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The President’s Column

Recently I was asked why celebrities and speakers veer into politics or social justice or faith when on stage. I explained about using their platform to advance or address topics of importance to them. It got me thinking about our own platform and how we are using it. It has been known as far back as I remember that librarians and library workers collect, enjoy, and share stories – as long as they aren’t our own. We talk up the latest releases and give great readers advisory to get our community members onto a new author or genre. We advise them to check out the best database for their next paper. We tend to focus on everyone we serve, but forget that our stories are important, too. This led me to remember a conversation at LLX with Sam Helmick regarding our stories. In fact, their platform is Our Stories Are Worth Sharing. Now, this isn’t a political ad or me endorsing a candidate. It is, however, me using this platform to remind us of all that we all have an opportunity to share our library values with our communities.

I challenge us all to DARE to share our stories. Be brave and visit your local civic club and share what your library is doing. Schedule that sit-down meeting with your stakeholders and decision makers. Share the story of the gentlemen coming in to use the computer and internet to apply for, interview for, receive, and then accept an offer for a job. Share the story of the young family coming in to check out DVDs because they don’t have sufficient broadband access. Share the story of the student using a study area to prepare for the MCAT. Share the story of a colleague being recognized at your library association for publishing a book, for sharing a poem, for volunteering to donate gently used items to the VA, decorate the bulletin board, and more. Just Dare to share.

“Power is given to those who dare to lower themselves and pick it up. Only one thing matters, one thing; to be able to dare!” - Fyodor Dostoevsky

Crystal Gates
North Little Rock Public Library System
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Interested in joining SELA or need to renew your membership?
SELA has special new member and student rates.
One thrilling activity within academic librarianship is the publication of written works in a book or journal. For me the excitement remains the same for publishing a solo or collaborative piece, an essay, book review, book chapter, or research article. Personally, my activity in writing and publishing occurred only in the last decade, i.e. late in my career. Even though authoring publications was not required for librarians, working in an academic setting (where promotion in the other academic departments required published research) pushed me towards achieving the same goal. In the process of writing and publishing, I gained invaluable experience that helped me grow professionally.

This is why encouraging librarians to write for professional journals is a worthwhile endeavor and provides numerous and far-reaching benefits. Accumulating a body of written works adds to the credibility of a librarian’s expertise. In writing, the author shares experiences and knowledge they have acquired, and the rest of us learn from reading their findings and conclusions. Professional writing on a topic does not exist in a vacuum but contributes to an ongoing conversation on that subject. Before embarking on a writing project, savvy authors consult related professional journal publications to research trending topics before embarking on a new project, creating a survey, or seeking new engagement strategies. Writing for publication should expand and build upon the understanding of a research topic. Library research articles ideally generate discussion, growth, and inspiration.

The purpose of New Voices, the Southeastern Library Association’s paper writing award is to promote writing to librarians early in their career. The call for papers invites professional librarians with less than five years of experience to submit a research paper for consideration. The author whose paper is selected will receive $200 from an EBSCO sponsored award, earn a poster presentation slot in the SELA conference, and have their paper published in SELn, the Southeastern Library Association’s peer reviewed journal. Papers written collaboratively are accepted as long as the authors all meet the eligibility criteria.
Government Documents for All:
PS or Preventive Maintenance Monthly

By Tim Dodge, History & Political Science Librarians, Professor, Auburn University
Chair, Government Documents Roundtable (GODORT)

One of the more intriguing government documents, in my opinion, is PS: Preventive Maintenance Monthly (D 101.87: ). Published by the Army through the Government Printing Office, later, Government Publishing Office, from 1951 through 2019, PS (also known as PS Magazine, the title varies) was, essentially, a monthly comic book filled with preventive maintenance instructions and tips for everything from guns to trucks to tanks. Before the reader thinks this is simply of interest to military technology enthusiasts, let me note there is plenty here of human interest and that a sociologist or a psychiatrist might have some choice things to say about what was portrayed in PS and how.

When I started working at Auburn University as a Government Documents Reference Librarian in 1992, I quickly discovered PS since one of my duties was processing shipments of government documents as they arrived. Not being a military veteran, PS was new to me. I recall being simultaneously amused and impressed. Amused, because the magazine featured anthropomorphic talking equipment and military personnel characters that featured suspiciously attractive looking females. The magazine also seemed to be straining a bit to include sufficient numbers of non-white characters as well. However, I was impressed by the good advice being presented on how to properly maintain military equipment. This was non-technical but well-phrased advice on how to maintain such equipment: things to watch out for, when to take certain steps (like oil changes, for example), and good precautionary advice in using equipment and vehicles. PS is not the same thing as the numerous and far more detailed Department of Defense Technical Manual series where the advanced mechanic or engineer will find very technical information.

PS was started in 1951 in the middle of the Korean War and in an era rather different from our own. Unlike today’s Army which actively recruits women, and which now includes women in combat roles, the Army of 1951 was overwhelmingly male. I mention this because, the female personnel portrayed in PS in the 1950s were even more blatantly drawn to appeal to the male viewer than those suspiciously attractive female characters I saw in the magazine in the 1990s.

Virginia Commonwealth University has created an online archive featuring images of the magazine covering the period 1951-1971 (see https://digital.library.vcu.edu/islandora/object/vcu%3Apsp). The cover of the third issue available, August 1951, perfectly illustrates this appeal to the magazine’s primary intended audience: it features a shapely woman in a two-piece bathing suit carrying a hose and bucket while behind her is a mad scramble of fully clothed men in Army uniforms frantically trying to be the first to write down his name on a sign-up sheet labeled “Duty Roster: Car Washing Detail” (see https://digital.library.vcu.edu/islandora/object/vcu%3A16910 ).

Not surprisingly, PS changed its approach over the decades. While I have not had the time to look at every issue through November 2019, what I have seen does indicate ongoing societal changes being reflected in the characters who inhabit the magazine. Women take a much more prominent and professional role (although still looking better than average) and, yes, there are some suspiciously handsome men who appear in recent decades as well. There is an increasingly diverse cast of races and ethnicities too. Yes, the military had been desegregated by President Harry Truman’s 1948 executive order but, as we know all too well, significant numbers of African Americans (and other underrepresented groups) do not show up in these early issues and certainly not in leadership roles.
Changing times also have now rendered the print magazine obsolete with the final issue appearing in November 2019. Now called PS: The Army’s Preventive Maintenance Magazine, the publication has become a regularly updated website: https://www.psmagazine.army.mil/. Gone is the anthropomorphic talking equipment and mostly gone are the comic book human characters. Digital photos have replaced anthropomorphic equipment.

PS is now searchable. Perhaps reflecting budget cuts (despite the truly huge sums appropriated for the federal defense budget), there is a notice on the screen that as PS staff writers leave, they are not being replaced which means that there is no one available to respond to reader questions concerning the following areas: “Small Arms,” “CBRN [Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear],” “Construction CCE [Civil, Construction and Environmental],” “Missiles,” and “Mine Clearance/Mines/Mine Systems.”

Unintentionally, perhaps, PS is as much a reflection of major societal changes that have taken place as it is a source of good advice on maintaining military equipment over the past 73 years.
Past President Interview: Melissa Dennis

1. Discuss your background in libraries.
I worked in the J.D. Williams Library at Ole Miss as a Circulation student assistant for a year before graduating with a B.A. in English. I didn’t want to go to school anymore at that time, but an English degree didn’t exactly open up a ton of work opportunities near the small town in Mississippi where my new husband and I lived. I thought about the only job I had at this point and how much I enjoyed it, so I decided to go to library school at the University of Southern Mississippi. I was hired at Belhaven University (Jackson, MS) as a Circulation Manager and really enjoyed that work until I got my library degree. Then I went to Delta State University (Cleveland, MS) for 18 months as a Reference Librarian before an opportunity of Outreach Librarian opened at Ole Miss. I got the job! After I got tenure, I applied for the Head of Research and Instruction position and got that, too, which is where I am currently now. So, I have only ever worked in academic libraries in Mississippi for about 20 years!

2. Describe your history with SELA, such as your first involvement, positions held, and other service.
I first heard about SELA during my time at Delta State University. Several colleagues had been involved and it seemed exciting to me to go to a regional conference. At the time, we all rotated which conferences we attended so I wasn’t there long enough to go with DSU. However, when I got the job at Ole Miss, I noticed no one there was doing SELA and decided to attend a conference. After I got tenure, I applied for the Head of Research and Instruction position and got that, too, which is where I am currently now. So, I have only ever worked in academic libraries in Mississippi for about 20 years!

3. Talk about your time as President of SELA. For instance, could you share any major accomplishments, initiatives, or challenges you faced while President?
I was President-Elect of SELA during COVID in 2020, and helped plan the Georgia Libraries/SELA joint online conference. It set a precedent for the next couple of years for online conference planning at state, regional, and national levels. In 2021, when I became President, COVID-19 restrictions were still in effect for many states and conference planning was still aimed at online (North Carolina) with some in-person planning happening – mainly for the NCLA attendees in the Winston-Salem area. In 2022, the joint conference happened to be in my home state of Mississippi for the first time in a very long time. It was a face-to-face conference, yet marketed as a hybrid in that some sessions would be recorded live and shown to attendees who could not attend in person. We found out that this approach had many drawbacks in the technology functioning in each room and it did not work. Luckily, the pandemic had pretty much subsided for the masses by then (though COVID is still around) and we had a large number of SELA attendees at the conference in-person to make it a good conference and I was proud of the number of Mississippians who joined SELA during that year. It was the first and last time I addressed the Board in-person as President and it was my very last session as President. Getting to lead the officer induction ceremony at the SELA Breakfast was very special to me.

4. SELA to remain relevant during the next 10, 25, or 50 years?
I have no doubt that SELA won’t remain relevant because of our active membership. Libraries will always need each other and SELA is an outlet for
members to work together to help get through problems. I would have never believed 15 years ago that I would be talking about censorship in libraries and banned books at the level we were in 2022 and now in 2023. It looks like problems will always exist that need our expertise and advocacy efforts to educate our collective patrons, legislators, and friends in order to keep moving our communities forward instead of backward.

5. Do you have any other comments or stories about SELA that would you like to share?
I have enjoyed the friendships and networking experiences over the past 12 or so years of being in SELA. I would have never met such wonderful librarians and had such fulfilling speaker opportunities if I had just stayed in local committees in Mississippi or only participated in the huge online sections of ALA. SELA helped me find a voice and helped me improve my confidence while being surrounded by a team of other leaders who never let me fail. I’m proud to still be on that team and want to continue holding that safety net for our future SELA leaders.
INTRODUCTION

Students who come to the university without experience of completing complex assignments that require the use of source materials as evidence of claims or lack awareness of the role information literacy plays in scholarly endeavors, are placed at an immediate disadvantage. Librarians seek to address this problem by providing entering students with some form of library intervention to set them up for early academic success. Multiple models address various first-year student information skills. These different approaches depend on factors, such as how students enter the university, the size of the first-year class, and the staffing of the library instruction.

Many libraries take the path of participating in, or teaching, first-year seminar (FYS) courses. The success of this approach assumes an institution has a FYS, students take it seriously, and librarians are invited to teach in that space. Another approach is providing library instruction in first-year composition or writing courses (FYC or FYW) that students must take upon matriculation. This path assumes a library has the staffing capacity to teach in each section of a course that may have 50+ sections. The traditional “one shot” model of library instruction can be used to meet this need; however, in the authors’ experience, first-year writing faculty would like librarians to attend multiple meetings of their classes.

James Madison University (JMU) is a public, comprehensive undergraduate institution located in Harrisonburg, in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. JMU’s student body consists of approximately 20,000 undergraduates and 1,900 graduate students. JMU’s typical entering first year class is approximately 4,500 to 5,000 students, who are primarily residents in on-campus housing and attend classes in-person.

Entering first year students are enrolled in JMU’s core curriculum in their first academic year. The core curriculum is comprised of 41 credit hours spread across five “clusters” of courses. The program is outcomes-based; students pick from courses that meet shared learning outcomes versus choosing from a list of courses identified by disciplinary departments. In their first year at JMU, students complete Cluster One of General Education, Foundational Skills. Cluster One consists of first year composition, the basic communication course, a critical thinking course, and an information literacy test (nine credit hours and a test). For over twenty years, JMU has had information literacy learning outcomes embedded...
in the General Education program within Cluster One of General Education. All of these foundational requirements must be completed within the student’s first academic year. The writing, communication, and critical thinking learning outcomes are demonstrated via the completion of a 15-week course (or its transfer equivalent), the information literacy requirement is demonstrated with a passing score on a competency test, known as the “MREST” (Madison Research Essential Skills Test). The MREST is the information literacy test examined by the researchers, in this paper.

Information Literacy Outcomes

The information literacy test requirement began in 2000 when a beta version of the first test was administered to a small number of students. Under the guidance of test development experts in JMU’s Assessment Office, librarians created and maintained an instrument that met reliability and validity requirements. That year, JMU’s General Education program was revised. The cluster model was implemented, and the then-new Association for College and Research Libraries’ (ACRL) Information Literacy Standards for Higher Education were adopted almost verbatim as information literacy learning outcomes within the General Education curriculum. An existing print library workbook was converted to a set of online modules, and delivery of the workbook/web tutorials was established within a basic communication course. In 2016, a group of librarians from JMU Libraries worked to update those outcomes as informed by the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education.

Delivering Instruction

The entering first year class at JMU comprises approximately 4,500 to 5,000 students and continues to grow. JMU Libraries has one faculty librarian and an Assessment Office graduate student formally dedicated to the work of delivering information literacy outcomes in the first year with other assistance as available. An almost 5,000:2 (library) instructor to student ratio mandates that we automate as much of our process as possible. Ninety-eight percent of first year students take JMU’s basic communication course (SCOM 121). Librarians have crafted tutorials for the MREST, using the moniker “MREST Toolkit” as modules in the Canvas learning management system. These modules include the video components seen on the public website, but also quizzes (not publicly accessible) embedded in each section of the communication course. Faculty teaching sections of SCOM 121 assign these modules to their students. After students complete the modules and quizzes, they are assigned to complete the MREST in a proctored assessment computer lab. Students must achieve a passing score and may achieve a passing at advanced level score. Once the student meets the competency standard, this status is documented on their transcript and the requirement is met. Students may take the test as many times as they need to in order to pass (most students pass by their second or third attempt) but failing to meet the standard prior to the spring semester deadline will result in an academic hold on their account thereby, prohibiting them from registration for sophomore level courses.

The MREST Toolkit Tutorials

The Toolkit comprises a set of 15 videos that reside on JMU Libraries’ website. The first two videos serve as introductions to the content that will follow and work to introduce new students to JMU Libraries’ facilities and services, with the remaining 13 videos addressing learning outcomes. None of the videos exceeds a running time in excess of nine minutes, and a transcript of each video is provided to assist with accessibility requirements. Web analytics data indicates that a majority of students who begin the videos watch them through to the end.

The Toolkit includes practice exercises for faculty teaching SCOM 121 to embed into their Canvas courses, with the practice exercises being mapped to the learning outcomes – this model replicates the MREST, itself. Following completion of the practice exercises, the students are in a position to attempt the MREST.

Aims of this Paper

This paper aims to report the findings of a study, using focus groups to gather and analyze the
opinions of students exposed to the MREST and the MREST Toolkit during the course of their studies in SCOM 121. A primary area of interest for the researchers involved student attitudes towards the quality and content of the video tutorials. Given library staffing levels, asynchronous online instruction using video tutorials is the only realistic method for delivering instruction to 4,500 to 5,000 entering students over the course of one academic year. As JMU Libraries has invested much time and effort in developing and maintaining the test and its supporting materials, the researchers wished to learn about student perceptions of the test and materials. The team chose to use a qualitative methodology in which participants were encouraged to speak freely about their experiences and perceptions. The authors seek to report what students think about the product of those efforts using content analysis to describe reasons for their attitudes. Using this approach, improvements to the MREST and its Toolkit can be developed in a student-centered manner.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Why Use Video Tutorials?

Over a decade ago, Dewan and Steeleworthy (2013) reported a strong increase in distance learning in the university setting, readily fulfilled by the use of video tutorials.

There are several benefits to using online video tutorials to provide information literacy instruction. Video tutorials may be viewed at any time or place convenient to the student (Bowles-Terry et al., 2010). Videos may also be viewed as many times as a student chooses to view them, which may be helpful for students who like to learn independently and at their own pace. Video tutorials that are equipped with closed captioning can also be helpful for non-native English speakers or students who have auditory disabilities (Bowles-Terry et al).

Will Students Use Them?

While some students may express the belief that there is “no need” to watch video tutorials and others express “no interest” in the tutorials, a majority of students asked about video tutorials report a willingness to explore and view the online content (Colosimo & Kasuto, 2012).

Students have shown a preference for video tutorials that are succinct and relevant (Keba et al., 2015). Many universities have begun using video mini-series to aid in library instruction, which are a series of one-minute-long videos that explain a topic (Rush and Stott, 2014), with related feedback from students being positive. When assessing the preferences of video tutorials that were designed specifically for nursing students, Baker (2014) found that the students had preferences for four characteristics when it came to video tutorials: 1. Length, 2. Pace of narration, 3. Visibility of screen images, and 4. Frequency/number of callouts (a callout is typically a short burst of textual information appearing on the screen). The nursing students in this study showed preferences for videos that were about one to three minutes in length, had a pace of about three words per second, were in full screen, and contained less than four callouts per minute.

Weeks and Putman Davis (2016) sought to describe best practices in creating online tutorials for the purposes of information literacy instruction. Focusing on one specific task (finding a book in an online catalog), the authors identified definite learning outcomes, brevity, the use of visual clues to draw viewers’ attention to key components, engaging content and delivery, basic assessment, and marketing/publicizing the video as mandatory elements to a successful tutorial. Reflecting upon the piloting of their tutorial, Weeks and Putman Davis noted the importance of delivery, having received feedback that “unnatural” or “robotic” delivery distracts the viewer, as does narration that “sound[s] too much like reading a script. The emphasis on publicizing the tutorial is of more relevance to the MREST and its Toolkit than might be imagined, at first glance. While the MREST Toolkit materials are deliberately brought to the attention of their intended audience by SCOM 121 instructors, it must be borne in mind that this vicarious publicizing removes librarians from that process, and the question of how the third-party instructor chooses to describe the materials may be of some significance.
**Required Information Literacy Testing**

As is the case at JMU, University at Buffalo (UB) students are required to take and pass an information literacy skills test at some point before graduating from the university. When Walsh (2011) surveyed students to find out their views on the information literacy skills test at UB, many of them expressed the idea that the information included on the test would be very useful to know and would help them be successful in their research endeavors but suggested turning the test into a one-credit requirement instead of just having it be a graduation requirement. This suggests that adding a reward, in this case a single credit, might influence and encourage students to take the information literacy skills tests more seriously. Students at UB who took the test during their senior year or just months before graduating suggested that the test should be required to be taken within the first year of attending UB (Walsh), which is currently the requirement for students at JMU University.

**METHODOLOGY**

**Participants**

The research was conducted after the approval of an IRB Protocol by JMU’s Office of Research Integrity. Students enrolled in SCOM 121 are typically aged 17 to 20. The consent form stipulated only students 18 years or older could participate, in order to assure that no minors were involved in the study. No inducements were provided for participating in the research; participants were advised that they were free to withdraw from the research at any time, with no adverse consequences. The researchers requested no personal identifying information (such as the names of speakers at the focus groups); any personal identifying information volunteered by participants was scrubbed from the data set prior to content analysis.

\[N=41\] (Focus Group Section #1: \(n=15\); Focus Group Section 2: \(n=12\); Focus Group Section 3: \(n=14\)).

The research team conducted focus groups during the spring assessment day. JMU reserves two assessment days (one in the fall semester, the other in the spring semester of each academic year) for the assessment research center to collect longitudinal data on student learning and development outcomes. Participation in the fall assessment day is a requirement of all first year students. Students involved in the spring assessment day are a mix of students who have completed 60 to 90 credit hours at JMU or another institution (transfer students). Focus group participants were purposefully recruited from the spring assessment day sample in order to represent various majors across the university. At least one participant from each JMU college attended each focus group session. Participants were informed of this purposeful sampling and were encouraged to reflect on their college and major in relation to other participants’ colleges and majors.

**Study Design**

Three face-to-face semi-structured focus groups were conducted in which participants gradually filled out a questionnaire that was used to stimulate discussion. Following completion of the questionnaire, the researchers led a general discussion guided by the questionnaire. The participants’ answers in the questionnaire booklets, and transcriptions of the focus group discussions, were then subjected to content analysis. The study design represents a mixed methods approach, allowing for collection of quantitative data about participants’ levels of interaction with the materials, in conjunction with qualitative data recording participants’ opinions and observations about the materials, themselves.

**Description of Data Collection Instrument**

The data collection instrument (Appendix B) consisted of nine single-choice and short-answer questions that asked students for their impressions of the MREST and their awareness and use of the materials included in the MREST Toolkit.
Method Choice

The focus group method was chosen because the social environment created by it offered an ideal way to acquire detailed qualitative data from students in a relaxed and non-threatening manner. The sessions were facilitated by a guided-conversation technique.

Setting

Three face-to-face semi-structured focus group sessions were held consecutively on the same day; the sessions took place in a classroom with tables and seating arranged in a circle in the center of the room to facilitate conversation. The facilitator sat with a projector screen behind them where questions and other information were displayed over the course of each session. The remainder of the research team sat to the side of the room and sometimes asked participants follow-up questions. The full research team introduced themselves at the beginning of each session, and identified themselves as part of the team researching student perceptions of the test/tutorial suite. The classroom setting was chosen because assessment day is conducted across campus in reserved classrooms; a classroom with movable seating was requested to accommodate the circular seating pattern needed for the sessions.

Process

Each focus group session lasted one hour. Stimulus material, in the form of a questionnaire, was presented in both paper booklets and projections on a screen behind the facilitator. Sessions progressed through stages defined by question groups on each page in the booklet. Participants turned pages, moving to the next stage, only when asked. During each stage, participants were prompted to write their responses to questions in their booklets. After all participants finished responding to questions in writing, they were invited to share their answers and reflect on each other’s perspectives and reasoning.

Description of Discussion Guide and Questionnaire Booklet

The discussion guide directed the facilitator and research team to conduct each session in a consistent manner. The guide addressed such things as: what participants would be doing during the session; what the facilitator and research team would be doing; how the research team would handle the data; transitions between discussion sections; neutral facilitator language examples; instructions for particular questions; and follow-up questions considering different issues. See Appendix A for the discussion guide.

The participants’ questionnaire booklet was divided into five thematic sections:
1. What is information literacy?
2. Communication about required test
3. Rationale of the required test
4. Did the required test help you?
5. Conclusion

Each section was treated individually as participants were instructed to turn pages in their booklets at specified times. At the beginning of each section, participants were asked to respond to each question in writing and to quietly wait until everyone was finished before discussion would begin. To assure shared understanding of the directions and discussion question language, the booklet text was projected onto the screen behind the facilitator as the session progressed through each stage.

Reporting Reflexivity

The facilitator and research team identified themselves as JMU librarians at the beginning of each session. To create a welcoming atmosphere, the facilitator reiterated that the purpose of the study was to gather student perceptions of the tutorial/test with the goal of improving it based on their experiences.
The researchers addressed bias by leveraging the sample’s unique awareness of assessment in higher education. All assessment day participants must view a brief, humorous video about assessment day at the beginning of their session. The video explains that assessment day is an essential part of the cycle of data-driven improvements to which the university is committed, and how it contributes to the quality of their education; the video also emphasizes the significance of assessment as a part of campus culture at JMU because classes are not held on assessment days and selected students are required to participate.

The team leveraged the awareness of assessment practices to address response bias, specifically social desirability bias and acquiesce bias, at the beginning and throughout each session. Participants were continually reminded they were contributing to assessment day by sharing their impressions of a significant test all rising sophomores must pass, and that their feedback would help future students. The facilitator specifically tried to address social desirability bias, the desire to provide answers perceived to be desirable by their peers or facilitators, by phrasing questions and discussion in a manner that invited participants to feel accepted, and listened to—no matter what their views were. Acquiescence bias, the instinct to agree with questions or statements based on their phrasing, was addressed by using neutral language in the booklet and during the discussion by encouraging counterpoints in discussion.

Data were coded separately by two of the librarian researchers and a graduate student from the university’s assessment research center. The coders met to methodically review data and their codes, adjudicating differences within the content analysis.

Limitations
The number of focus group or interview sessions held is ideally based on when data saturation occurs (Hancock et al., 2016; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009; Guest et al., 2006) however, the team could only hold a maximum of three sessions given the assessment day schedule. Even with this limitation, the team detected emergent themes within and across sessions. Additionally, Onwuegbuzie et al. recommend holding multiple sessions to uncover and test themes in an exploratory study using focus groups, which the team chose to do.

FINDINGS

Quantitative Data from Questionnaire Booklets
These data take the form of participants’ recorded responses to questions about their interaction with the MREST and the MREST Toolkit.

1. (Question 2.2 in questionnaire booklet)
*Did one of your first-year instructors assign you to watch the MREST tutorial videos?*
- 61% (25 students) were assigned to watch the MREST tutorial videos by a first-year instructor.
- 32% (13 students) were not assigned to watch the MREST tutorial videos by a first-year instructor.
- 7% (3 students) responded this item did not apply to them.

2. (Question 2.2.1 in questionnaire booklet)
*If you were assigned to watch the videos, did you watch them?*
- 54% (22 students) responded “yes.”
- 15% (6 students) responded “no.”
- 13 participants did not respond (32%)

3. (Question 2.3 in questionnaire booklet)
*Did you complete the MREST practice quizzes embedded in your SCOM 121 Canvas course?*
• 68% (28 students) responded “yes.”
• 24% (10 students) responded “no.”
• 7% (3 students) responded that this item did not apply to them

4. (Question 2.3.1 in questionnaire booklet)
If you were assigned to take the quizzes, did your instructor give credit/points for completing them?
• 46.3% (19 students) who were assigned to take the quizzes, received credit/points for completing them.
• 29.3% (12 students) who were assigned to take the quizzes did not receive credit/points for completing them.
• 10 participants did not respond to this item (24.4%).

Qualitative Data from Questionnaire Booklets and Related Focus Group Discussion
Data are expressed thematically following content analysis of the transcripts generated from focus group discussions. Participants’ written responses in questionnaire booklets were analyzed in light of these identified themes.

Table 1: Qualitative data collected within focus group discussions and codified by theme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Number of instances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication about / awareness of MREST and Toolkit</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of MREST goals</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test / tutorial quality</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test-taking strategies</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past experience / familiarity with test content</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preference for face-to-face information literacy instruction</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responses irrelevant to the research study's aims</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Communication about / awareness of MREST and toolkit
Overwhelmingly students are hearing of the MREST requirement from their instructors teaching in SCOM 121. This is good, as that is where they are supposed to hear about the requirement. Many faculty who teach in these classes require that the test be completed as part of the eventual course grade. Some students noted that they heard of the requirement in a different general education first year course (Critical Thinking or First Year Composition were noted). One student noted that they heard of the requirement from their first-year advisor as advisors can see completion upon reviewing an advisee’s transcript. Students reported that they heard of the requirement from peers (roommates, first year peer advisors, orientation experiences, and older students). Students also mentioned reminder email messages from the General Education Administrative office to meet the deadline, and finding information regarding the requirement at the General Education program’s website.

Less encouragingly, “word of mouth” communication about the MREST and its materials suggests that students’ perceptions of the materials may be influenced by those third parties’ opinions:

“I didn’t watch it, but my professor gives a fair warning of how awful [it is].”

“Like, some people say it’s really easy and take it once and then like I have one friend who took it like six times and hated every bit of it.”

“I mean, like honestly, like it’s like most of the kids aren’t even paying attention in class. So, basically,
you just hear from that one kid who happened to listen and remembered the date and then everyone
freaks out and takes it the next day.”

One participant provided a consideration of how better marketing of MREST and the MREST
Toolkit by the library may encourage students to approach it more positively:

“I think make the goals of it more apparent to students because I definitely just treated it like some test
I was cramming for and I didn’t really know the full scope of what you guys are trying to do, so I just
treated it like that and then forgot about it once I was done taking it.”

Participants also expressed frustration at the lack of a uniform approach to the MREST and
Toolkit by instructors teaching across sections of SCOM 121. This is of some significance, as perceived
unfairness that some instructors give course credit for completing the MREST or practice tests whereas
others do not, may influence students’ willingness to watch the videos and complete the practice exercises:

“Some professors give credit for it. Others did not."

“Well, there’s like - isn’t there quizzes for like the videos? Well, I didn’t have to take - they recommended
watching the videos, but I didn’t get credit like some other SCOM 121 professors.”

It is noteworthy that 24% of participants reported not completing the practice quizzes within the
MREST Toolkit, and 29% reported that their SCOM 121 course instructor did not provide course credit
for this activity. Hence there is a reasonable suggestion that tying the MREST to for-credit instruction
creates an expectation of credit received. In the absence of such, some students struggle to see the broader
benefits of the MREST.

2. Perceptions of MREST goals

When asked to provide a description of “information literacy” as the opening question in their
questionnaire booklets, the majority of participants approached this question thoughtfully, and many
provided answers which librarians would likely find encouraging and regard as reasonably accurate definitions of this term. Examples include:

“The ability to define, find, comprehend, and analyze information through proficient, effective research.”

“Being able to competently assess the source of information, its origin, legitimacy, and analyze it in an
objective way.”

As the participants in this study represent JMU students who have already attempted the
MREST, it seems that the MREST is succeeding in one of its primary aims – delivering understanding of
what information literacy actually is. Less encouragingly, however, analysis of participant responses sug-
ests that the students struggle to connect the goals of the MREST with the competencies they have ac-
quired as a result of taking the test. The responses reveal an attitude that the MREST is simply a rather burdensome item to be “checked off” as a requirement for progression through the university’s curriculum. Some responses indicate that the students undervalue or underestimate the skills they have gained throughout the process:

“I feel like [the MREST] is again one of those things you just have to check off your list, you’re done with and then you don’t think about it again. So, for me, which was like okay, I need to pass it, work
through the tutorials, halfway listening, and then took it, passed it, and I was done. And, the same with that, I just clicked through it.”

“Yes because I have to do a lot of like writing and I use the library a lot and like the resources there. And, in terms of what the [the MREST] taught me on how to like use the resources in the library, it like succeeded. But beyond that, I don't really remember like any of these, like how to like infer things. Like, that really didn’t stick. It was just the like - it prepared me, it like taught me what JMU can do for me in terms of helping me. But beyond that, I think it was kind of just a test I took.”

3. Test / tutorial quality

Responses discussing the quality of the video tutorials, and the participants’ related willingness to use the tutorials, emphasized the need for engaging content and presentation as identified in the Literature Review section of this paper:

“So, my teacher told me about, like, the videos and the quizzes for SCOM and like I tried to watch the videos, but they're like really boring. I actually like fell asleep during the first one. So, I was like I don’t think I can like make it through it.”

“I just think an interactive person in the video just makes a video better, because if you have like a monotone professor, who’s just like going through the information and that you can clearly see on what you're watching is really not interesting and not engaging. So, videos can be engaging. It just depends on the type of video and who’s speaking and how they’re speaking and relaying information.”

This complaint about the need for a more interactive approach was repeated as participants reflected on the MREST, itself:

“I feel like the test, if I remember correctly, was so wordy. I was like staring at a screen and then I had to read the question like at least seven times before it really processed in my head. And, I would just - like it got to the point, like, especially towards the end of the test, I just started clicking answers, because I was like my head hurts. Look, I was just at that point. I was like, I can’t keep reading this.”

Other participants described a more prosaic approach, recognizing the value in the test and its materials, but without obvious enthusiasm:

“It seemed to be the norm that you just had to take it and there’s nothing else really said about it, I think. But like after taking it, like I understand why.”

4. Test-taking strategies

The 12 responses about test taking strategies focused, for the most part, on ways to pass the test without engaging with the provided materials. Participants observed:

“I just kept taking it until I passed.”

“I feel like it really didn’t matter, because I didn’t take a look at them and I passed the first time.”

“No. No. Like, I didn’t have quizzes either like our - our professors said that we had quizzes on Canvas and I couldn’t find them and then I remembered, oh there’s videos like online. I was like, oh okay. So, then I watched them, then I took the [test] like yesterday. I passed, but I don’t think the videos helped at all.”

One participant employed this strategy using the practice quizzes rather than the test itself, for
this purpose:

“Okay, so I was like I’m not going to watch them. So, I didn’t watch them, but I took like all the quizzes and they’re like - the quizzes were almost exactly the same as the questions they asked. So, the quizzes did help me at least, because like I know like which books or which majors are held in which library. I didn’t know that, so like those quizzes did help for like that aspect, but research, I did learn that in high school.”

Only one of these 12 participants discussing test-taking strategies stated that the practice quizzes and tutorials were key components of their success in passing the test. The data revealed that the approach of repeated (uninformed) attempts until finally achieving a passing score was the method favored by the other 11 students – those who discussed this topic from the perspective of avoiding engaging with the Toolkit.

5. Past experience/familiarity with test content

Four participants reported confidently held assumptions that previous (K12) experience would suffice for the purposes of passing the MREST:

“I would say I probably had a good chance of passing it just like right out of high school.”

One participant reflected soberly on this misassumption, after attempting the MREST:

“I mean, like someone brought up like the point about where would I find this book, like what library, like, I would never think that that would be on like [a test]. I didn’t even know what MREST stood for until today. So, there’s just really random stuff like I wasn’t expecting. Like, it was stuff I heard about when I would take like a library class when I was in middle school. That’s what I was remember, but like up until eighth grade, that was the only time I really heard of it and then I went through all of high school, hadn’t heard of any of that stuff, and then I had to come here and like take it and I had no idea that’s what was going to be on the test.”

6. Preference for traditional library instruction

Two participants indicated a preference for traditional, face-to-face library instruction over asynchronous, video-based learning. Such responses were slight variations on the theme described by this student:

“I feel like one way is that like one like lecture day could be devoted to just [this] material [in] your SCOM 121 class. I feel like students would be more likely to actually learn and like retain the information if they went to a lecture and like wrote stuff down instead of just on their own, like saying, you can watch tutorials, but like most people usually don’t.”

DISCUSSION

At the outset, it is important to remember that passing the MREST is a requirement placed on JMU students in order to advance in their studies, enroll and succeed in classes beyond their freshman year, and ultimately graduate from the university. The study reveals that the mandatory nature of the test undoubtedly influences how students approach it, with some participants adopting an approach of it simply being something to be endured and passed as perfunctorily as possible, others accepting it as a requirement of their undergraduate experience at the university and approaching it in a practical manner, and a smaller number of participants seeking to actively learn from the test and its related materials.

Delivering the test in the arena of SCOM 121 is an effective way of ensuring student awareness of
the test and its requirements, but it necessarily involves bringing those course instructors into the process. The study shows that attitudes to the test are formed in the stages of communication about the test, and hence it is reasonable to assume that how an instructor presents the MREST strongly influences a student’s approach to it. Similarly, it is very clear that students in different sections discuss their experiences with their peers – a lack of uniformity in approach, particularly with regard to course credit being either given or not given for completion of the MREST and/or the practice materials, can cause resentment, which, in turn, manifests itself in students who do not receive course credit being disinclined to engage with the learning materials.

One problem with the library creating an asynchronous test and suite of related learning materials, and then working with other members of the university to present it and draw attention to it, is that the library risks becoming the remote partner in the process. This is certainly not the intention, and the MREST and its Toolkit emphasize the accessibility of the library and its librarians, but it is a reality that students, who naturally see more of their course instructors than they do of librarians, with the added complication that the course instructor is the person who assigns grades for their class, may begin to view the test as “belonging” to their SCOM 121 course, which limits their perceptions of the transferability of the skills they have acquired. Resolving this problem may involve the library becoming more proactively involved in the actual marketing of the MREST and its aims and purposes to JMU students.

As stated throughout this paper, the asynchronous method is the only realistic way of providing and assessing this type of instruction to JMU’s entire first year class. However, the mixed attitudes to video instruction reported by the participants reemphasize the discussion in this paper’s literature review regarding best practices for this model. The data supports the literature’s assessment that brevity and interactivity are key components for creating engaging video tutorials. As the suite of videos is revised on a periodic basis, it seems that the current upper limit of nine minutes may be too lengthy to ensure student engagement with the tutorial content; additionally, the narrative approach may need to be replaced with a different communication style, which students regard as more appealing.

A positive element of the research is the revelation that the MREST has done its job – participants demonstrated a retained understanding of information literacy after having successfully completed the MREST. For some, the process of acquiring that knowledge may have been something to be endured rather than welcomed. For others, the test was simply a hurdle to be overcome by whatever means – including plugging away at multiple, unthinking attempts until their desired outcome (a passing score) was obtained, irrespective of the test’s goal of instilling transferable information literacy skills.

**CONCLUSION**

One conclusion of this paper is reticent acceptance: with asynchronous tests of this type, which necessarily allow for repeated attempts, there will be some students who are difficult to reach – those who believe that avoiding learning materials in preference for throwing mud at a wall until it sticks is the best method for overcoming a bureaucratic impediment. However, in trying to reach those students, the potential exists to improve the experience for all students. The participants in this study demonstrated the benefits of having been exposed to the MREST. Through hearing the observations of those who did complete the process in a manner hoped for by the library and the test’s creators, coupled with the best practices identified by the literature and echoed in the participants’ responses, the opportunity exists to further develop the MREST and its Toolkit, and to re-emphasize the MREST’s aims and purposes and inherent attachment to the library and its staff, for the benefit of future first year students at JMU.

**REFERENCES**

Baker, A. (2014). Students’ preferences regarding four characteristics of information literacy screencasts. *Journal of Library & Information Services in Distance Learning, 8*(1-2), 67-80. [https://doi.org/10.1080/1533290X.2014.916247](https://doi.org/10.1080/1533290X.2014.916247)


APPENDIX A
Assessment Day Focus Group
Facilitator Guide

Transition
[Staff member name] will explain what will happen and move everyone to the back of the room.
[Seating will be set in a circle]

Who are we?
[Introductions (all of us) with name and job info.
What’s your name and major?

Why are we here?
We’re here today to learn about your experiences with the MREST Toolkit (tutorial) and with the MREST.
We want to know if they prepared you for work you’ve done since your first year at JMU.

What we learn from you today will be used by faculty and administrators to help improve MREST.

What will you be doing?
Answer questions in your booklet.
Have a conversation about the responses you wrote.
Ask each other (or the facilitators) if you don’t understand something.
Since we will be recording this session, we ask that you try to refrain from using anyone’s name, or mentioning you own.

** Say anything you like – positive or negative – about your experience.
This is not meant to be a conversation about consensus. **

What will the facilitators be doing?
We will:
record this conversation (only heard by research team and transcriptionist);
guide the conversation;
take notes;
keep the group on topic; and
ask follow-up questions.

Later, we will:
pay an outside contractor to transcribe the recording;
listen to the recording and read the transcription;
read your booklets;
write a report for the faculty and administrators who manage the program; and
destroy the recording of our conversation when we write the report.

Do you have questions before we start?

Do you have any questions about what we are doing?

If you do not understand something, stop us and ask for clarification.
[START THE RECORDERS]

Section 1 – What is Information Literacy?

Question 1:
What is your definition of Information Literacy?

Section 2 – Communication about MREST

Question 1:
How did you find out about the MREST requirement?

Question 2:
Did one of your first-year instructors assign you to watch the MREST Tutorial videos?
Yes | No | Does not apply to me

If you were assigned to watch the videos, did you watch them?
Yes | No

Question 3:
Did you complete the MREST Practice Quizzes embedded in your SCOM100 Canvas course?
Yes | No | Does not apply to me

If you were assigned to take the quizzes, did your instructor give credit/points for completing them?
Yes | No

Question 4:
Did one of your first-year instructors assign you to complete the MREST Test?
Yes | No | Does not apply to me

If you were assigned to complete the test, did you take it successfully at that time?
Yes | No

Question 5:
Did you hear about the test and/or tutorials from outside of class? If so, how, and from whom did you hear about the test and/or videos?

Section 3 – Rationale of MREST

1: Why do you think JMU requires students to complete the MREST requirement?

2: Why do you think JMU requires completion of the MREST within your first year?

Section 4 – Did MREST Help You?

1. Look at Handout 1. Do you believe that the MREST tutorials and test accomplish these learning goals?
   Tutorials: Yes | No | Uncertain | Does not apply to me
   Test: Yes | No | Uncertain | Does not apply to me

2. Look at Handout 2. Do you agree with this information? Did your information literacy skills increase since you started at JMU?
   Yes | No | Uncertain
If you feel your information literacy skills increased over time, what would you attribute that success to?

If you viewed the tutorials, did they contribute to that increase?
Yes | No | Does not apply

If you feel your information literacy skills have not increased over time, what would help (beyond the MREST tutorials and videos)?

3. Did taking the test improve your information literacy skills?

Section 5 – Conclusion
Please consider your experience with the tutorials and test and answer the following questions. (If you didn’t know that much about either, or didn’t use the tutorials, that’s an experience also.)

1. If you could make a suggestion to the people who make the tutorials, what would you say?

2. If you could make a suggestion to the people who make the test, what would you say?

3. Do you believe the MRE tutorials and test helped prepare you for information literacy requirements in your major?
Yes | No | Uncertain | Does not apply to me

If so, what about the requirement made research work in your major helpful?
Do not place your name on this packet.

**Section 1 – Information Literacy**
1. What is your definition of information literacy?

**Section 2 – Communication About MREST**
1. How did you find out about the MREST requirement?

2. Did one of your first-year instructors assign you to watch the MREST Tutorial videos?
   - Yes | No | Does not apply to me
   If you were assigned to watch the videos, did you watch them?
   - Yes | No

3. Did you complete the MREST practice quizzes embedded in your SCOM100 Canvas course?
   - Yes | No | Does not apply to me
   If you were assigned to take the quizzes, did your instructor give credit/points for completing them?
   - Yes | No

4. Did one of your first-year instructors assign you to complete the MREST Test?
   - Yes | No | Does not apply to me
   If you were assigned to take the test, did you take it successfully at that time?
   - Yes | No

5. Did you hear about the test and/or tutorials from outside of class? If so, how and from whom did you hear about the test and/or videos?

**Section 3 – Rationale of MREST**
1. Why do you think JMU requires students to complete the MREST requirement?

2. Why do you think JMU requires completion of the MREST within the first year?

**Section 4 – Did MREST Help You?**
1. Look at Handout #1. Do you believe that the MREST tutorials and test accomplish these learning goals?
   - Tutorials: Yes | No | Uncertain | Does not apply to me
   - Test: Yes | No | Uncertain | Does not apply to me

2. Look at Handout #2. Do agree with this information? Did your information literacy skills increase since you started at JMU?
   - Yes | No | Uncertain | Does not apply to me
   If you feel your information literacy skills increased over time, what would you attribute that success to?
   If you viewed the tutorials, did they contribute to that increase?
   - Yes | No
   If you feel your information literacy skills have not increased over time, what would help (beyond the MREST tutorials and videos)?

3. Did taking the test improve your information literacy skills?

**Section 5 – Conclusion**
Please consider your experience with the tutorials and test and answer the following questions. (If you didn’t know that much about either, or didn’t use the tutorials, that’s an experience also.)

1. If you could make a suggestion to the people who make the tutorials, what would you say?

2. If you could make a suggestion to the people who make the test, what would you say?

3. Do you believe the MRE tutorials and test helped prepare you for information literacy requirements in...
your major?
Yes | No | Uncertain | Does not apply to me
If so, what about the requirement made research work in your major helpful?

**Handout 1 – Cluster One Information Learning Outcomes**

The MREST Toolkit, Practice Exercises and the MREST are designed to help you develop and achieve the following student learning outcomes.

- Recognize the components of scholarly work and that scholarship can take many forms.
- Demonstrate persistence and employ multiple strategies in research and discovery processes.
- Identify gaps in their own knowledge and formulate appropriate questions for investigation in academic settings.
- Evaluate the quality of information and acknowledge expertise.
- Use information effectively in their work and make contextually appropriate choices for sharing their own scholarship.
- Use information ethically and legally.

**Handout 2 – InfoCore Analysis Comparison**
**REVIEW**

**Community Across Time: Robert Morgan’s Words for Home**

Rebecca Godwin  
Morgantown: West Virginia University Press, 2023  
ISBN: 9781952271823  
193 p. $26.99 (Pbk)

Most famous perhaps for his 1999 novel *Gap Creek*, which was selected by Oprah’s Book Club, Robert Morgan is the author of seven novels, 16 volumes of poetry, four short story collections, and three works of nonfiction. For Morgan, a North Carolina writer who grew up in poverty but went on to teach literature at Cornell University, the history and the people of the Appalachian region where he grew up remained central to his work throughout his writing career. *Gap Creek*, for example, was loosely inspired by Morgan’s own ancestors. The novel follows the story of a young woman whose early life was filled with hardship, as she marries and relocates to South Carolina with her new husband in search of a better life but encounters more hardship and difficulties there as well. *Gap Creek* is a continuation of the family story that began in Morgan’s earlier novel, *The Truest Pleasure*, and which he would continue to tell in later novels, creating a multigenerational family saga which looks at the lives of ordinary people in rural Appalachian communities and how those people and those communities are impacted by historical events. His works look at what changes and what stays the same in these communities across the span of many different time periods to give the reader a rich and nuanced picture of the region.

Over the past few years, several new books have appeared that have focused on Morgan and his work (*Conversations with Robert Morgan* in 2019, a book of interviews with the author, and *Robert Morgan: Essays on the Life and Work* in 2021, an edited collection of literary criticism which also includes two essays written and contributed by Morgan himself). Rebecca Goodwin’s new book *Community Across Time*, however, is the first full-length scholarly work published about Robert Morgan. Thoroughly researched and cited, it includes a wealth of biographical information as well as an in-depth analysis of Morgan’s literary works and his writing career. The book does not only look at his work as a novelist but also considers his career as a poet and writer of nonfiction as well.

Rebecca Goodwin, the author, is a professor of English at Barton College in Wilson, North Carolina, and a scholar of Appalachian literature. The book benefits from her personal interviews and correspondence with Robert Morgan throughout his writing career. She is able to draw on these interviews as well as many other sources to sketch out in great detail Morgan’s biographical information, the family history of his ancestors, and the history of the places where his works are set, all of which greatly influenced his writing. The book looks at the lives of his grandparents and parents and at the things that happened to them and other relatives—family stories passed down through generations which came to inspire and influence characters and events in his writings. Although it might seem like too much backstory, Morgan became an author whose work was often inspired by his own family’s history, and as such it seems especially important for the book to cover all of these aspects of his own life in such detail. The book is also careful to point out that while family history often inspired Morgan, the stories he tells are fictionalized versions with many invented details as well.

Each chapter of the book focuses on a different topic. The first chapter looks at the influence and inspiration of other writers on Robert Morgan’s work, including writers like Wolfe and Hemingway as well as Appalachian writers like Wilma Dykeman and John Ehle. The second chapter looks at Robert Morgan’s childhood biography. Subsequent chapters look closer at the impact of the early American history of the Appalachian region on his work and the ways in which his own family stories appear in his novels, his short fiction, and his poetry. The book contains a chapter just about his poetry, which seems appropriate, since even though he became famous for his fiction, Morgan began his writing career as a poet.
and overall has written more volumes of poetry than fiction.

For libraries with collections in Appalachian literature or Southern literature, but especially for libraries that are located in the regions Robert Morgan writes about, this book will be an important addition. Even if libraries also have earlier volumes about Robert Morgan, they may also want to purchase this book, because it will add additional insight into the author for its readers.

Alison Faix, Coastal Carolina University

**Drifting into Darkness: Murder, Suicide, and a Death “Under Suspicious Circumstances”**

Mark I. Pinsky
Montgomery: NewSouth Books, 2022
ISBN: 9781588384577
380 p. $23.95 (Pbk)

Thanksgiving week 2004, wealthy couple Charlotte and Brent Springford Sr. were found brutally murdered in their Montgomery, Alabama, home. The prime suspect was quickly identified as their estranged son Brent Jr., who was subsequently sentenced to life imprisonment without parole. The first part of Pinsky’s book describes the years leading up to the murders, a vivid portrayal of the Springford family’s life, which seems (despite early tragedy involving the death of their infant daughter and of Charlotte’s parents in a house fire) to be largely unproblematic, with Brent Jr. and his sister enjoying a privileged lifestyle and indulgent parents. However, Brent Jr.’s young adult years started with a downward spiral of destruction with the onset of serious mental health problems, as well as a deterioration in his relationship with his parents. It was during this time in his early adulthood that Brent Jr. came to meet the main character in the tragedy, his spiritual healer “wife” Caroline Scoutt (a woman 24 years his senior who used many different aliases, claimed various Native American heritages, and practiced as a therapist despite no licenses or certificates). Pinsky summarizes the background of Caroline Scoutt and portrays the image of a con artist masquerading as a healer, preying on a vulnerable young man by financially abusing him and forcing him to live in poverty whilst she enjoyed a comfortable lifestyle funded by his parents.

Tragically, as Brent Jr. became more dependent on the woman who his parents believed was helping their son (possibly the only thing keeping him from suicide), they parted with large sums of money, controlled by Scoutt, to provide them with housing and cars. The author states that the catalyst for the murders was when the Springfords decided to stop funding the couple; this marked a final tragic turn in the story, culminating in murder.

The first few chapters are therefore captivating yet uncomfortable reading, akin to watching a train wreck unfolding, as we are led through the deterioration of the family relationship against a backdrop of financial exploitation and Brent Jr.’s mental health decline. Pinsky’s insightful writing prompts the reader to ponder difficult questions: What is the best one can do to support adult children in crisis? Did the relentless bankrolling by the Springfords ultimately lead to the exploitation of a vulnerable young man? When was the line crossed from spiritual quest into a mental health crisis? If Brent Jr. had consistently taken his medication, would the tragedy have unfolded in the same way? These are questions that unfortunately have no clear answers.

Brent Jr.’s subsequent suicide in prison seemed to be the end of the saga. However, the author is in the privileged position of being the brother-in-law of defense lawyer Susan Wardell and was asked by her to investigate the case further. The second half of the book follows Pinsky and his fellow investigator’s research into Scoutt’s role and aims to find out how involved she was with the murder and to what extent she acted as “puppet-master.” Pinsky goes on to describe a suspicious suicide that happened on Scoutt’s property and the discovery that not only was this another vulnerable man living in poverty whose income she controlled, but that she was named as a beneficiary on his life insurance. Numerous other cases come to light of Scoutt taking money to be used to finance her women’s refuge/spiritual center despite it never being built. Despite several attempts by the team of investigators into Scoutt’s affairs, as well as accusations of fraud and witness intimidation (amongst others), the efforts fail to come to any real fruition as she manages to evade the law until her death in 2019.
It is clear throughout the book that Pinsky is convinced of Scoutt’s guilt and himself describes his book as “the murder trial that Caroline Scoutt never had” (p. 353). Although fascinating and well researched, the book is therefore only one side of a very complicated story, with Scoutt now deceased and unable to defend herself against the accusations.

This book would be a valuable addition to the true crime section of a library and is compulsive reading for readers with an interest in family dynamics, criminal psychology, coercive control, and mental illness. It would also be of interest to students of Alabama local or criminal history. The author has worked as a journalist reporting murder cases for 40 years, writing for several publications, including the Los Angeles Times and The New York Times. Pinsky published his first non-fiction book, Met Her on the Mountain, in 2013 on the 1970 cold case murder of Nancy Morgan.

Layla Farrar, University of North Georgia

The NCAA and the Exploitation of College Profit-Athletes: An Amateurism That Never Was

Richard M. Southall, Mark S. Nagel, Ellen J. Staurowsky, Richard T. Karcher, & Joel G. Maxcy

Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2023
ISBN: 9781643363776
354 p. $104.99 (Hbk)

Paying athletes has been at the forefront of discussions about college athletics in recent years. Should athletes be paid? Which athletes should be paid? What constitutes payment? These are all questions that colleges and sports fans have been asking. In The NCAA and the Exploitation of College Profit-Athletes, five authors attempt to answer these very questions.

While the book covers a wide variety of topics, including racism, player autonomy, and unionization, the overarching theme is that of amateurism versus professionalism. The history of amateurism, how the NCAA defines it, and how paying athletes affects the idea of amateurism are all central to the core thesis of this book: that profit-athletes (Power Five football and Division I basketball players), many of whom are Black, have been systematically exploited by the NCAA and its member institutions for more than a century.

The NCAA’s explanation of the term “amateur” is central to its treatment of college athletes: “Student-athletes shall be amateurs in an intercollegiate sport. ... Student participation in intercollege athletics is an avocation, and student-athletes should be protected from exploitation by professional and commercial enterprises” (pp. 95-96). This characterization of what it means to be an amateur has long prevented NCAA athletes from earning money, while nonathletes are free to do so. The question of whether college athletes are amateurs or professionals has also impacted players’ unionization efforts. As far back as the 1930s, football players organized to improve conditions. The authors describe attempts to unionize throughout the 20th century and devote significant scrutiny to recent efforts by the Northwestern University football team.

Given the current discourse around paying college athletes, it may come as a surprise that this topic has been ongoing for over a century. The authors provide many examples of college athletes being paid even before the NCAA was founded in 1906, as well as throughout the 20th century. In the 1950s, this practice of paying college athletes led author William T. Foster to write:

Only childlike innocence or willful blindness need prevent American colleges from seeing that the rules which aim to maintain athletics on what is called an “amateur” basis, by forbidding players to receive pay in money, are worse than useless because, while failing to prevent men from playing for pay, they breed deceit and hypocrisy. (p. 180)

The authors provide examples of athletes being paid throughout the 20th and early 21st centuries, noting that while not all college athletes were comfortable accepting payment, many expected it. After a 2021 Supreme Court vote in which the justices unanimously voted that schools could provide their athletes with education-related benefits, it became clear that those same justices might well support other monetary compensation for college athletes. Seeing the writing on the wall, the NCAA changed its century-old stance and an-
nounced its support of NIL (Name, Image, and Likeness). However, this did not affect the NCAA’s perception of amateurism or the paternalistic nature surrounding their policies on paying athletes, as explained in the last chapter:

What was—as recently as 2019—viewed as “exploitation by professional and commercial enterprises” from which college athletes must be protected ... was suddenly trumpeted by coaches as the newest iteration of approved compensation and indicative of their commitment to doing what was in their players’ best interest. (p. 300)

This book is divided into three parts: “College Athletes Have Always Been Paid,” “Legal and Economic Realities of Big-Time College Sports,” and “Power Five College Sports Today.” While this division provides a good topical outline, it is not always linear. That, combined with the fact that five authors contributed to this book, leads to some repetition of content among chapters.

The five authors, all university professors, do an excellent job at hammering home the message that college profit-athletes should be able to accept payment for their services. All content is well referenced, with pages of endnotes for each chapter. Written at a time when the century-old NCAA model of athletes as unpaid amateurs is changing, this book provides extremely timely content, as well as an excellent historical perspective about the long history of the NCAA and its treatment of college athletes. This decidedly pro-athlete book is highly recommended for all academic libraries, and in particular those with sport management, labor relations, and race relations programs.

Ariana Baker, Coastal Carolina University

**Schooling the Movement: The Activism of Southern Black Educators from Reconstruction through the Civil Rights Era**

Derrick P. Aldridge, Jon N. Hale, and Tondra L. Loder-Jackson, Eds.
Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2023
ISBN: 9781643363745
304 p. $104.99 (Hbk)

Successfully filling a gap in the history of the African American civil rights struggle, *Schooling the Movement* traces the role and success of educators in advancement of justice and equality. While there are many books and articles addressing the use of litigation and direct-action protest, none, until now, have focused on the role of Black educators.

*Schooling the Movement* is an edited collection of 11 chapters (not counting the introduction and afterword) written by professors and a few doctoral candidates who explore and largely succeed in making the case that Black educators made significant contributions to the advancement of African American civil rights. Providing thorough treatment of the South, the book is divided into geographic coverage by chapter (North Carolina, South Carolina, Louisiana, Virginia, and Alabama), plus a look at W.E.B. Du Bois at the University of Berlin. Also included is Missouri, and—although not part of the Confederacy—the argument could be made that the state was definitely influenced by its Southern neighbors Arkansas, Tennessee, and Kentucky (all three of which were slaveholding states at the time of the Civil War).

Although written by different authors, the accessible yet scholarly language used throughout this volume appears to be consistent, likely reflecting solid editing provided by the three editors, all of whom are currently university professors. The articles provide sometimes lengthy endnotes, and there is a useful selected bibliography and a helpful index. The latter two features, normally considered standard for scholarly works, are sometimes lacking in today’s publishing environment or must be accessed online at times.

The chapters primarily focus on the 20th
century, especially recent decades, and include quotations from still-living educators who participated directly or indirectly in the civil rights struggle of the 1950s through the 1970s. It is nice to note there are at least two chapters covering librarians, the most informative being “Cynthia Plair Roddey: Carolina Activist and Teacher in the Movement” by Alexis M. Johnson, Danielle Wingfield, and Derrick P. Aldridge (Roddey had a more extensive career as a teacher but did work as a degree librarian as an early educator). The historical period of educator activism is represented in “W.E.B. Du Bois and the University of Berlin: The Transnational Path to Educational Activism” during the activist/scholar’s time as a graduate student in 1890s Germany learning about social science analytical methods for investigating race in the United States. Glen Bowman’s chapter “Planning, Persistence, and Pedagogy: How Elizabeth City State Colored Normal School Survived North Carolina’s White Supremacy Campaign, 1898-1905” is a fascinating account of this African American teacher training school adopting an “industrial education” curriculum rather than one of teacher training, thus avoiding being completely shut down by white supremacists who saw the more academic education of African Americans as a threat.

Like others who engaged in civil rights work, teachers/educators sometimes paid a high price for their activism. A particularly telling example concerns Willa Cofield Johnson, who taught at an all-Black high school in Enfield, North Carolina during the early 1960s. Despite warnings from the school’s African American principal (who felt under pressure from the local white school board and superintendent), Johnson persisted in civil rights work in and outside the classroom and, consequently, was fired in 1964 as described by Crystal R. Sanders in the chapter “In the Face of her Splendid Record: Willa Cofield Johnson and Teacher Dismissal in the Civil Rights Era.” Fortunately, her story ultimately had a fairly happy ending with the U.S. Supreme Court decision in 1967 affirming Johnson’s constitutional right to protest. However, other African American teachers lost their jobs for their participation in the civil rights movement as inadvertent casualties of school desegregation in the South. Alexander Hyres in “Dedication to the Highest of Callings: Florence Coleman Bryant, School Desegregation, and the Black Freedom Struggle in Postwar Virginia, 1946-2004” observes, “As school desegregation took hold, Black teachers and educators across the South lost their jobs at a staggering rate” (p. 157).

Schooling the Movement illuminates a little-known aspect of the civil rights movement. African American educators have not often been recognized for their contributions to the struggle for freedom and equality, but chapter contributors make a very good case for including these dedicated and often unrecognized or underappreciated participants. They may not have made as many news headlines and, often, their contributions were of a quieter albeit more sustained nature than those made by activists, lawyers, and more prominent heroes of the civil rights movement. This book suggests there are many more stories that need telling concerning African American educators as activists in the struggle for freedom from the Reconstruction era through the civil rights era (and beyond).

Complete with detailed endnotes, a bibliography of primary and secondary sources, and a useful index, Schooling the Movement will appeal most to an academic readership; however, this well-edited work is accessible to interested lay readers as well. Academic and large public libraries collecting in the areas of African American and civil rights history will find this book to be a good addition to their collections, as will those collecting in the subject of the history of education, especially in the South.

Tim Dodge, Auburn University

Skimpy Coverage: Sports Illustrated and the Shaping of the Female Athlete

Bonnie M. Hagerman
Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2023
ISBN: 9780813949239
338 p. $34.50 (Pbk)

Skimpy Coverage: Sports Illustrated and the Shaping of the Female Athlete provides a longitudinal study of women athletes through the eyes of mass media, focusing specifically on the leading magazine for
sports, Sports Illustrated (SI). In the first book-length study of its kind, Bonnie Hagerman explores how media coverage represents, influences, perpetuates, and creates archetypes and stereotypes of women, as illustrated through reporting on sportswomen who have often “used sports and the platform it offered to push for empowerment, freedom, equality, and acceptance in ways that have complemented, inspired, and challenged broader feminist agendas” (p. 4). Through deep study into Sports Illustrated’s reporting over time, the book explores the topics that were reported on repeatedly, revealing perspectives beyond the sportswomen themselves and into broader culture. Working through this history thematically, the book features chapters on femininity, sexuality, Title IX, the frailty myth, Olympic athletes, women’s leagues, and SI covers. Intersectional perspectives on the female athlete experience are explored in every chapter, noting how the phenomenon discussed is often racialized as well, amplifying the effects on women of color.

The book begins with a foundational exploration of the concept of femininity as it has been applied to sportswomen throughout the years by SI’s discussions of their presentation, their bodies, and their emotions. Through these discussions, the book investigates how portrayals of femininity, whiteness, and race have changed over time. The book then makes the connection in the second chapter to the lesbian stigma applied to women when they fail to reach the feminine goals expected of sportswomen in society. The following study of sexuality in this chapter investigates how homophobia was used to marginalize and diminish women in sports and amplified focus on “real women.” This focus reinforced a narrow view of gender and identity and maintained patriarchal order, as seen through examples of women’s stories from the 1920s to the current issues trans women are facing in sports today. The subsequent chapter, “An Odd Way to Even Things Up,” covers Title IX, its implementation and coverage, and the pursuit for gender equity, acknowledging that with the pursuit of gender equity, there was not racial equity.

The fourth chapter of the book covers the frailty myth, a concept debunked by Collette Dowling in a book of the same name—that women are the weaker sex. In investigating this topic through SI’s reporting, the author explores the topics of injury and attacks, mental health, eating disorders, performance drugs, and sexual assault through the stories of women like Monica Seles and Nancy Kerrigan, Ronda Rousey and Simone Biles, Lindsey Vonn, Cathy Rigby and Serena Williams, and many more well-known and lesser-known female athletes over time. In the following chapter, the book examines the Olympic ideal and how athletes—and female athletes in particular—have been used in diplomatic strategy for international teams throughout history, as they were portrayed as both diplomats and national treasures. Through examples spanning the 1960s and racial politics, Cold War competition, indigenous rights, and reconciliation for colonialism, this chapter illustrates how, despite greater visibility in coverage through SI, issues of civil rights have been ignored or downplayed by the magazine.

Despite seeing more robust coverage at the Olympics and having legal protections under Title IX, female athletes faced challenges “making the case that they deserved the same kind of respect, compensation, and opportunities their male counterparts enjoyed” (p. 192). In “A League of Their Own,” the book delves into the formation of professional women’s leagues and the fight against the perspective that leagues are publicity stunts and not populated with accomplished athletes. This fight is exemplified in this chapter through the stories of women’s baseball leagues, with early Bloomer Leagues and later in the 1940s; the Red Heads and women’s basketball leagues in the 1970s and beyond; women’s golf conferences; soccer federations and the World Cup competitions; as well as tennis associations. Concluding the book is an examination of SI magazine covers that returns the reader to the central questions of how femininity was a requirement of female athletes despite the concept’s evolution over time and how SI’s influence on the world of sports has acted to uphold that requirement instead of upend it.

The author of the book, Bonnie M. Hagerman, is an associate professor of women, gender, and sexuality at the University of Virginia. This book is the product of the author’s dissertation work and is reflective of her teaching expertise at the University of Virginia as well.

While scholarship surrounding Sports Illustrated and its history abound (see Michael MacCambridge’s The Franchise: A History of Sports Illustrated Magazine), as well as scholar-
ship centering feminist research on women in sports, this book brings together sports journalism history and feminist research in a way that is comprehensive and would be beneficial to sports studies, journalism and mass media, and women and gender studies collections. The gender history perspective could be fruitful to expand perspectives of sports studies and journalism students. This book would find its place in academic libraries and public libraries alike for those looking for a comprehensive study of women in sport and the societal perspectives of female athletes over time.

*Loren Mixon*, Coastal Carolina University

**Vaulting Ambition: FDR’s Campaign to Pack the Supreme Court**

Michael Nelson

Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2023

ISBN: 9780700634125

124 p. $24.95 (Pbk)

Is it possible to gain a mental picture of a president’s attempt to “pack” the Supreme Court through canvassing his closest advisors and enacting legislation to accomplish this goal? Throughout the pages of the book *Vaulting Ambition: FDR’s Campaign to Pack the Supreme Court*, author Michael Nelson accomplishes this feat effectively. At one point in the book, the author includes seven possible decisions to be made which would help FDR accomplish his goal of packing the Supreme Court. The inclusion of these decisions helps the reader get a better picture of what factors might have contributed to the president’s decision-making process. For instance, was the decision to pack the court based on prior success with getting New Deal legislation passed? Alternatively, was the president’s decision to pack the Supreme Court based on the feeling that overall public opinion would support his decision? One of the main ideas of the book is to show how FDR might have overestimated his ability to get legislation passed to influence the three branches of government during his tenure as president. In this case, FDR tried to remake the Supreme Court by increasing its number with justices who would support any legislation that was proposed or would make it less likely that any opposition would arise in the final analysis.

In this book, the author includes President Franklin Roosevelt’s notion to add a new justice to the Supreme Court every time a justice reaches 70 and does not retire. In the end, the motivation of FDR was to exert influence over the court by electing like-minded individuals to the court who would be more likely to approve his programs or legislation. Conversations between FDR and close advisors like Harold Ickes (secretary of the treasury) or Homer S. Cummings (attorney general) help illustrate President Roosevelt’s reliance on these trusted advisors to help him remake the Supreme Court into an institution that would support his legislation completely. At various times in the book, the author includes these conversations to help the reader understand the political climate happening in the United States during the late 1930s.

The addition of these actual accounts of FDR’s interactions with his advisory staff also contributes to our understanding of why he thought it might be possible to accomplish the court-packing plan during his presidency. Essentially, FDR felt that the initial success of his New Deal programs would make it easier to accomplish his ultimate court plan to increase the size of the Supreme Court with like-minded justices. This book really contributes to the subject of how presidents used their initial success or popularity to push through programs that might suit their political goals. Additionally, including this type of book in academic libraries would help support research into this area of history. The book is also part of a series called Landmark Presidential Decisions. For this reason, students majoring in political science at any university or college would benefit by having the book in their college library for relevant research assignments.

This book is intended as a historical overview of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s campaign through the Judicial Procedures Reform Bill of 1937 to try and “pack” the United States Supreme Court with additional justices who could rule favorably on the constitutionality of New Deal programs. In the end, FDR failed in his effort to increase the size of the Supreme Court. Specific pieces of conversation that President Roosevelt had with his closest advisors lend some added un-
derstanding to the book. Because of its specific scope, _Vaulting Ambition: FDR’s Campaign to Pack the Supreme Court_ would be suitable for inclusion in any academic or local library with a focus on historical episodes. The book could also be a valuable addition to any special library with a Southern history or political history focus. Michael Nelson is the Fulmer Professor of Political Science at Rhodes College in Memphis, Tennessee, and senior fellow at the University of Virginia’s Miller Center. Prior to writing this book, his other publications include the following: _Resilient America: Electing Nixon in 1968, Channeling Dissent, and Dividing Government_ (2017), _Clinton’s Elections: 1992, 1996, and the Birth of a New Era of Governance_ (2020), and _43: Inside the George W. Bush Presidency_ (2022).

_David W. Young_, University of North Carolina at Pembroke

If you are interested in becoming a book reviewer for the _SELn_ email Teresa Nesbitt, teresa.nesbitt@ung.edu, for more information.
Attention New Librarians: Call for Papers for New Voices 2024
Sponsored by the University and College Library Section of the Southeastern Library Association (SELA) and EBSCO

The winner will be awarded $200 and invited to present their paper as a poster session at the 2024 SELA conference, scheduled for July 15-16, 2024, on the campus of The University of Alabama in Huntsville.

**Submissions must be:**
1. Written by a new professional librarian with no more than five years of experience
2. Address an idea or perspective on a current library issue
   - As the work will be published in *The Southeastern Librarian (SELn)*, see the complete guidelines at https://www.selaonline.org/storage/assets/southeasternlibrarian/gfas.pdf

The monetary award for New Voices is sponsored by EBSCO.

**Important Date:** For your paper to be considered, submissions will be accepted starting May 23rd, with a deadline of noon May 31st, to Neil Foulger, email: nfoulger@alasu.edu.
University of Alabama’s Business Library Receives National Recognition

The Angelo Bruno Business Library was featured in the 2023 American Libraries Library Design Showcase issue. This annual showcase features new and renovated libraries that meet patron needs in exciting and effective ways. In 2022, Bruno completed major renovations, updating all facets of the facility with new fixtures, carpet, and décor, and created 20 new team workrooms with modular furniture, white boards from floor to ceiling, and large monitors for collaborative research. The new Thomas Jefferson Jones III business analytics information commons includes a mother’s nursing room and a large stock exchange ticker, replicating what students would see on Wall Street.

The University Libraries, in coordination with the office of Academic Initiatives and Integrity, have created a research guide titled “AI and Academic Integrity” that is free and open to the campus community and beyond online. As the use of AI becomes increasingly common, this guide serves to provide definitions, ethical considerations, instructions for citing AI sources and precautions that should be taken when using AI in an academic setting.

Lee Dotson, the University of Central Florida’s Digital Initiatives Librarian and institutional digital repository manager, was accepted into the prestigious Digital POWRR Peer Assessment Program for 2024. POWRR stands for “Preserving (digital) Objects with Restricted Resources.” This program is an exclusive initiative designed to empower individuals to address the challenges of preserving digital assets, especially when faced with limited resources. Lee will engage with a cohort in a year-long comprehensive assessment process, collaborating to evaluate and improve digital preservation strategies and practices. Participants will work closely with peers and mentors, conduct an institutional case study, generate a longer peer assessment report, present findings through a final project showcase, and write a white paper that will be published.
Robust Programming at Augusta University

2023 was a busy year for the Reese and Robert B. Greenblatt, MD Libraries. In the spring a ribbon cutting was held to celebrate the completed renovation of the Greenblatt Library. Garnett Johnson, Mayor of Augusta, and Sonny Perdue, Chancellor of the University System of Georgia, were a few of the local and state dignitaries in attendance.

Other events throughout the year included: Free Comic Book Day, The Segregated Doctoring History Lecture by Dr. Leslie Pollard, A Constitution Read-In, and The annual AU Authors Reception celebrating student, staff, and faculty authors.

The year ended with Reese Library hosting “Life and Limb: The Toll of the American Civil War.” This National Library of Medicine traveling exhibit examines the experiences of disabled veterans and their role as symbols of a fractured nation. A book discussion on Paying with Their Bodies: American War and the Problem of the Disabled Veteran by John M. Kinder was held in coordination with this exhibit.

The AU Libraries are busy planning various exciting and educational programs for 2024. Presently, the Greenblatt Library is hosting the National Library of Medicine traveling exhibit “Care and Custody: Past Responses to Mental Health.”

family history, and more.

The Special Collections Library is open Monday-Thursday from 10 AM-4PM central time. While walk-in visits are permitted, confirmed appointments are preferred for viewing materials.

UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA AT LAFAYETTE

UL Lafayette Earns National Award for Access and Diversity Efforts

The Edith Garland Dupré Library is among 56 academic libraries to earn the inaugural Library Excellence in Access and Diversity (LEAD) Award from INSIGHT into Diversity magazine. The LEAD Award honors academic library programs and initiatives that encourage and support diversity, equity, and inclusion in a range of areas. Those areas include content, programs, research, technology, accessibility, exhibitions, and community outreach.

UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI

New Hires at the University of Mississippi

On October 30, 2023, The University of Mississippi Libraries hired two new librarians. Ally Watkins has joined UM Libraries as a Research & Instruction Librarian and Assistant Professor. Ally will be the library liaison for the School of Education. She graduated from the University of Mississippi with a B.A. in English and received her M.L.I.S. from the University of Southern Mississippi. Jeannie Speck-Thompson
has joined UM Libraries as the University Archivist and Assistant Professor. Jeannie received her M.L.I.S. from the University of Southern Mississippi and her B.A. in English from the University of Mississippi. In addition, Jeannie is working toward her doctorate in history from the University of Mississippi.

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

Southern Miss Hosts New Exhibit

The University of Southern Mississippi’s Special Collections has a new exhibit: “Gene Taylor: South Mississippi’s Choice for U.S. Congress, 1989-2011.” Drawn extensively from Gene Taylor’s papers, the exhibit highlights major themes of his tenure. A listening center and research table are installed in the gallery to allow visitors to spend more time learning about his perspectives on the Iraq War and Hurricane Katrina. The exhibit is on display in McCain Library and Archives through March 22nd by appointment.

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL

UNC Chapel Hill Vaping Settlement Depository Partnership

A partnership between the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill’s University Libraries and the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) will create an online searchable public depository of roughly 4 million internal documents from the state of North Carolina’s $47.8 million settlement with electronic cigarette maker Juul Labs. As part of the settlement, Juul Labs is required to make these records public. These documents will explain how Juul Labs marketed its products and will help make sure that other companies cannot use the same playbook.

UNC-Chapel Hill was selected to oversee the $1 million project. The Libraries in turn partnered with the UCSF Industry Documents Library, which has extensive experience managing the volume of records involved in the Truth Tobacco Industry Documents and other collections. The Juul Labs documents will be cross-searchable with more than 18 million other documents in the Industry Document Library’s tobacco, opioid, chemical, drug, food, and fossil fuel industry archives, which have supported over 1,100 publications and had a significant impact on tobacco control and other public health policies in the U.S. and around the world.

CLEMSON UNIVERSITY

Clemson History Museum Receives First Major Gift

Mary Blakely “Blake” Hendricks Burnside has given $25,000 to the development of a Clemson history museum and interpretive center. Burnside, whose family has a 100-year history with the institution, also plans to include the museum in her estate, so that more money will go to support the project in the future. This donation marks the first significant gift towards this initiative.
VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

Vanderbilt’s Science and Engineering Library’s Improved Main Floor

Vanderbilt University’s Sarah Shannon Stevenson Science and Engineering Library has reconfigured its physical space to be more conducive for students to gather. All books were relocated from its main floor to the Reading Room, freeing up more than 3,400 square feet of space for studying and collaboration.

VIRGINIA TECH

Virginia Teach Data Expert Named Maintainer Community Lead for the Carpentries

Nathaniel Porter, University Libraries’ social science data consultant and data education coordinator, is taking on a new role as the maintainer lead for The Carpentries, an international community of data and computing educators. The maintainer community lead’s primary role is to recruit, connect, and coordinate The Carpentries’ lesson maintainers from all over the world. This includes hosting monthly meetings, recruiting and onboarding new maintainers, coordinating with curriculum leads, and encouraging and equipping non-maintainers to contribute effectively.
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