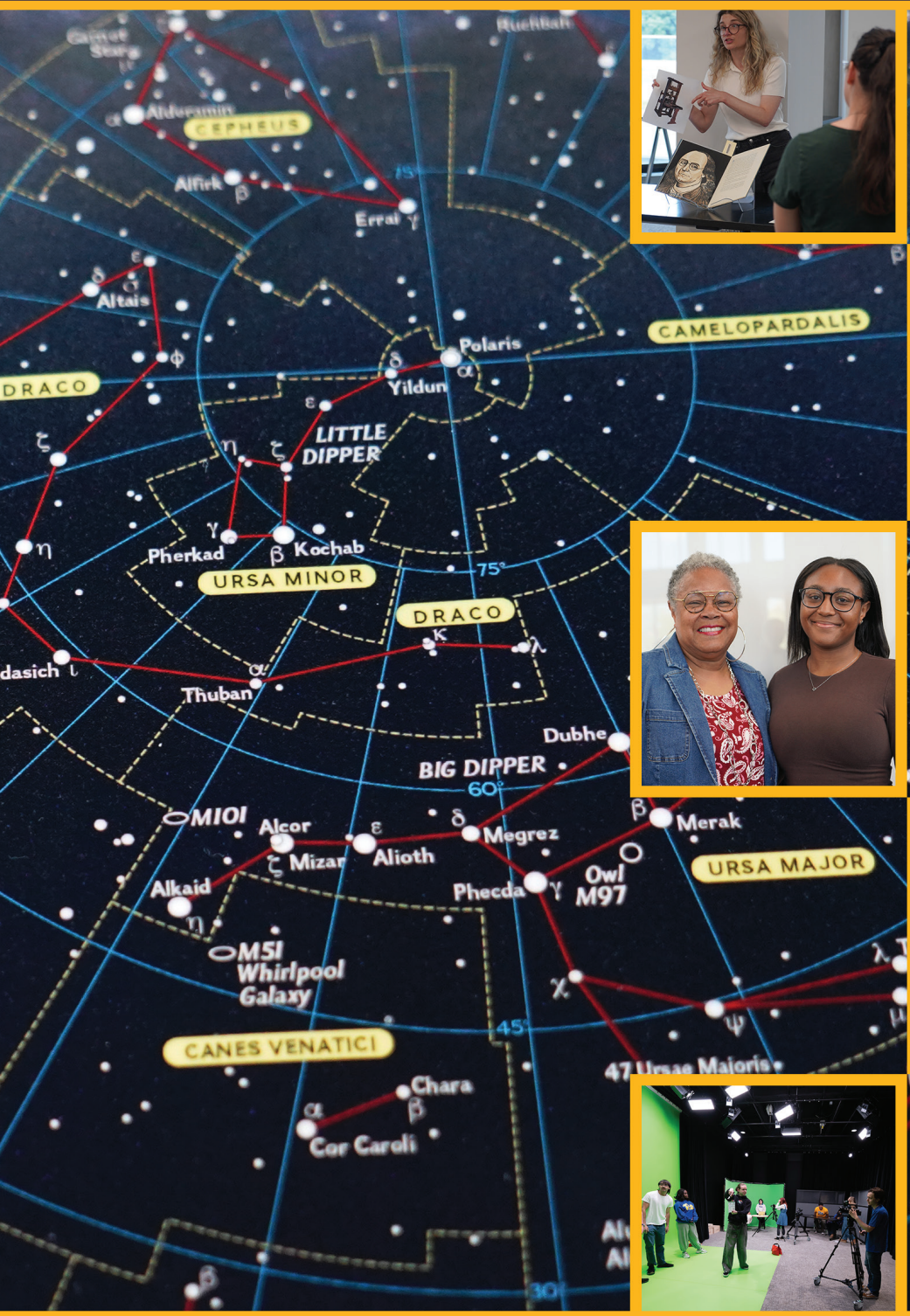
University of Pittsburgh

LIBRARY SYSTEM

IMPACT REPORT 2026























University of Pittsburgh | University Library System

ULS LIBRARIES

Bevier Science & Engineering Library

Center for American Music

Finney Music Library

Frick Fine Arts Library

Hanley Library (Bradford)

Haskell Library (Titusville)

Hillman Library

Millstein Library (Greensburg)

Owen Library (Johnstown)

Thomas Blvd. Library

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A Look at Hillman Library's Transformation

A year after reopening from a multi-year renovation, Hillman Library is bustling with activity. The final phase of the renovation brought online the Digital Scholarship Lab, which enables faculty and students to build 3D models and visualize data, and the Digital Research Wall, which amplifies their research and discoveries. The Media Lab: Film serves as a studio for documentary film projects, interviews, discussions, and instructional material. Calderone Media Row offers an acoustically treated audio lab for recording and mixing, plus editing booths for post-production work. These pages capture Hillman Library as it looks now, a hub of campus life.







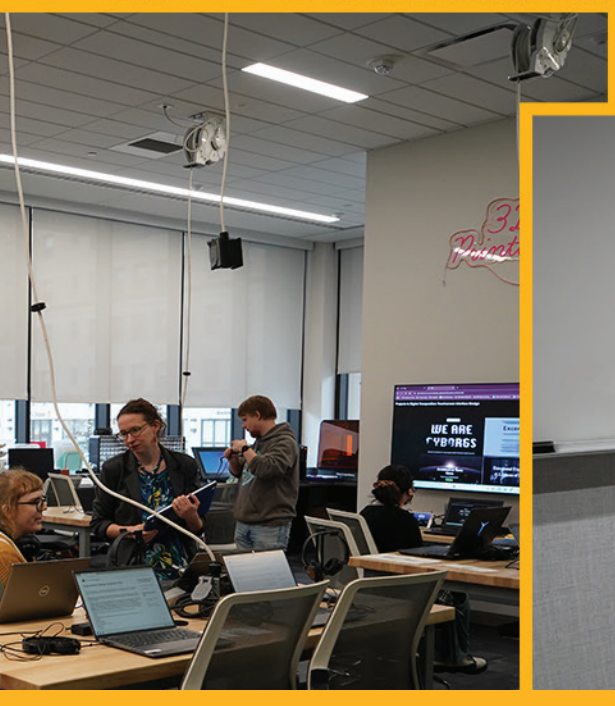









I am made to leave
I am made
to return


WE ARE
CYBORGS



More Readers, Greater Impact:

The Library Expands Open Access for Pitt Scholarship





Much of the world's scholarly research sits behind paywalls, out of reach for the clinicians, teachers, journalists, entrepreneurs, and curious readers who could put it to use. Open Access (OA) removes that barrier by making research free to read for anyone, anywhere.

Pitt authors often face steep fees to publish this way. Since 2024, the University of Pittsburgh Library System (ULS) has negotiated agreements with publishers that cover those costs, so Pitt researchers can share their work openly at no charge to them. In 2025, we grew the number of agreements to 17, and Pitt authors published 771 OA articles.

The results are measurable. Among articles published with Wiley, one of Pitt's largest scholarly publishers, those covered by our agreement were viewed 3.7 times as often, cited 1.6 times as often, and reached readers in 141 countries, compared with 94 for articles outside the agreement. Seventy percent also drew media coverage, compared with 59 percent of other articles.

By negotiating on behalf of our researchers, the library helps ensure that Pitt discoveries reach the people who can learn from them and build on them, here in Pittsburgh and around the world.



Bridging Disciplines at Origins of Astronomy Week

In April 2026, the ULS brought together physicists, classicists, art historians, archivists, and librarians for Origins of Astronomy Week, bridging disciplines that rarely intersect so they could exchange knowledge. We held faculty talks, hands-on makerspace activities, rare book exhibits, film screenings, and more in Hillman Library, inviting participants to explore how innovations in astronomy from the past paved the way for our modern understanding of the universe.

Faculty interaction across disciplines was key to the event's success, according to Carles Badenes, a professor in the Department of Physics & Astronomy who gave a talk on measuring the size of the universe. Badenes said a professor's specialized work can become insular because it often means working within one department. Origins of Astronomy Week let faculty connect with Pitt's wider scholarly community and approach the same subject from entirely different angles.

Badenes was struck by how the Digital Research Wall showcased his colleagues' work in ways a computer screen could not. Evan Schneider and Rachel Bezanson, professors in the Department of Physics & Astronomy, displayed images of some of the deepest views of the universe taken with the James Webb Space Telescope. Badenes said observing them in that medium was "really rewarding to see." He also noted that Schneider's high-resolution galaxy simulations displayed on the wall "looked really spectacular."

After seeing the Digital Research Wall for the first time, Stamatina (Tina) Mastorakou, a professor in Pitt's Department of Classics, was inspired to build a rotating exhibit exploring how different cultures have imagined and represented the Sun across time. "I've never seen it elsewhere," Mastorakou said about the digital wall. "It's a great tool for the library because it's interactive and so easy to use; you can do so many things." She credits Rachel Starry, head of digital scholarship and publishing at the ULS, with helping distill her material into concise, exhibit-ready content. Mastorakou said the collaboration was easy.





As someone new to Pitt, she called Origins of Astronomy Week "a great opportunity" for people to get to know our resources.

Sandhya Rao, another professor in the Department of Physics & Astronomy, wanted a way to bring a new unit in her course to life. Rao turned to Open Lab @ Hillman, a collaborative program between the ULS and the University Center for Teaching and Learning, where Molly Ritter, curriculum coordinator at the Open Lab, helped her students 3D-print, laser-cut, and hand-build astronomical instruments and models of ancient structures and artifacts, including a scale Stonehenge and inscribed Babylonian clay tablets. The best student work was on display during Origins of Astronomy Week, with students on hand to walk visitors through what they built. Rao said her "students loved the projects they were involved with and they thought it was the highlight of the course." She plans to keep collaborating with the Open Lab and add a few more projects in future semesters.

Jason Rampelt, the history of science and medicine archivist in Archives & Special Collections (A&SC), moderated a faculty panel featuring scholars from Pitt's Department of History of Art and Architecture, Department of Physics & Astronomy, and from the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science.

The panel discussed how past cultures viewed science and spirituality as less distinct than they are treated today. Rampelt also worked with Runxiao Zhu, head of the East Asian Library, on an exhibit exploring the history of astronomical and astrological thought through rare 15th- to 19th-century books drawn from A&SC.

Origins of Astronomy Week offered students, faculty, and scholars a rare opportunity to collaborate on a shared subject across disciplines. That kind of work can go unnoticed, Badenes said, but he considers initiatives like this “really important” for a university to keep doing.

We plan to continue turning specialized expertise into shared discovery with another “Origins of Science” week in the future, centered on a different subject.



The ULS Trains Kenyan Librarians in Digitization Practices to Preserve an East African Archive

In summer 2026, the ULS hosted Damaris Wambugu and Daniel Waswala, two librarians from St. Paul's University (SPU) in Kenya, to train them in collection digitization practices. The training equipped them with the skills to begin preserving and disseminating SPU's library collections, including a rare set of historical records related to the slave trade in East Africa. Once digitized, the materials will be accessible through SPU's library, opening a historically underrepresented archive to researchers. Without digitization efforts, these delicate, irreplaceable materials could be lost before scholars have a chance to study them.

The ULS has a long and distinguished history of digitizing and preserving special collections, and we brought together the expertise, specialized equipment, and preservation spaces needed to train Wambugu and Waswala. Over two months, our Archives & Special Collections team taught them archival practices, digitization methodologies, and library systems management. Waswala said that touring Hillman Library and its resources changed his understanding "of what a library could be." The collaboration is part of our investment in African-focused scholarship alongside Pitt's Center for African Studies and our broader commitment to forging international partnerships.





Preparing Pitt Students for an AI Future

The ULS hosted a series of workshops in the spring semester of 2026 to help the Pitt community use generative AI tools thoughtfully. In “Navigating Pitt’s AI Resources for Research & Learning,” Luke Ferdinand, technology support services manager, and Ula Lechtenberg, learning design coordinator, walked attendees through available AI tools and helped them determine each tool’s strengths for their research needs. Attendees left with a clearer sense of which Pitt-supported platforms or general AI assistants best matched their goals.

A companion workshop, “Creating a Personal Research & Learning Assistant: Writing Effective Prompts,” helped attendees go a little further. Led by Carrie Iwema, head of the Bevier Science & Engineering Library, and Lechtenberg, the session taught participants to move beyond treating AI like a search engine. Attendees learned to build prompts using frameworks that incorporate a persona, context, and supporting references, sharpening both their questions and the AI model’s responses.



We also extended the conversation beyond the classroom by co-sponsoring “Academia & AI: A Student-Faculty Dialogue” with Pitt’s Student Government Board, coordinated by Iwema. A student board member moderated a faculty panel as students asked questions about generative AI’s role in academia.

From the classroom to campus-wide dialogue, we are teaching Pitt’s community to use AI thoughtfully and question it critically.



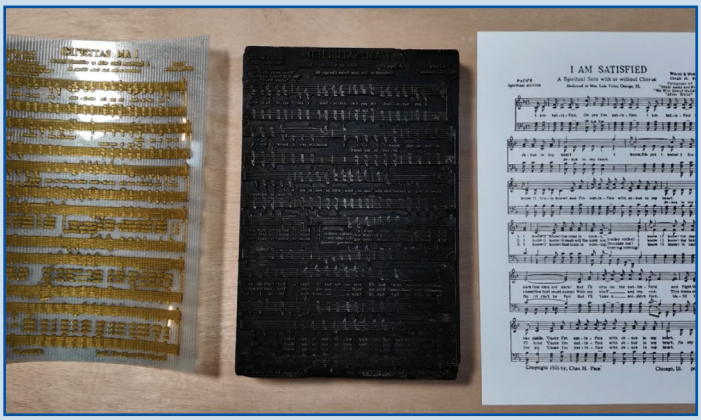
THE LIBRARY EARNS NEH GRANT

to Preserve and Share Gospel Music from the Charles and Frankie Pace Collection

In 2026, Christopher Lynch, head of the Theodore M. Finney Music Library, received a $190,000 National Endowment for the Humanities Scholarly Editions and Translations grant. The two-year project will mark the culmination of years of work in the ULS to preserve and share the rare gospel music in the Charles and Frankie Pace Collection. The NEH grant will allow us to complete the restoration of Charles Pace's music.

Charles Henry Pace (1886-1963) wrote some of the earliest Black gospel music, and with his wife Frankie, he ran one of the most successful independent Black gospel music publishing businesses. They started in Chicago in 1934 and moved to Pittsburgh's Hill District in 1936. By distributing his sheet music nationally, he and Frankie helped establish the genre's conventions and build the distribution network that fueled gospel's popularity in the 1940s and 1950s.

Despite Pace's historical significance, historians and musicians had largely forgotten him, and very little of his printed music has been preserved. The Charles and Frankie Pace Collection includes some sheet music, but most materials are manuscripts, photographs, and printing plates. Many of his songs survive only on the printing plates in the collection.



In 2023, the ULS set out to reintroduce Pace's songs to the living tradition of gospel music. We digitized much of the collection and co-sponsored and recorded the first Pace concert in over 60 years. The concert featured the Heritage Gospel Chorale of Pittsburgh in performance at Ebenezer Baptist Church.

In spring 2026, we revived more of Pace's music by producing new polymer printing plates, copies of Pace's originals, from which we printed crisp, clear pages as he designed them. These prints are now available for performance and study. Lynch also oversaw the library's production of studio recordings of six of these songs with local professionals. Music director Alton Merrell led the group, which included Anqwenique Kinsel, Faith Otey, Erika Johnson, Michele Bankole, and Brendon Williams. The performers sang with only piano accompaniment, which reflects how Pace would have performed the songs in the 1930s and 1940s.

Lynch will work with Seton Hill University to transcribe the rest of Pace's music from the plates and create a complete edition of more than 200 of his songs, helping ensure the music remains accessible to researchers for generations.

Learn more in a video featuring Lynch and Frances Pace Barnes, the daughter of Charles and Frankie Pace.



Opening the Papers of

SHARON G. FLAKE

Award-winning Children's Author and Pitt Alumna

In 2024, children's literature author Sharon G. Flake designated the ULS to steward her life's work and provide access to her collection, which documents her literary career and professional activities. A Pitt alumna (English, 1978), Flake is a prolific award-winning author. Her 1998 debut novel, "The Skin I'm In," delves into themes of colorism and self-worth that still resonate with audiences today.



In the spring of 2026, our Archives & Special Collections celebrated the opening of her papers for research. A selection from her archive was on display, including picture books, young adult novels, books from the "I'm In" trilogy, a photograph of Flake with August Wilson, and her winning story for his 1992 contest. Clare Withers, curator of the Elizabeth Nesbitt Collection of children's literature, moderated a panel discussion on the significance of Flake's writing and its cultural impact with Courtney Weikle-Mills, director of the Children's Literature Program; Hebah Uddin, PhD candidate and children's literature author; and Khirsten Scott, director of the Western Pennsylvania Writing Project.

Nina Giles, an English Literature senior on the pre-med track and a 2026 recipient of the Archival Scholars Research Award, discussed her research on the critical reception of "The Skin I'm In." Working with Withers to define her project, Giles found correspondence in the archive that showed the global reach of Flake's writing, including a letter from a Japanese student who translated parts of the novel for her thesis. "Even though that student might not relate to the protagonist's story personally," Giles said, "she still thought it was profound and important enough to translate." Access to the archive gave Giles and students like her a firsthand look at Flake's influence around the world.

In her closing remarks, Flake reflected on growing up in her Philadelphia neighborhood, on the community she's building here in Pittsburgh, and on entrusting us with her literary legacy. By safeguarding her papers, we help ensure Flake's voice and the community that shaped it will continue to speak to new readers.

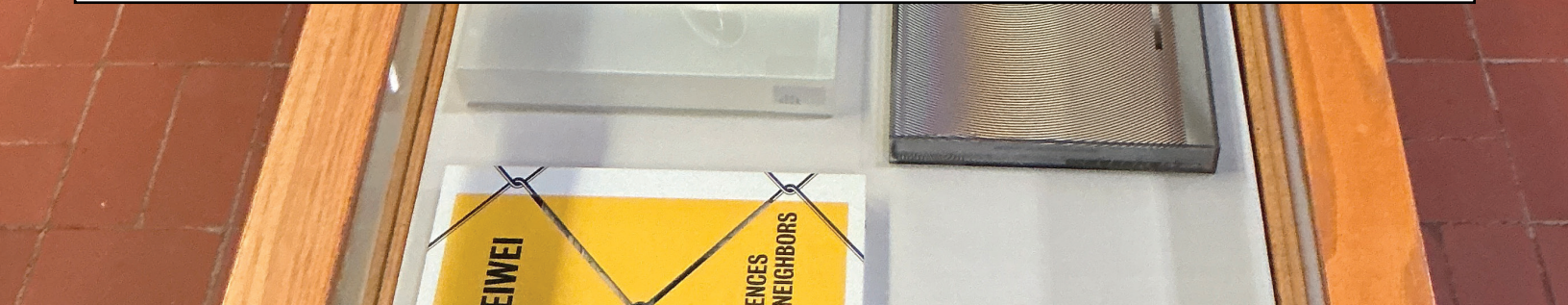
Explore Sharon G. Flake's papers alongside collections from other African American writers such as Bebe Moore Campbell, Albert French, and August Wilson that the ULS holds.

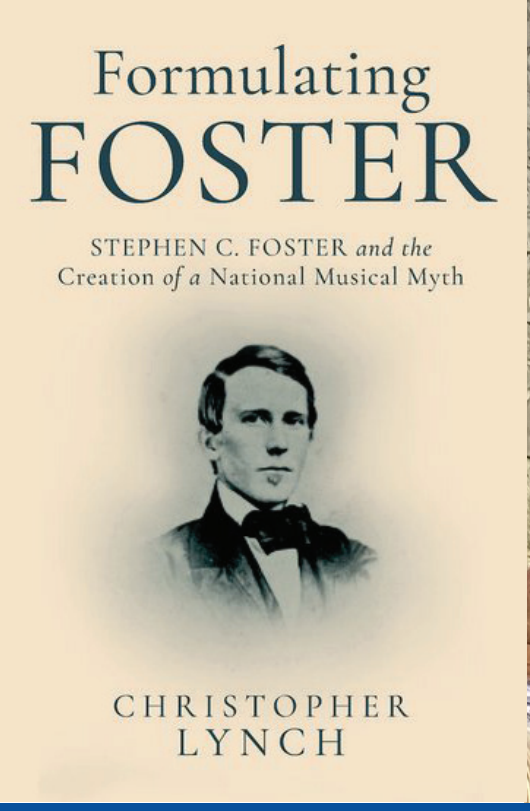




Frick Fine Arts Library Upgrades to Protect and Showcase Cultural Treasures

The Henry Clay Frick Fine Arts Library reopened after closing in spring 2026 to replace the building's heating and cooling system and protect rare books, photography collections, and other materials from temperature and humidity swings. New lighting brightens the browsing room, with more fixtures coming to the reading room soon, making it easier for patrons to read and study. The project also gave us a chance to rethink how we present our collection. Most of our photography books are now housed on the mezzanine in the reading room, where patrons can browse freely rather than requesting materials one at a time. "With this space, we aim to cultivate an environment that invites curiosity and serendipity, deepens research, and brings our visual materials to life," said Anaïs Grateau, head of the Frick Fine Arts Library. Several professors have already asked to bring classes in for guided sessions that would fold the collection directly into their coursework.







Christopher Lynch, Head of the Theodore M. Finney Music Library,

Unravels an American Myth in New Stephen C. Foster Scholarship

Christopher Lynch, head of the Theodore M. Finney Music Library, published his book, "Formulating Foster: Stephen C. Foster and the Creation of a National Musical Myth" with Oxford University Press in 2025. Lynch's research draws from the Foster Hall Collection in the Center for American Music, the principal repository of materials documenting Foster's life and work, which we have held since 1937. Using previously unknown archival materials, Lynch authenticates a new song and reveals details about Foster's life and personality.

An antebellum Pittsburgher known as the "father of American music," Foster left behind a complicated legacy: classic songs like the 1854 ballad "Hard Times Come Again No More" alongside minstrel songs with disparaging depictions of African Americans. "Formulating Foster" confronts racism in American music and proposes new ways to hear his work that consider its historical significance alongside its most controversial elements. Western Pennsylvania History magazine called it a "revelation," and Oxford University Press nominated it for the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers Foundation's Deems Taylor/Virgil Thomson Award and the American Musicological Society's Music in American Culture Award.

During the book tour, timed to Foster's 200th birthday, Lynch brought his scholarship to audiences well beyond Pittsburgh, from the banks of Florida's Suwannee River to a sold-out world premiere musical inspired by the book. Locally, Lynch's tour included a visit to the ULS's Foster Museum in the Stephen Foster Memorial with Kathryn Miller Haines, head of the Center for American Music. In the year of America's 250th anniversary and the 200th anniversary of Foster's birth, "Formulating Foster" invites audiences to engage with Foster's legacy through a critical lens.

Partnering on a Global Initiative to Digitize a 20th-Century Philosopher's Work

The ULS is helping to create a digital edition of the complete works of Rudolf Carnap (1891-1970). A pioneer of analytic philosophy and a key figure in the Vienna Circle, Carnap profoundly shaped 20th-century thought. His extensive papers, primarily housed in our Archives of Scientific Philosophy, have been a vital resource for scholars worldwide. The Rudolf Carnap Papers include over 100,000 pages documenting his writings, diaries, and correspondence with hundreds of scholars; lectures and manuscripts; and a substantial collection of photographs taken throughout his life.

After decades of preserving this collection, we are now a key partner in a 25-year international collaboration with the Bavarian Academy of Sciences and Humanities and Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich, Germany. The €400,000-per-year funding will help efforts to digitize Carnap's entire body of work and give researchers access through a new digital platform. For the first time, his logical deductions will be available as digital mathematical objects, opening the door to new research methods. The project will also produce a printed student edition with English translations, bringing Carnap's core works to a wider international audience.

Pitt's Center for Philosophy of Science will host visiting scholars working on the project, continuing its long tradition of welcoming researchers who study Carnap's papers. "By transforming more than 100,000 pages of physical manuscripts into a dynamic, open-access digital environment, the ULS is not just preserving the past. We are ensuring Carnap's insights are accessible to every researcher in the world," said Kornelia Tancheva, director of the ULS.



HILLMAN LIBRARY NAMING OPPORTUNITIES
Leave Your Mark on a Legacy of Learning

Thanks to the generosity of donors, we have named four more spaces in Hillman Library. From group projects to class instruction, each room serves as a gathering point for the Pitt community and carries the legacy of those who made it possible. Through library naming opportunities, donors can create a lasting tribute in a place where discovery happens every day.



Your name, or the name of someone who shaped your journey, will greet more than a million visitors each year, reminding each of them that those who came before helped build their success. Naming a space is an invitation to be part of our story, now and in the future. Your support goes beyond the room's walls and transforms a student's experience.

Prove What's Possible with the Library and Pitt's $3 Billion Campaign

In fall 2026, the University of Pittsburgh launched *Proving Possible*, a $3 billion fundraising campaign supporting students, faculty, researchers, and staff across every Pitt school and campus. *Proving Possible* is organized around four priorities: accelerating student success; advancing scholarship and innovation; cultivating community, partnership, and impact; and fueling work that makes the impossible a matter of fact. The library's fundraising priorities, Student Success and Archives & Special Collections, support all four of these.

As one of Pitt's most heavily used partners in research, teaching, and creative work, the ULS can advance the campaign's goals as much as it can benefit from them. Every day, we give students the resources to succeed, equip researchers with the tools and latest scholarly research to make discoveries, and offer the community access to archives, collections, and expertise found in few other places. So far, the campaign has raised more than $1.4 billion toward its $3 billion goal, with more than 128,000 donors and nearly half a million recorded moments of alumni engagement.

We invite you to be part of what comes next. Every gift, whether directed toward the ULS or another corner of the university, helps build future *Proving Possible* promises. To support this campaign, learn more and give directly at **provingpossible.pitt.edu**.

2025 LIBRARY SPOTLIGHT

1,274,785
Visitors to the library

994
Classes and workshops taught

17,895
Participants in classes and workshops

4,504,953
Article searches in library-supplied databases

3,687,042
eBooks owned

13,968
Books borrowed by other libraries worldwide

Fall 2025 Student Survey

88.9%
Say employees are helpful

81.1%
Overall satisfaction rate

77.7%
Say the library helps them succeed in their degree

Possible Starts with Someone Who Believes

Every gift matters. Will you join us in proving possible?
Your support makes the impossible a matter of fact.

provingpossible.pitt.edu

