From My Vantage Point

Message from Marianne Gaunt

Dear Friends,

It’s been a busy time for the Libraries. This issue describes several initiatives that have engaged the Libraries over the last year and have come to fruition recently. I hope you enjoy reading about them.

We are now immersed in planning for the integration of the University of Medicine and Dentistry (minus their School of Osteopathic Medicine) into Rutgers. The Boards of Governors and Trustees recently approved the integration, but there are many pieces that need to come together on Day 1, July 1, 2013, and thereafter. The Libraries are actively engaged in these discussions and planning. We hope to bring the two library systems together to create one outstanding library that spans the disciplines of a great university.

There are many subscriptions for databases and journals that need to be integrated and reconciled, and our catalogs, circulation and acquisition systems will merge into one. Each institution brings strengths to the other and we plan to capitalize on these strengths. Medical libraries, for example, have been leaders in the use of mobile devices for access...

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Partnership

SPRING 2013

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 1

Librarian demonstrates ‘Jersey Roots and Global Reach’ in Liberia

By Martin Kesselman, Agriculture and Life Sciences Librarian

I am very grateful that I can use my experience and knowledge of 27 years at the Rutgers University Libraries to help out in Liberia, Africa. Since 1991, I have been active in global librarianship when I received a Fulbright award to work in the United Kingdom at Brunel University in West London and got involved with the International Federation of Library Associations. So when the opportunity arose to participate in a USAID (US Agency for International Development) grant, EHELD (Excellence in Higher Education for Liberian Development), I jumped at it. EHELD involves building two Centers for Excellence in the country, one for engineering at the University of Liberia and the other for agriculture at Cuttington University. As the librarian liaison to the Rutgers’ School of Environmental and Biological Sciences and with degrees in Forest Biology and Botany, it was the perfect fit.

Librarians typically look at the landscape in a very holistic way. In today’s rapidly changing digital environment, librarians no longer just bring people and information together; they also bring people together with other people with information. Once I became part of the grant’s research team with Rutgers Prof. James Simon of Plant Sciences and Prof. Bala Balaguru of Civil Engineering, co-Principal Investigators on the EHELD grant, I got to work. I saw my role as much more than just creating libraries for engineering and agriculture at the two institutions; I also became involved in developing the agriculture curriculum at Cuttington University, keeping the EHELD team abreast of developments in Liberia such as President Sirleaf...

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Martin Kesselman, left, stands with University of Michigan Engineering Librarian Paul Grochowski outside the Engineering Building at the University of Liberia.
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to information; research universities have developed sophisticated digital repositories. Together we can create a responsive environment for information content and services to serve our students and faculty even more effectively than before. Our overall goal on Day 1 is to ensure that nobody experiences any diminished service as a result of the integration, but over the first year we expect our users to already experience a positive change in how the libraries serve them.

A second important initiative is the university’s entry into the Big Ten conference, and as a result, we will also become members of their Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC). The CIC is the academic arm of the conference and there is a Library Directors Committee that is actively engaged in collaborative activities. While we will not become members immediately, the CIC Library Directors are working on shared resources, collective purchases, a shared print repository, and technology innovations. The Rutgers University Libraries can bring much to the table and benefit from these collaborations as well. As news unfolds, we will report it to our many supporters in Partnership!

Librarian demonstrates ‘Jersey Roots and Global Reach’ in Liberia
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Johnson’s “back to the country” initiative, and helping Emmet Dennis, President of University of Liberia and former Dean of University College at Rutgers, to recruit a new University Librarian and to help to revamp their library school.

I have also been able to leverage my work in EHELD and that has led to a grant from the Engineering Information Foundation being included in another major USAID project, PROSPER (People, Rules, and Organizations Supporting the Protection of Ecosystem Resources). Connie Wu, the engineering librarian for Rutgers, and I also obtained a grant entitled EAKO, Engineering Access to Knowledge Offline. The EAKO System we developed, based on the California Digital Library’s XTF software, does not require Internet access, up to now a major limitation in Liberia. EAKO also provides access to approximately 3000 full-text journal articles and 500 ebooks. We got the idea from the Mann Library at Cornell University that has developed a very successful offline library for agriculture, TEEAL (The Essential Electronic Agriculture Library) that incudes access to 300 full-text journals from 1999 to one year before the present. Not only did we create EAKO to network at the University of Liberia, we also networked TEEAL along with 500 free e-books in agriculture we selected with the help of a Rutgers School of Communication and Information intern, at Cuttington University. We are planning to experiment with tablets, many of which are now well under $100. With tablets, students can download e-books and articles and the tablets can be circulated by the library, a much less expensive option than purchasing, shipping, and cataloging printed books. New websites such as Bookboon.com offer free e-textbooks on all subjects and we will be encouraging faculty at the two universities to make use of these free resources. New books are critical for faculty and students. Some think that donating old books and old computers to Africa is helpful. However, that thinking just adds to the digital and learning divides between Africa and the rest of the world.

Finally, my work in Liberia has increased my understanding about the role of academic and public libraries in Africa and in developing countries worldwide. There is definitely an ecosystem of knowledge where research from universities is distilled to public libraries, which makes knowledge and information available to the communities they serve, for literacy, sustainable agriculture practices, health information, civic information, and education. The beyondaccess.net movement supported by IREX, Gates, IFLA, and many other organizations demonstrates how public libraries power development in much of the world. Currently Liberia has a single public library in Monrovia, the capital city. Working with Michael Weah, the director of the We Care Library, Rita Pschorr, the librarian at the US Embassy, and Kenneth Best, publisher of the Liberian Daily Observer newspaper, and helping to spread the word will hopefully lead to increased attention to the need for more libraries in Liberia. We have already been able to gain the attention of a major charity in the United Kingdom. If the organization agrees to work in Liberia, it will develop and increase capacity building projects, such as educating librarians, improving access to the Internet, improving access to content, and improving library infrastructures.

I have also learned that it takes a concerted effort and a community of many universities and individuals to make things happen in Liberia. We, along with other library partners, can be a major force in Liberia’s continued development.

Marianne
Through the dedicated efforts of one man, a wealth of rare and valuable materials about minorities in the Middle East has been saved, collected, and brought together into one comprehensive collection. Through a recently developed partnership with the Rutgers University Libraries, that collection will be preserved digitally and made broadly available to the worldwide scholarly community.

George A. Kiraz comes from a family with a rich background of involvement in Middle East history. His great-great uncle Thomas and great uncle Giragos were skilled scribes of Syriac liturgical manuscripts. Syriac is a dialect of Aramaic that was commonly used throughout the Middle East, from the 5th through the 14th centuries. His father Anton, an immigrant from Southeast Turkey to Palestine in the 1920’s, was a prominent businessman in Bethlehem who discovered the Talpiot ossuaries in Jerusalem in 1945 and helped acquire the first four Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947.

While engaged in post-graduate study in computer science at the University of Cambridge in 1992 George Kiraz noted, with growing concern, that there was lack of any organized effort to preserve and collect publications that illuminate the proud history of Syriac culture as well as the history and culture of other Middle East minorities. Motivated both by pride in his heritage and a determination to assist in its preservation, he founded Beth Mardutho [Syriac for ‘house of knowledge’]: The Syriac Institute whose aim was to advance the field of Syriac academic studies through the use of computer technology.

Over the intervening two decades that followed, and with the financial support of friends and colleagues, Kiraz has built a vast private collection of books and manuscripts, which forms the heart of the Beth Mardutho Research Library (BMRL). The BMRL has also acquired two other significant collections of private scholarly libraries, including a significant collection of rare materials from Abrohom Nuro and an extensive library devoted to commentary on the Gospels).

• A collection of ethnic newspapers published by immigrants in New Jersey in the early 20th century, in different languages that all used the Syriac script.
• Ta'arikh suriyyah, by Yusuf al-Dibs, an eight-volume history of Syria from ancient times to the Ottoman Period, in Arabic.
• Books on Peshitta, one of the earliest translations of the Old Testament into a language other than Hebrew. The translation, into Syriac, was prepared by Syriac Jews.
• Cassette recordings of the liturgies of the Oriental Orthodox Christians of the Middle East and South Asia in their native languages.
• Over 15,000 letters and telegrams from a rare library in the Middle East, from the mid-1850s to the 1930s.

The Beth Mardutho Research Library primarily holds texts in Syriac, Arabic, English, French, German, Greek, and Latin. The library also contains publications in less-common languages such as Aramaic, Armenian, Coptic, Malayalam, and Turkish.

In addition to the resources of the research library, Beth Mardutho: The Syriac Institute also publishes an online, peer-reviewed journal dedicated to the scholarly study of Syriac called Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies, featuring articles pertaining to Syriac literature, religion, history, and culture along with critical book reviews that pertain to Syriac studies. Moreover, Beth Mardutho sponsors the publication of other scholarly resources devoted to Syriac, such as the recently released Gorgias Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Syriac Heritage. This work, over a decade in the making, includes over 600 entries written by more than 70 scholars from around the world.

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The libraries on the New Brunswick/Piscataway campuses offered a variety of activities during the week before and the week of finals in December to help students relieve stress and focus on their studies. Judging from the strong response, the Libraries’ offerings were a huge hit.

Libraries activities included:

- Pet a Puppy sessions, offered in conjunction with the RU Seeing Eye Puppy Raising Club, in the Alexander, Douglass, and Kilmer libraries, and the Library of Science and Medicine;
- Free cups of coffee coupon giveaways in the Alexander Library to promote the Scarlet Latte Café;
- Free gentle back rubs, offered in conjunction with the RU Stressbusters club, at the Alexander, Douglass, and Kilmer libraries, and the Library of Science and Medicine;
- Free coffee and tea in the evenings at the Library of the Science and Medicine;
- A ‘Make and mail your own holiday card’ session, conducted by Art Librarian Megan Lotts, in the Kilmer Library.

The Libraries were pleased to have raised students’ spirits and calmed their nerves during the last critical days of the semester.
monique r. @monilove8791
They have masseuses in the library...Rutgers is fancy
Retweeted by RutgersUnivLibraries
Expand

Eugene McDermott @emcderm
Free large coffees and massages at Alexander Library!? Pretty clutch
@RULibraries, pretty clutch!
Retweeted by RutgersUnivLibraries
Expand

Tamir Arusy @tamirarusy
Free coffee? and now Free back massages? Alexander library you really outdone yourself
Retweeted by RutgersUnivLibraries
Expand

Rutgers H.O.P.E. @RHSOPE
Student Wellness! props 2 Alexander RT @tamirarusy: Free coffee? and now Free back massages? Alexander library you really outdone yourself
Retweeted by RutgersUnivLibraries
Expand

Lauren Green @IgreenWP Soccer
Oh rutgers, you amuse me with all the finals week things going on (stress buster events and free coffee coupons in the library)
Retweeted by RutgersUnivLibraries
Expand

Brooke Ellentuck @BrookeEllentuck
Rutgers finally doing something right: having this nug in the library to help relieve stress pic.twitter.com/WzarglB2
Retweeted by RutgersUnivLibraries
View photo
In December the Libraries celebrated the 75th anniversary of publication of The Journal of the Rutgers University Libraries. The Journal is the longest running scholarly-oriented publication of the Rutgers University Libraries and one of the oldest scholarly publications at Rutgers.

The Journal of the Rutgers University Libraries was launched in December 1937. It featured greetings from then Rutgers President Robert Clothier and articles on “Century-old textbooks in the Rutgers Library,” “History of the Library,” “Notes from the Library” on significant new acquisitions, and other articles. Over the intervening 75 years the Journal has been led by a succession of nine editors, and has undergone a few changes in style and subject matter. What has remained constant is a focus on printing articles that would elicit the interest and inquiry of scholars on a range of topics.

In 2005 the editor of the Journal, Associate University Librarian for Collection Development and Management Robert Sewell, recognized the growing significance of online access to scholarly works and initiated an effort to create an online counterpart to the Journal. All previous issues as well as the current issue can now be viewed as the current issue can now be viewed.

Rutgers’ University Senate votes to make Rutgers research freely accessible to public

With one vote in mid-October, the Rutgers University Senate moved Rutgers into a growing list of preeminent universities that are expanding access for scholars, and regular citizens, to scholarship produced at their schools.

The Rutgers University Senate is a university-wide deliberative body consisting of representatives of Rutgers faculty, staff, administrators, and alumni. The Senate considers matters of general University interest and makes recommendations to the University administration on those matters.

At their October 19th meeting the University Senate overwhelmingly approved a resolution, proposed by the Open Access Subcommittee, that states that the university should establish, in conjunction with University Counsel, a University-wide Open Access policy wherein Rutgers faculty and scholars, including graduate students and postdoctoral researchers, shall provide open access to all works that are produced without expectation of payment, subject to waivers and embargoes upon request by an individual author for a specific work. In his address to the Senate later in the meeting, Rutgers University President Robert Barchi spoke in support of the resolution.

The open access resolution puts Rutgers on a path to making the scholarly research, scientific discoveries, and intellectual output of Rutgers faculty, post-docs, and grad students readily available to New Jersey citizens and to scholars across the globe. By placing copies of their work in RUcore, the university’s institutional open-access repository, Rutgers scholars will place their work in one place at the university where it can be easily discovered by Google, Google Scholar, and other commonly used search engines.

Previous to the adoption of this policy a substantial portion of Rutgers scholarship has been available only in scientific or professional journals that charge steep fees for regular subscriptions or access to specific articles. Adoption of this policy should lead to greater visibility for Rutgers scholarship, increased use of these works by other scholars, and greater acclaim for the university.

Universities such as Harvard, MIT, the University of California at San Francisco, Cornell, Duke, Stanford, Princeton, and the University of Kansas have taken similar steps to open access to their school’s scholarship.

Members of the Open Access Subcommittee are Jane Otto, Media and Music Metadata Librarian (Chair); Robert M. Goodman, Executive Dean of the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences; Victor Greenhut, Professor of Materials Science and Engineering; Jerome J. Kukor, Dean of the Graduate School in New Brunswick; Laura Bowering Mullen, Behavioral Sciences Librarian and Co-Chair of the Rutgers University Libraries Committee on Scholarly Communication; and John Ottomanelli, Ph.D. candidate in Global Affairs in the Graduate School of Newark.

For more information on the effects of the University Senate’s open access resolution, or on the RUcore repository developed and maintained by the Rutgers University Libraries, contact Jane Otto at jotto@rulmail.rutgers.edu or at 848-445-5950. To read the full University Senate resolution, go to: http://senate.rutgers.edu/RGPEConS1103onOpenAccessOctober2012.pdf
RU Libraries partner with Syriac Institute, to preserve and promote collections on Middle-East minorities

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What Beth Mardutho: The Syriac Institute has lacked is both a connection to a respected institution of higher education and the means of conducting large-scale digital preservation of its rare materials. Both shortcomings have been removed through a partnership the institute formed this spring with the Rutgers University Libraries.

Through the agreement signed between the two parties, the Libraries will digitally archive, preserve, and make publically accessible all works in the Beth Mardutho: The Syriac Institute in the public domain (that have no copyright restrictions). The works will become part of RUcore, an open access institutional repository that makes the significant intellectual property of Rutgers University faculty and Rutgers University departments, centers, and institutes permanently and freely accessible for scholars and researchers around the globe.

The Libraries will also provide facilities for conferences and symposia organized or cosponsored by the Beth Mardutho: The Syriac Institute and will provide storage space for rare print materials of the institute.

The Rutgers University Libraries are delighted with this new partnership, in recognition that access to the materials of Beth Mardutho: The Syriac Institute will significantly enhance the resources available for scholarly study of ancient history, the Middle East, languages, and religion at Rutgers. Middle Eastern Studies faculty members at Rutgers have already praised the Beth Mardutho: The Syriac Institute, noting that: “The research library includes a number of rare works such as manuscripts, rare editions, and books printed by now defunct Middle East publishing houses. Because of this, many of the books in can not be found in any other library, including the libraries of Princeton and Harvard.

… The Beth Mardutho Research Library will directly address the academic interests and needs of Rutgers faculty and students across four departments and three programs, as well as students in a wide array of cultural and religious organizations. And with access to these materials, the university will be in a much stronger position to seek external funding for these areas in the future.”

Janice T. Pilch, Copyright and Licensing Librarian at the Rutgers University Libraries, commented: "The Beth Mardutho Research Library holds a very interesting and valuable collection of material on Syriac heritage and language, and the languages, histories, cultures and traditions of the Middle East’s minorities. To see the physical collection is to realize how much care and effort it took to amass this unique material. It is a great privilege for the Rutgers University Libraries to partner with the Syriac Institute in this project that will benefit scholars across the world."

For more information about Beth Mardutho: The Syriac Institute, please see: www.bethmardutho.org

For more information about RUcore, please see: rucore.libraries.rutgers.edu/

Libraries’ scholarly publication reaches major milestone

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The online counterpart to the Journal has been remarkably successful, with 78,000 views of articles as of September 2012 and an average of 1,000 article views per week.

University Librarian visits RU Foundation’s Annual Fund callers

In November Vice President for Information Services and University Librarian Marianne Gaunt visited with the student callers at the Rutgers University Foundation’s annual fund. Marianne offered an update from the Libraries, answered students questions, and thanked them for their efforts to raise funds for the Libraries.
GIVE AND RECEIVE

Your generous support enables the RUTGERS UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES to advance student learning and faculty research. From building and preserving our collections to providing inviting spaces for study, you can make the difference of a lifetime.

For more information on gift annuities to benefit the Rutgers University Libraries, please call 732-932-7505.

Rutgers University Foundation is the fundraising arm of Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey.