

University Library System (ULS) 2023-
2024 Summary of the Year's Efforts

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Major Strategic Accomplishments

Signing License Agreements that Allow Pitt Research to Publish Open Access in Major Journals Free of Charge

In 2023, the ULS began transforming its journal subscription packages by reworking the terms and paying a surcharge to include a free open publishing component for University community members. We are gradually increasing the number of deals that include this component, and, to date, our agreements cover nearly a third of the journals in which Pitt authors publish (based on the 2023 article count in Web of Science). Publishing open access allows authors to retain their author rights and make their publications freely accessible immediately after publication (avoiding embargoes). This strategic initiative marks a move away from supporting article processing charges (APCs), which subsidize Open publishing article by article and with fees sometimes reaching into the thousands per article, an unsustainable model.

Our most notable agreements include free open publishing in *Wiley*, the *Association for Computing Machinery (ACM)*, the *American Chemical Society*, and *Cambridge University Press*. We are close to signing a contract for free or reduced-fee open publishing in most Elsevier journals. For a current list of agreements, see <https://library.pitt.edu/publish-agreements>.

Jonas Salk Papers

Early in 2023, Peter, Jonathan, and Darrell Salk donated records from their father's research on the polio vaccine (1947-1960) to the ULS, adding to our growing archival collections in medicine. Archives & Special Collections (A&SC) processed the collection in time to be displayed at a Graduate School of Public Health (GSPH) event in April 2023 and ongoing exhibit. Dr. Don Burke, former dean of GSPH, is using the collection to understand the course of the overlooked early trials of the vaccine, which were conducted in Pittsburgh before the more well-known national trial. Jason M. Rampelt, History of Science and Medicine Archivist in A&SC, advised a student using newspaper clippings from the collection to compare public reception of vaccines in the 1950s and the 2020s. The potential for further historical epidemiology with the patient records could reveal more about past epidemics and interventions.

Market Analysis for New Academic Programs

In collaboration with the Office of the Provost, the ULS offers a market analysis service for academic units proposing new degrees, certificates, and programs. Units researching the viability of new academic offerings must examine existing offerings from other institutions, the demographics of potential student populations, and employer needs and trends within specific geographic areas. The ULS supports these information needs by subscribing to an educational analytics platform called Lightcast. Lightcast

aggregates data from the US government's Integrated Post-secondary Education Data System (IPEDS) and combines it with other relevant data, such as those that characterize the labor market. The library's expertise in the research process is key to this service, particularly in helping administrators translate information needs into systematic queries and working through multiple data and formats to produce standard reports.

In the past year, our service conducted analyses for the School of Law, the School of Education, the Dietrich School's Economics Department (Masters of Qualitative Economics), the School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences, and the School of Social Work in partnership with UP Johnstown.

Work with the Community Engagement Centers (CECs)

Archives & Special Collections (A&SC) partnered with the Community Engagement Centers in several meaningful ways. Several members of A&SC lead a day-long workshop at the Homewood CEC to teach residents how to preserve and care for their personal archives. Residents brought items from home to consult with A&SC staff about the best methods for caring for their heirlooms or objects. We offered tours of our library and archival facility on Thomas Boulevard in Point Breeze to Homewood and the Hill District residents. These tours have provided an insider's view to see firsthand how we store, manage, preserve, and make accessible thousands of archival collections and books. The tour included stops in preservation and digitization labs and storage areas, including our high-density storage area, where millions of books are currently housed. Further, through a relationship built with Homewood native Dr. Harry Ford, the ULS was able to arrange to donate his 1,000+ personal library on African American history, personalities, sports, arts, and culture, etc., to the CEC Homewood facility.

August Wilson Outreach and Engagement

With generous support from the Heinz Endowments and Henry L. Hillman Foundation, Archives & Special Collections (A&SC) has implemented a research award program that has attracted high school students, teachers, and artists to apply for funding to support their interests. Nine public and private high school teachers were awarded funds to conduct research in the August Wilson Archive and created a lesson plan for their classrooms. A&SC has hosted 6 field trips for students in grades 8 – 12. We have continuously supported the Pittsburgh artistic community, as reflected in the numerous award applications we have received. Seven high school students and six artists contributed to creating exhibits and artwork at Hillman Library and/or the August Wilson House. While inspiring the youth and artistic community, the Wilson Archive has attracted over a dozen scholarly researchers nationwide. We have moderated speaking panels and host various writing workshops on the Wilson Archive. One workshop attendee said, "This was a cool way to experience August Wilson in a new way.

Being from Pittsburgh and having family from the Hill, I feel like I know all there is to know about August Wilson's work, but this was a unique experience seeing his annotations on his scripts. Really loved it!" Our work continues to demonstrate that the August Wilson Archive will have a lasting impact on the Pittsburgh community.

Hillman Library Renovation

The Hillman Library renovation is currently in its final phase, with work on the ground floor, the core of the building, including elevators and bathrooms, and a new entrance volume. This three-story glass atrium situates the main entrance to the library on the corner of Forbes Ave. and Schenley Dr., with a direct line of sight to the Cathedral of Learning. This phase has seen the greatest disruption, which we continue to work hard to mitigate.

On-Going Efforts

Recruited and retained faculty; faculty departures

We have hired for the following strategically important positions this year:

- Distinctive Collections Cataloger
- Assessment Coordinator
- Head, Digital Scholarship Services
- Head, East Asian Library
- SCI-ULS Alliance Fellow Resident
- Grants Coordinator

For departures, we note that we lost one Research Data Librarian and one Digital Scholarship Librarian to the Pittsburgh Supercomputing Center.

Efforts to advance diversity, equity, inclusion, and sense of belonging

With our newly hired Director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, & Accessibility, we:

- Recruited Jay Gilmore as our 2023- 2024 ULS/SCI Alliance Fellowship & Residency Program Fellow.
- Invited speaker Dr. Emiola Oriola (Student Affairs, Pitt) to speak on student belonging and the support libraries can offer. The event was attended by (roughly) 60 people in December 2023.
- Facilitated unit-level discussions on what inclusion looks like at the ULS. Each unit attended the discussions, which surfaced areas of gaps, growth, and opportunity from unit-level viewpoints that unit heads and leadership will review in the next few months.

- Recognized Indigenous, Latinx & Hispanic, Asian, and Black History months by developing campus-wide events and speaker(s). This work included the creation of three spotlight collections in Hillman Library related to the above celebratory months.
- Designed and developed the Inclusion & Belonging Place (IBP), a seating area on the first floor of Hillman Library that prioritizes hosting and collaborating with units across the University to have events and speakers supporting inclusive excellence.
- Supported the Community Engagement Centers with educational programming from ULS units for K-8 and adult learners across Homewood and the Hill District neighborhoods.

Workplace enhancements – career development, employee engagement, well-being initiatives, etc.

- The library implemented a *ULS Managers / Supervisors Interest Group* in January 2024. The ULS Manager/Supervisor Interest Group aims to empower managers/supervisors who have completed Pitt’s Office of Human Resources Supervisor Essentials program to lead by example, appreciate the value they bring to the organization, and assist managers/supervisors in finding opportunities to engage and motivate the employees and teams that they oversee and lead. Many managers/supervisors experience challenges in communicating effectively with employees, addressing performance problems in a timely manner, resolving conflict, mitigating burnout, and achieving work-life integration. The Office of Human Resources (OHR) Supervisor Essentials @ Pitt program is designed to enhance existing supervisory skills and build new skills by introducing participants to human resources-related policies, procedures, and programs at the University. The ULS Manager/Supervisor Interest Group will review the content covered in Supervisor Essentials @ Pitt and offer participants the opportunity to apply what they have learned, reinforce positive approaches to management and supervision, exchange regular feedback, identify mentorship prospects, and support professional growth.
- Training Sessions - Life Solutions Workshops presented specifically to ULS:
 - *Civility in the Workplace: Who Do You Want to Be?* (34 Attendees)
 - *Time Management: Prioritizing Your Goals* (21 Attendees)
 - *Managing Virtual Teams* (17 Attendees)
 - *Maintaining a Kind & Respectful Environment* (28 Attendees)
 - *Mastering Difficult Conversations* (25 Attendees)

New Programs or Partnerships

Data Ethics Across the Disciplines Series

Throughout the Spring semester, ULS Digital Scholarship Services hosted a series of interdisciplinary conversations around data ethics challenges and approaches (<https://dssatpitt.github.io/data-ethics-across-disciplines/>). Across eight events attended by researchers, academic support staff, and graduate students from across Pitt, attendees heard about ethical frameworks for working with data of different types, discussed dilemmas like the paradox of informed consent, debated where our research practices fall along the spectrum of access and privacy, and created an informal community of practice. Speakers at the events represented a wide range of Pitt schools and centers, including the Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences, Law, Engineering, School of Pharmacy, School of Computing and Information, the Pitt Johnstown campus, and the Office of the Provost.

Love Data Week 2024

The ULS continued its annual collaborative programming around International Love Data Week, which occurs around Valentine's Day every February. This year's events included an Art + Data workshop led by Chelsea Gunn (School of Computing and Information) and Liz Monk (Center for Social and Urban Research) that allowed participants to explore the connection between art and the creative side of visualizing data. Another workshop featured Brian Riordan from the Department of Music, who presented interactive electronic music techniques to participants. Both events were held in The Open Lab @ Hillman, a partnered space with the University Center for Teaching and Learning.

Also related to Love Data Week, this spring, a team of Pitt librarians from the Health Sciences Library System (HSLs) and University Library System (ULS) launched a new Canvas course: the Open Scholarship and Research Impact Challenge (<https://hsls.libguides.com/osric>). This asynchronous course includes a wide range of resources and activities that give researchers practical tools to make their research more accessible, impactful, reproducible, connected to the public welfare, and more aligned with personal values. The course is for anyone at the University of Pittsburgh who creates scholarly works, including publications, data, protocols, etc.

External Recognition (i.e., from outside the unit)

New ULS Grants (FY24)

This year, the ULS received multiple grants, the biggest of which was a \$186,511 Landmarks of American History and Culture grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to support a collaborative project with Rivers of Steel. The grant will fund The Homestead Steel Strike and the Growth of America as an Industrial Power

2024 summer workshops, which bring K-12 teachers together with scholars, librarians, and archivists to explore the unique events that led to the 1892 Battle of Homestead through historic site tours, lectures, and hands-on work with primary sources.

Total Grants Awarded: \$217,835

Total Grants Pending: \$135,148

Media Mentions

National & Local

Making Headlines at the University of Pittsburgh, Rachel Kranson, *In geveb, a Journal of Yiddish Studies*, Feb. 2024 <https://ingeveb.org/pedagogy/making-headlines-at-the-university-of-pittsburgh>

Audubon Day Returns to the University of Pittsburgh Library, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, May 2024 <https://www.post-gazette.com/ae/art-architecture/2023/11/08/pitt-library-audubon-birds-of-america-audubon-day-bien-prints/stories/202311070083>

University of Pittsburgh student recreates awe-inspiring Marie Antoinette-inspired dress, KDKA News, Jan. 2024 <https://www.cbsnews.com/pittsburgh/news/university-of-pittsburgh-student-marie-antoinette-inspired-dress/> Pitt archives contain publications detailing history of Pittsburgh's queer community, KDKA News, June 2023 <https://www.cbsnews.com/pittsburgh/news/pitt-archives-publications-queer-community/>

Pitt-Bradford planning to renovate Hanley Library, MARCIE SCHELLHAMMER, The Bradford Era, May 2024 https://www.bradfordera.com/news/pitt-bradford-planning-to-renovate-hanley-library/article_9befacd4-ba39-11ee-8fa5-3fbdd97ffb1c.html

Faculty and Staff Contributions

In 2023, ULS faculty and staff contributed the following:

- 1 monograph (Brodt, Zach. *From the Steel City to the White City: Western Pennsylvania and the World's Columbian Exposition*).
- 3 book chapters
- 9 peer-reviewed journal articles
- 9 software/code contributions
- 14 conference papers or posters
- 17 conference presentations
- 1 each data set, exhibit, broadcast interview, and curriculum

Additionally, they were elected to multiple national and international organizations, some of which include:

- Chair of the Library of Congress - Council for East Asian Studies Internship Committee
- Member of IFLA North America Regional Council
- Member of Theatre Library Association Board of Directors

Current Year Challenges and Concerns

New Budget Model and Shared Resource Centers Like the ULS

As noted last year, a potential challenge is presented by the new budget model where tuition-generating responsibility centers pay for "central services." The distributed administrative structure of the libraries at Pitt (ULS, Health Sciences, and Law) presents major potential problems where a school such as the Law School might opt to pay for its Library only instead of proportionately for all University libraries' services and resources.

Journal, Electronic Journal, and Open Access Costs

The library collections budget has been static for the last several years, and the costs of electronic materials continue to outpace general inflation. As we make a concerted push to provide opportunities for Pitt researchers to publish Open Access, which benefits the worldwide production and dissemination of scholarship, we note additional costs on top of already high journal subscription costs.

Staff Salaries

Low library staff salaries are proving particularly challenging as we cannot attract qualified candidates and retain them if we make successful hires.

Plans for the Coming Year

Goals and Strategic Actions Planned for Next Year

Significant Upgrades to the two Platforms That Provide Access to Digitized Archival Materials and to Pitt Research Outputs

The platform behind *ULS Digital Collections* (<https://digital.library.pitt.edu>), *Documenting Pitt* (<https://documenting.pitt.edu>), and *Historic Pittsburgh* (<https://historicpittsburgh.org>), which provide access to digitized books, photographs, manuscripts, letters, and other materials, have been using an Open system called

Islandora for well over a decade, which has served our communities very well. Our current *Islandora* system contains 300+ collections, comprising roughly 2.3 million digital objects available across three separate sites, with an average of over two million page views annually. These collections are significant and highly used teaching and research assets at the University, and they are well-used and beloved in the local and global research communities. As this major public-facing system is reaching end-of-life, we have selected a vendor to transition us to a more modern platform that will, among many other enhancements, better handle audio and video assets, provide out-of-box mobile-friendly pages, and make searching, browsing, and saving or exporting easier and more intuitive. We expect to go live with the new system this coming fiscal year.

A second major platform transition is underway as we move *D-Scholarship*, the University's institutional repository, from its current back end, Eprints, to a more modern community-owned, open infrastructure platform called *Hyku*. The Eprints platform has been the software for the University of Pittsburgh's institutional repository and preprint repository services for over a decade. These publicly accessible repositories are places to collect, share, and preserve the research outputs of our faculty, staff, and students. This includes *D-Scholarship@Pitt*, the *Archive of European Integration*, the *Philosophy of Science Archive*, the *Aphasiology Archive*, and the *Industry Studies Working Papers* archive. The new system will launch this fall.

General Collections Strategy

As part of the ULS leadership re-organization, we identified a leadership role for strategically re-evaluating our general collections development philosophy and policies. The proliferation of digital content (books, journals, and special collections that we purchase or license from publishers), the evolving nature of research and the scholarly record, and the shift toward open-access publishing necessitate a fundamental rebalancing of our collection development efforts. We need to consider an expansion from the traditional "owned" collections (purchased or licensed) model to both "shared" (accessed from other institutions using resource-sharing services) and "facilitated" (available outside subscription paywalls) collection models. We also need to appreciate that we increasingly find scholarly content outside formal publication channels, including in institutional and disciplinary repositories, data archives, and research funder platforms. Our collections development approach must meet the information needs of our communities at the time and place of their choosing while taking account of the opportunities afforded by an expansion beyond physical collections housed on our campus. Our first step in this re-evaluation is an in-depth analysis of our "owned" collections against historic strengths (identify areas of excellence to build upon), current and emerging research and teaching needs, and in support of our increasingly important special and archival collections.

Assessing Unique/Rare Materials Storage Conditions

Held within the University Library System's Archives & Special Collections are intrinsically and monetarily valuable items that cannot be replaced since they are unique or scarce resources. The ULS understands donors' trust in us when acquiring archival and special collections materials. Likewise, we spend significant resources each year to purchase distinctive materials to support research and teaching activities at the university, attracting scholars and historians worldwide to research our collections. As stewards of this rare and valuable material, the ULS has strived to ensure that our collections are placed in safe and secure environments with appropriate safeguards.

As a precaution, the ULS has been reviewing its protocols and physical environment to store our unique material to address any gaps or concerns that might endanger the safety of our collections. This has entailed a review of access to key locations where such material resides, the presence of surveillance cameras, and HVAC issues that, if not correctly working, can lead to material degradation over time. We have identified our high-density library storage facility on Thomas Boulevard as meeting the conditions required to protect our materials. In addition, we are upgrading this facility's environmental surveillance hardware and software to include continuous data collection and reporting, as well as a 24/7 alerting system. We are identifying the most significant and valuable collections (according to appraisals) and moving them into this location. It offers a high degree of safety, care, and protection. Moreover, we are vigilant about our storage space for archival manuscripts and special collections in Hillman Library to ensure that it, too, offers a high degree of protection for the material stored in this location.

Anticipated Challenges and Concerns

New Budget Model and Shared Resource Centers Like the ULS

As noted last year, a potential challenge is presented by the new budget model where tuition-generating responsibility centers pay for "central services." The distributed administrative structure of the libraries at Pitt (ULS, Health Sciences, and Law) presents major potential problems where a school such as the Law School might opt to pay for its Library only instead of proportionately for all University libraries' services and resources.

Hiring and Retaining Staff with In-Demand Expertise

For skills that are in high demand, including IT and data skills, the library has a two-fold problem: attracting talent initially, given that library salaries for these skills are not competitive with the general market, and then retaining those employees, as they have

gained experience to complement their skills, making them as individuals more competitive and the library as an employer less so.

Data

The ULS tracks several indicators that assess the impact of its services on the University community. We benchmark some of these indicators against our peer Association of Research Libraries (ARL) libraries.

FY23 Statistics

- Library visits – 1,095,416 (12% increase over the previous year)
- Physical circulations – (0.2% decrease from the previous year)
- Physical course reserves – 5,713 (69% increase over the previous year)
- Digital circulations (full-text downloads and database searches combined) 8,040,252 (27% increase over the previous year)
- Reference transactions – 18,817 (6.28% increase over the previous year)
- Research consultations – 492 (3% decrease from the previous year)
- Workshops and instruction sessions – 598 (0.5% increase)
- Outreach events – 324 (12% increase)

Our GradSERU statistics (2017, 2019, 2021, and 2023) show a high level of satisfaction with the “quality of library resources and services), consistently placing Pitt in the top 25% percentile (“satisfied” or “very satisfied” responses) of the cohort.