

UNIVERSITY HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY ANNUAL REPORT FY2021

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: Native American and Othered Literature, Poetry Explication, 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 communication tools, computer programming, and cybersecurity. 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/>. While teaching virtually throughout the entire 2020-2021 school year was challenging, it also afforded the opportunity for many pedagogical and technological innovations (such as more gamified curriculum). More details on this can be found in the librarian's teaching dossier.

The Computer Literacy 2 teaching team continuously refines the requirements for the 9-week independent group projects. We have intentionally taken more time to help students not only with their project proposals, but with the formation of healthy group dynamics. Student 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, largely based on 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 visual novel (with original music, illustrations, and an

immense amount of coding), creation of a short animation (also with original music), an interactive game created on the popular Discord platform, and short documentary based on real historical events.

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. Schoepfle has persisted over the past few years. Due to the entirety of the school year being virtual, this collaboration was not as in-depth as it has been in past years.

CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

The Uni High library unit, through the efforts of Paul Kotheimer in particular, has been integral in gathering and organizing a multitude of archival materials for the Uni High Alumni Office. Much of these archival materials will be presented at the official University of Illinois Laboratory High School Centennial Celebration, the kick-off of which will begin in Fall 2021.

ZINES

English teacher Dr. Ernstmeyer plans to do another zine collaboration with the library. Complementary events are usually planned with Zine Librarian Kathryn La Barre. Due to the events of COVID-19, that collaboration will be pushed back until Fall 2021.

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 has 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,
- Monthly meetings of SLAC'ers (the Student Library Advisory Committee)
- Escape Room collaboration (a special distanced version developed due to Covid-19)
- Uni Reads collaboration with MPAG (Multicultural Parent Advisory Group) - New Kid Book Discussion
- Queer Lit Book Club collaboration with Spectrum Club - books over the spring were *We Are Okay*, *I Wish You All the Best*, and *Check, Please!*

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, virtual display making, and in the area of collection development. 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, LGTBQIA+ awareness, and so forth). We always strive to make our programs as student-driven as possible.

Technology

Early on in the 2020-21 school year, Senior Library Specialist Paul Kotheimer consulted with Dr. Valerie O'Brien, Uni High's coordinator of Equity and Public Engagement, as the school coordinated loanable technology to provide to students and staff who needed to upgrade their home setups to participate fully in online classes and other virtual events via Zoom. Paul helped the school acquire long-term loans of GoPro portable cameras and lavalier microphones from Undergrad Library Media Commons loanable tech collection as the school coordinated funding for a more permanent solution. Paul also helped the school choose appropriate tech for the task, settling on Logitech C270 USB webcams. Loans of those webcams were managed by Uni High Library on behalf of the school.

Uni High Library also administered a locker pickup system for loanable tech loans and returns, circulating cameras and camcorders, drawing tablets, and other devices from its own collection via that system, as well as loanable webcams.

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, and the shift was made to have the senior library specialist serve on this), Subfreshman Teacher meetings, Freshman Teacher meetings, and Central Public Services Division meeting (when able). The librarian contributed to efforts in searches for new Computer Science teachers. 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-19 Update

As August 2020 approached, the Uni High administrative team announced that the academic year would be conducted entirely online. As a library, we adapted to this change as best we could. We arranged for a locker pick-up system for those instances where students had need of the physical book. The librarian, the graduate assistant, and (occasionally) the senior library specialist dropped into Zoom classes to assist with research questions. We continued to ramp up our online presence via social media and online availability. 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. However, this assessment process was de-emphasized during this year of virtual schooling.

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

Charlie Newman-Johnson was hired for this school year, and he did an amazing job making connections with the high school students and the Uni High faculty, despite having a virtual school year. Luckily, the graduate assistant already knew many of the faculty due to being an alum.

We also hired Charlie as a Graduate Hourly for the summer, and were able to offer virtual summer programming as we did the previous summer. This is quite a pivot from the approach in years prior, which has been to cease programming in the summer. However, due to the emotional and academic benefits of the programming, 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.

- 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.
- Planning for the Parable Path Community Book Read, focused on Octavia Butler's *Parable of the Sower* and celebrating the arrival of *Parable of the Sower: The Opera*, commenced in Spring 2021, and the Uni High Library librarian regularly went to these meetings.
- 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 (although he did retire in the past year).

5. Progress on last year's goals:

- 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).
Update: We did not acquire any new databases, but we did try out the K-12 Swank Movie Licensing program for the year, and we intentionally sought to acquire more e-books and audiobooks when building the collection.
- 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.
Update: We developed two additional online modules for classes last year, with plan to do more of this the current academic 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.
Update: We started a library Discord server, which was very popular and a useful tool for engagement over the course of the virtual school year. Much of our efforts are documented through our notes on weekly staff discussions, as well as through the Discord server itself.
- We hope to expand on our existing collaboration with other library units, in terms of both programming and instruction.
Update: Due to the current shift of merging the Undergraduate Library with the

Research and Information Services Unit, this expansion will be inevitable in the 2021-2022 school year.

- We also need to develop appropriate metrics to measure success in a virtual environment. Update: We have the statistics from our social media pages, as well as reports from our various Zoom sessions. In retrospect, we could have gathered more qualitative information, and we will consider that for library assessment in the future.

6. Unit annual goals for FY21

The Uni High Librarian advises the following for 2021-2022:

- The MakerSpace is being more utilized by the school, due to a new hire in the Computer Science department; more collaborative efforts should be established between the MakerSpace and library programming.
- We will continue to experiment with some virtual elements of our library programming (such as having virtual trivia events).
- We hope to continue and improve upon our existing collaboration with other library units, in terms of both programming and instruction. It would be wonderful to see our current partnerships to extend into the broader community as well.
- There are a sizable number of new faculty at the school; outreach efforts should target these new faculty especially, and making sure they are utilizing the library in their classes.
- We can make an effort to gather more qualitative feedback from our high school and faculty users this year. We are under special circumstances of starting off a new school year after not being in the building in a long time, so it is a time for a reassessment of some of our longstanding practices (levels of quiet in every room, and so forth).

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 Charlie Newman-Johnson were as follows:

Library Administration

- Assisted with collection development—researching new acquisitions
- Maintained circulation of books in and out of new books section, via our locker system
- Maintained the Uni High Library Blog and Discord Server

Instruction and Instruction Support

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

Publicity

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

Events & Programming

Programming from the past year: Subject specific Discord Trivia events (for example, Percy Jackson); Pet Contest; NaNoWriMo library facilitated writing group; Virtual Board games hangout; Craft Hour; partnering with Spectrum Club to form the Queer Lit Book Club (described in more detail earlier in this report); Escape Room committee; Dungeons and Dragons virtual campaign

Bulletin Boards, Displays, & Promotions

- Promotions/Campaigns
 - Book recommendations for National Latinx/Hispanic Heritage Month; NaNoWriMo Celebration for those who completed the challenge; Holiday Book Surprise Pick-Up; Fat Bear Week Bracket filling challenge; Blind Date with a Book; March Mammal Madness;
- Virtual Displays

- National Comic Book Day; LGBTQIA+ History Month; What to Read; Black Futures Month

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

Most of this was not used by staff or students for the majority of the year due to virtual teaching.

Number of hours open to the public per week:

Summer II 2020: 0

Fall 2020: 0

Spring 2020: 0

Summer I 2020: 0 hours

- **Personnel**

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

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

Charlie Newman-Johnson (Graduate Assistant) (50%) (August 16, 2020-present)

User Services

- **Gate count** (extrapolated from FY19 Sweeps Week DeskTracker report for Uni’s 18-week semesters): FY2020 Gate count: N/A

- **Circulation By Collection**

Biography	1
Fiction	228
Graphic Novels	63
New Books	28
Reserves Non-circulating	3
Stacks	112

Uni High Circulation total: 435

- **Circulation By Circulation Desk**

Charges: 190

- **Reference questions: 163***

*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

Presentations

Number of presentations to groups: 148* (including Computer Literacy 1 and 2)

Number of participants in group presentations: 4,649**

*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 Programming



To kick off the new school year, we had students come and just craft while we played music. It was well-attended—students were craving connection with other teens at this point in the pandemic.

Despite the difficulties of the past virtual school year, we were able to successfully launch an in-person, socially distanced Escape Room. It was named the John B. Garvey Escape Room, to honor a Uni High teacher who had just passed away.





We had students writing furiously to finish for NaNoWriMo; two of the writing group finished their novels successfully!



Our library advisory group comprised of students were invaluable during this time of online learning. We are grateful that they still chose to engage with the library!

Dungeon Letters

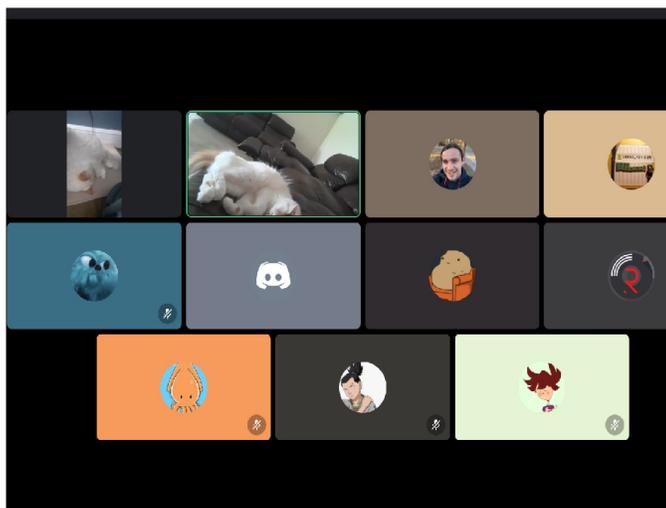
October—2020

The Uni High Library Newsletter

HAPPY SPOOKY MONTH!

Pic of the Month

At the end of our Discord kick-off event, we got two sleepy cats on camera at once during the pet contest! Congratulations to the trivia winners and thanks to everyone who came and made it a fun virtual event.



What to Read

Display On the Blog:

From Far Away— Books (and one video game) about connection across distance. 2020 has been lonely at times, but even when we're far apart we can still be together.

Title to Watch

Blazewrath Games by Amparo Ortiz comes this month to a library near you (especially the Uni Library, but the public libraries as well). If all you wanted as a kid was to play Quidditch, this magical sporting event might be the book for you! Review to follow as soon as Charlie gets his mitts on it.

Coming Soon

Latinx Heritage Month runs from September 15th to October 15th, and we'll have a display of our favorites by Latinx authors this week!

Fat Bear Week!

Fat Bear week just ended, with the final round of voting on Tuesday the 6th. Curious what this was about? [Find out more!](#)

SLAC Meeting

Join us on **Monday the 12th at Lunch** in the [Uni Library Zoom](#). All are welcome!

It's hard to be a cat in 2020! Gotta get some extra naps in.

Upcoming Events!

Halloween! Trivia!

Halloween is coming, and so is NaNoWriMo. (Event times will be announced via discord, but mark your calendar for these days)

- **10/14 Trivia is back!**— Join us on Wednesday the 16th for some more trivia on the Discord. More book trivia and more Google races!
- **10/21 NaNoWriMo Prep Event**— thinking about doing NaNoWriMo this year? Join us to talk strategy, trade tips, and tell us about your ideas
- **10/29 SpOoOoOky Trivia and a movie**— Test your Halloween knowledge, then hang out for a Halloween movie. We'll have three choices for those present to vote on! BYOP(opcorn)

Book Pickup

Uni students can now request books more easily, as long as they're in the Uni Collection. [Email Paul](#) with your request for up to ten books.

