours open to the public per week:

Summer II 2019: 0

Fall 2019: 42.5

Spring 2020: 42.5 (until post-Spring Break, when most units were closed until further notice—however, due to school being in session, staff members were still available in a virtual capacity)

Summer I 2020: 0 hours

*Note that the Uni calendar does not correspond exactly to the University calendar. Uni is still in full session (42.5 hours/week) during part of Summer I.

• **Personnel**

DoMonique Arnold (Academic Professional) (August 2016 – present)

Paul Kotheimer (Senior Library Specialist) (February 22, 2010 – present)

Cynthia Medrano Torres(Graduate Assistant) (50%) (August 17, 2019-May 10, 2020) (also served as a Graduate Hourly from May 11, 2020 until August 15, 2020)

User Services

- **Gate count** (extrapolated from FY19 Sweeps Week DeskTracker report for Uni's 18-week semesters): FY2019 Gate count: 19,184 (down by 1,054 from FY18)

- **Circulation (from Voyager circulation reports)**

Charges: 3261 (up by 347 from FY18)

Renewals: 3369

Discharges: 3281

- **Reference questions: 1,040***

*Please note that this data is extrapolated from two stretches of time in the year, during which students had one day off at the University Laboratory High School

Circulation of electronic equipment

DIGITAL VIDEO RECORDERS

"TOTAL PRO" DLSR camera/camcorder	76
Other Canon Camcorders	32
Sony Bloggies	0
Camcorders, total	108
WACOM tablets	43
Headphones	498
Loanable laptops	253
Podcasting kit	7
ZOOM audio recorder	18
Tech accessories	11
Art supplies	41
Digital still cameras	0
iPads (faculty use only)	1

Journalism class equipment	5
Socials Studies class equipment	2

Presentations

Number of presentations to groups: 297 (including Computer Literacy 1 and 2) (down by 73 from FY19)*

Number of participants in group presentations: 5,598** (including Computer Literacy 1 and 2)

*Due to the school shifting to a block schedule (to facilitate transitioning to online school), the number of sessions would be smaller, yet longer in length.

**Many of the presentations had overlapping groups, due to the nature of the school, which is something to consider when looking at that number

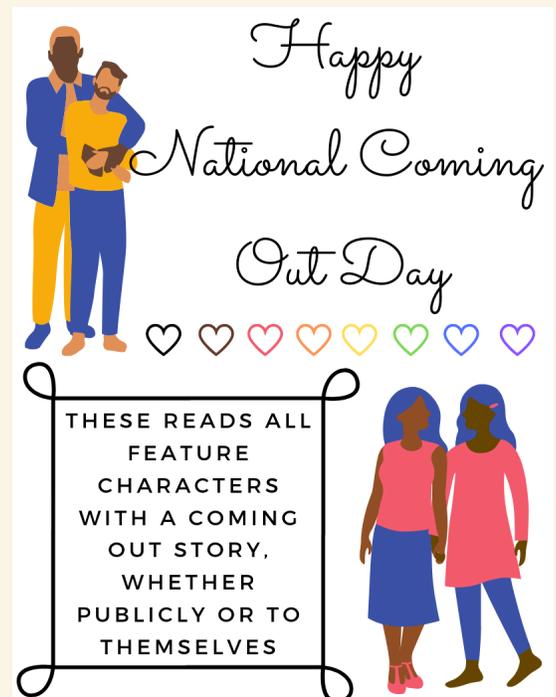
Appendices:

Appendix A: Uni Library in action



This Lizzo-inspired book display was a popular talking point among the students, and the accompanying book marks were often used.

An example of signage we had in the library on National Coming Out Day. Through our programming and signage, we are always striving to make the library an inclusive space, in particular for marginalized populations.



Here are two subfreshmen working with our new podcasting kits.



Sugar skulls were generously donated by La Casa Cultural Latina, and the event held to decorate them and discuss the cultural importance of Día De Los Muertos was well attended.



Sasha Velour, an alum of Uni High, came to visit the library for Sasha Velour Day



Uni High students gathered for the screening of Sasha Velour's winning moment on Ru Paul's Drag Race.



Signage for when we had the League of Women Voters in the library to help Seniors register to vote.

Zines were incorporated into the Subfresmen Computer Literacy 1 curriculum, as well as during Agora Days during February.



Dungeon Letters

February—2020

The Uni High Library Newsletter

"If art doesn't make us better, then what on earth is it for?" — Alice Walker

Pic of the Month

We ended January with a vision board making station. One student designed a to-do list, which she made reusable by laminating it— so smart!

On Display

In the hallway: Learn about notable Black figures in the library world.

In the library:

- Oscars ballots
- Graphic novels by/about Black people
- Blind date with a book



Students creating vision boards using construction paper, stickers, and markers.

SLAC Meeting

Come to the library on Tuesday, 2/25, during lunch for our monthly SLAC'ers meeting.

Coding Competition

Calling all levels of coding expertise to participate in Uni Code's first ever coding competition on 2/24 during Uni Period.

Tech Update

We've got new equipment for podcasting, photos, videos, and more. Here's what's new:

- Pro quality microphone
- Mic stand
- USB audio interface
- NEW DSLR camera
- Light-weight gimbal

Stop by and ask Paul for details, and then borrow one and take it for a test-drive!

Upcoming Events!

Love is in the Air!

From 2/10–2/14, we are partnering with the National Art Honor Society to do Valentine Candy Grams! We will have a valentine-making station set up all week, and NAHS will deliver your notes!

Join us for a screening of *To All the Boys: P.S. I Still Love You* 2/12-2/14 during lunch.

Want to hear some tales of dating woes, romance, or just life in general? Come listen to teachers share their tales on 2/28 during Uni Period.

Know an activist trivia

Test your knowledge of Art and Activism on 2/26 during Uni Period in celebration of Black Futures Month.

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