JMU Libraries Magazine

Jenne M. Klotz  
*James Madison University, klotzjm@jmu.edu*

Kristen S. Shuyler  
*James Madison University*

Emily Blake  
*James Madison University, blakeed@jmu.edu*

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Community seed library sows hope in uncertain times (page 8)

Documenting Black history in Harrisonburg (page 11)

A beautiful relationship is blooming with the Furious Flower Poetry Center (page 14)
Welcome to our first-ever JMU Libraries magazine! We’re proud to share a few highlights from a momentous period in the history of James Madison University and its library system.

In these pages, you’ll find stories about our steadfast support for a campus and community in crisis—as librarians, archivists, public services and collections staff, instructional designers, and educational technologists across our organization sprang into action to meet challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Our people’s creativity, adaptability, dedication, and deep expertise helped JMU Libraries lead the way.

You’ll also find hope-filled stories of blossoming and growth. New collections, happenings, and projects in partnership with JMU faculty are helping us shed light on hard histories, celebrate important individuals and communities, and position our students, scholars, and staff to work collaboratively toward a better tomorrow. From our Community Seed Library to the Flowerings Project, JMU Libraries believes that you reap what you sow.

I am so proud to have the opportunity to work with the wonderful team and campus community you’ll get to know through this report. This is a message of gratitude to them—and to you. Your generous contributions allow the Libraries to build valued digital and physical collections, invest in staff professional development, and support our deserving student workers as they pursue a JMU education. Thank you for helping all of us learn and grow.

Sincerely,

Bethany Nowviskie
Dean of Libraries, Professor of English, and Chief Academic Technology Officer at JMU
Our mission

To engage with JMU’s diverse communities in their creation and search for knowledge through academic resources, physical and virtual spaces, and educational and research services.
In the spring of 2020, campus buildings were closed so that students and faculty could complete the semester from the safety of their homes. But in Rose and Carrier libraries, 3D printers hummed along steadily. These printers, along with others throughout Harrisonburg, were turning out brightly colored plastic clips for face shields. After learning about a shortage of personal protective equipment at local hospitals and clinics, JMU Libraries faculty and staff responded to the need. We mobilized to quickly and safely fabricate protective face shields in partnership with JMU faculty members beyond the Libraries, local business owners, and volunteers from the Harrisonburg maker community.

“Applying these skills directly to meeting local needs provides an excellent example why [the Libraries invests] time and resources into teaching the JMU community about 3D printing,” said senior instructional designer Jamie Calcagno-Roach.

Within the first month of this incredible community effort, 3,000 face shields were in the hands of local healthcare providers.

“My connections [to digital fabrication] originated from an Integrative Design Technology Fellowship through JMU Libraries... It has been amazing how quickly JMU has not only provided access to materials, equipment, and personnel, but really taken a leadership role in this endeavor.”

~ ADRIENNE HOOKER, JMU Professor of Media Arts and Design

“I am so grateful that I’m playing a small part in this grassroots movement. The spirit of quiet cooperation for the public good helps me cope with feelings of anxiety and helplessness [brought on by the pandemic].”

~ KEVIN HEGG, Director of Digital Projects, JMU Libraries
Award-winning services support ONLINE LEARNING

“Astonishingly, 5,422 courses were shifted from in-person to online in just over one week. JMU Libraries accomplished a massive lift helping faculty to make the transition.”

~ JONATHAN R. ALGER, JMU PRESIDENT (ZDNet, April 6, 2020)

Teams in the Libraries worked quickly to put resources at our users’ fingertips by creating mobile-ready websites.

Librarians, educational technologists, and instructional designers are used to hard work. Every year we partner intensively with JMU professors to incorporate technology and digital resources into their teaching. Whether it’s figuring out how to record lectures, design compelling assignments, evaluate and use digital information, or completely revamp a class to make it more accessible, experts in the Libraries help every step of the way. Demand for online learning support increased exponentially when more than 6,200 classes had to move online in under two weeks due to the COVID-19 pandemic in the spring of 2020.

When the scale of the challenge became clear, the Libraries mobilized quickly, pulling together liaison librarians, media production specialists, and experts in teaching with technology to support JMU faculty—many offering their courses online for the first time—in creating rich experiences for students. We also produced extensive, resource-filled webpages, ensuring that helpful information and online books, journals, and videos were easy to find and use. And crucially, our online learning team designed and hosted an emergency version of the JMU Libraries Online & Hybrid Teaching Institute. Pre-pandemic, this intensive institute typically had a dozen professors enrolled. In March of 2020, over 300 faculty members participated.

None of the work that went into JMU’s online pivot happened in a vacuum. Our Libraries faculty and staff collaborated closely with partners in every corner of campus. For their joint efforts in 2020, JMU president Jonathan R. Alger recognized the Libraries alongside JMU IT, the Center for Faculty Innovation, and Office of Disability Services with a Purple Star Award for Teamwork.

“I’ve learned what I need to do, how to do it and why, so I can provide my students with a quality online learning experience that’s consistent with JMU’s reputation for student-centered instruction.”

~ JULIE GOCHENOUR, JMU Communication Studies instructor and Libraries institute participant

“The biology faculty wishes to thank the JMU librarians and technical staff for ‘pulling out all the stops’ to help us teach during these unprecedented times. Your efforts have matched JMU’s mission to provide excellence in teaching to our students.”

~ JMU BIOLOGY DEPARTMENT

Instructional designer Jessica Lantz demonstrates the Lightboard, a valuable tool for presenting complex concepts in video.
UNPRECEDENTED. UNUSUAL. UNCERTAIN.

These terms and more describe the experience of the 2020–21 academic year, when students and faculty had to adjust to new ways of learning. UNDETERRED, staff from our Classroom Technology Services (CTS) team worked steadfastly all year long to install and maintain flexible, student-focused learning spaces. Not only did they modify scores of existing classrooms, labs, and conference rooms—installing hundreds of new cameras, microphones, projectors and computers to prepare for the return of students to campus—but they also helped with the design and creation of new classrooms in Darcus Johnson Hall and Hartman Hall, and the conversion of other, large university venues to teaching spaces that could support social distancing. In a year that required flexibility and improvisation, the Libraries’ CTS team provided reliable services and equipment so that teaching and learning could go on.

A faculty member teaches a hybrid class, with some students attending in-person and some online.

An instructor station equipped with digital technology, complete with sanitizing supplies.

Classroom technology
SAVES THE DAY
ADAPTABILITY is the name of the game

Whether in person or online, every Libraries visitor interacts with our Library & Information Services (LIS) team. Staff in LIS check out books, answer questions and make helpful connections, track down materials and solve research puzzles, help with printers and public computers, and teach people to use our resources. With responsibility for some of the busiest buildings on campus and in a year when community health challenges often outnumbered solutions, LIS also invented new ways of supporting our users safely—first virtually, and eventually physically. Although supporting changing policies and public health requirements was a heavy lift, JMU Libraries emerged as a model for safe practices and a leader in community support.

Adapting to the evolving pandemic did not interrupt our continuous drive to serve the campus and our Valley community well. We developed a new contactless pickup service, expanded our chat reference support, and streamlined our processes and policies to expand safe access to our collections and spaces. Thanks to the ingenuity and dedication of our LIS staff, we maintained and even improved many of the Libraries’ most essential services.
“Gardening is a privilege that requires time, money, and space. My hope is that the Community Seed Library will lower some of these barriers not only by providing seeds and supplies, but by building community around shared knowledge.”

~ Sarah Pritchard, organizer

COMMUNITY SEED LIBRARY sows hope in uncertain times

There is something inherently comforting in preparing a garden bed. Who can resist tilling the soil, tugging at the weeds, and eventually plucking that ripe tomato, still warm from the sun? In late February of 2020, thanks to an internal grant made possible by the generosity of Libraries donors, the Community Seed Library opened in the lobby of Carrier Library. At a well-attended launch event, students, faculty, and community members lined up to dream—perusing the seeds and collecting what they needed for their own gardens. Planting could begin, they imagined, soon.

Just a few weeks later, with the world in lockdown due to COVID-19, comfort was in short supply. But Seed Library founders Sarah Pritchard and Liz Chenevey had an idea. With all those seeds tucked away in Carrier Library, why not start a no-contact, multilingual ordering and off-site pick-up service, so that community members could still plant their gardens? With a bit of careful planning, and a mention in the local newspaper, Sarah and Liz distributed thousands of seeds to hundreds of would-be gardeners—including neighborhood children stuck at home—starting in April 2020.

Like traditional libraries, seed libraries thrive on sharing. Start-up expenses for JMU Libraries’ Community Seed Library were covered through gifts—gifts of money and gifts of seeds. And while the “return” of seeds is welcome, should a gardener feel inspired to save them after harvest, it is not required. Now in its second year of operation, the seed library is available for everyone to use and is open in the lobby of Carrier Library during normal library hours. Operations have expanded to a sister seed library in Massanutten Regional Library in downtown Harrisonburg.

“Seeing the community’s enthusiasm for this project has been such a bright spot in this incredibly difficult year.”

~ Liz Chenevey, organizer
Makerspaces cultivate curiosity, creativity, and exploration in as many ways as possible. The Makery locations in JMU Libraries provide access to high-end equipment like 3D printers, vinyl and laser cutters, cameras, audio recording devices, mix-and-match electronics components, and sewing machines. Through classes and events, The Makery empowers anyone to discover themselves as a maker. Users create everything from beautiful 3D models, electronic games, tools, and artwork, to audio recordings of original melodies.

When the pandemic hit and our spaces temporarily closed, staff from The Makery tapped into their own creativity to support the JMU community. Distributing equipment to faculty who needed to deliver online courses became top priority. Working together with staff across the Libraries, they made as much equipment as possible available for long-term checkout. The Makery’s workshops also went online, adding workshops in mixed-media painting as a contributor to student mental health, alongside offerings in podcasting and 3D modeling and printing. As restrictions eased, staff collaborated with students and faculty to reopen our spaces and offer hands-on experiences in printmaking, electronics, 3D scanning, and textiles once again.
Special Collections is JMU Libraries’ repository for rare, irreplaceable, unique, or otherwise valuable materials, including many that document the history of the Shenandoah Valley and JMU or support the teaching and research priorities of our faculty. Our librarians and archivists preserve rare books, manuscripts, and objects for future generations, describe them so that they can be found, and engage with scholars and students interested in using them. JMU students and valley scholars typically love visiting Special Collections in person to get up-close and personal with the collections’ fragile, rare, and beautiful materials or books that must be handled to be understood. In a year when visiting the reading room was not safe, Special Collections piloted the use of video to provide access. Staff filmed artists’ books, special fore-edge paintings (in which a hidden image can only be exposed by fanning the pages of a volume), and highlights from our moveable and pop-up book collection, as well as other more unusual items like toys and games. These videos offered a glimpse into the vast and varied treasures of JMU Libraries Special Collections.

This year, we also continued to acquire materials that support the JMU curriculum and our values, especially the Libraries’ ongoing work to collect materials reflecting a variety of lived experiences. Thanks to the Frances Jobson Francis Special Collections fund, we were able to acquire several new artists’ books and significant works in African American children’s literature and Black poetry. Among these titles are *We Real Cool* by Gwendolyn Brooks, *Ego-tripping: and other poems for young people* by Nikki Giovanni, *and there we wept: poems* by bell hooks, and *Between Ourselves* by Audre Lorde.

Special Collections also acquired several early Third World Press publications and other important signed works by editor, poet, and activist Haki Madhubuti, in support of summer Legacy Seminar programming organized by our collaborators at the Furious Flower Poetry Center.
Personal correspondence, informal notes, and candid photographs contain some of the richest depictions of local history. These treasured mementos serve many purposes. A snapshot of neighborhood children taken sixty years ago may contain an image of a long-gone house; a handwritten note may include the missing piece to a puzzle about a church choir; a receipt might provide a glimpse into a local business. Over time, collections of personal papers can document the history of our cities and towns. Author of two books on Harrisonburg's African American community, Ruth Toliver had such a collection of her own family's papers, and after working closely with JMU faculty on the Celebrating Simms project, she decided to make her family and community's history more widely available to researchers.

In February 2021, Ruth and Lowell Toliver donated their family papers to JMU Libraries Special Collections. Some relate to George Ambrose Newman, Ruth’s grandfather, who served for 33 years as a teacher and administrator in Harrisonburg's early African American schools and is remembered as a trailblazing member of Harrisonburg’s Black community. Additional materials relate to the Woman's Society of Christian Service as well as to Gerald Harris, designer of the Route 11 turkey statues in Rockingham County. The gift also includes records from the John Wesley M.E. Church in Harrisonburg (1943-1976), correspondence and drawings, twelve large tri-fold displays with photographs of the residents of the Newtown area of Harrisonburg, and an unpublished manuscript titled A Miserable Revenge: A Story of Life in Virginia, written by Newman.

Our Special Collections staff recently completed processing the Ruth and Lowell Toliver Collection of Newman Family Papers. The collection offers researchers and students an invaluable resource—documenting and illustrating a vibrant Black community in Harrisonburg, along with its church, families, friendships, and active social life.
In the spring of 2021, JMU Libraries Special Collections finished processing the extensive personal and professional papers of Dr. Joanne Veal Gabbin, professor of English and founding director of JMU’s Furious Flower Poetry Center. Furious Flower (also featured on pages 14 and 15) is the nation’s first academic center for the study and appreciation of Black poetry. Spanning more than fifty years, this collection includes manuscripts, correspondence, photographs, research articles, and a selection of materials related to the Center, as well as to Gabbin’s scholarship, poetry, and service. It is available to researchers by appointment in the Special Collections reading room in Carrier Library.
ILLUMINATING
Virginia’s difficult history

For years, the history of lynching in Virginia was largely hidden. Documentation existed about widespread murders of African Americans in our state, but it was distributed and difficult to find. In 2017, 85 years after the last recorded lynching in Virginia, Dr. Gianluca De Fazio of the JMU Department of Justice Studies decided it was time to “restore the collective memory of lynching victims” in the Commonwealth.

Working with JMU Libraries faculty and staff and using data from existing inventories of lynchings and digitized newspapers from the Jim Crow era, De Fazio set out to create a more complete catalog that would include in-depth details about each crime. With the help of the Libraries, De Fazio and his students created a database with biographical information about victims and an interactive map and charts describing each murder by county, decade, race, and gender. Newspaper accounts of the incidents are also included, giving readers a chance to learn more about how these crimes were reported in the 19th and 20th centuries. The resource is available at Racial Terror: Lynchings in Virginia.

In addition to illuminating a tragic period of Virginia’s history, the website and publicity around it catalyzed a local effort in Rockingham County to erect a historical marker commemorating Charlotte Harris, the only African American woman known to have been lynched in Virginia. On September 26, 2020, a somber crowd gathered on the county courthouse lawn in Harrisonburg to witness the unveiling of this marker.

JMU Libraries supported De Fazio’s project by providing access to historical databases, teaching students to perform rigorous historical research, creating the database that holds information on each victim, and building and maintaining the public-facing website. Going forward, our team is supporting students and professors from the College of Education in creating lesson plans based on the database for Virginia middle and high school students. This project is one of the many ways that the Libraries demonstrates our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. By contributing to digital projects that support truth and honest reckoning, we hope to contribute to a more just society.

The Charlotte Harris memorial marker on the lawn of the Rockingham County courthouse.
Photo courtesy JMU Libraries.
In February 2020, JMU Libraries and the College of Arts and Letters brought together poets, professors, students, and community members in celebration. The occasion was a gala book launch for English professors Joanne Gabbin and Lauren Alleyne, editors of *Furious Flower: Seeding the Future of African American Poetry*—an anthology with hundreds of poems by generations of African American poets as well as themed essays on poetics. The event also marked the beginning of a collaboration, funded by a $150,000 planning grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, between JMU’s Furious Flower Poetry Center and the Libraries. This 2020-2021 planning grant project, titled “Furious Flowerings: Developing a Partnership Model for Digital Library Support of a Living Center for Black Poetry,” is laying the groundwork for future collaborations and may even provide a model for library-based partnerships across the globe.

“This partnership is a giant step toward making the resources of the Furious Flower archive accessible to a global community of poetry lovers. We are excited to begin this work.”

~ Joanne Gabbin, Furious Flower director

A beautiful partnership IS BLOOMING

Bethany Nowviske, Dean of Libraries, and Joan Gabbin, Director of the Furious Flower Poetry Center.
The Libraries—which had recently acquired Furious Flower’s one-of-a-kind video archives of Black poetry readings and scholarly discussions dating to the mid-1990s—has long invested in initiatives that document both dedicated struggles for liberation and the daily joys, hopes, and lived experiences of marginalized communities. We’ve grown a world-class collection of Black comic books and graphic novels, created exhibits and supported digital projects that showcase the experiences of immigrants to the Shenandoah Valley, and collected oral histories that document poverty and land appropriation in the Shenandoah National Park. Libraries staff also routinely collaborate with JMU faculty and community members to make local history accessible through projects like Celebrating Simms and Histories along the Blue Ridge.

Now, with generous support from the Mellon Foundation for this planning grant, we are working with Furious Flower to develop a sustainable approach to preserving and sharing the Center’s important video collection—while we also think deeply, together, about community-engaged, reparative archival work that is centered in equity, partnership, and mutual understanding.

Despite interruptions brought by the pandemic, and with the help of a distinguished group of external advisors, Libraries and Furious Flower staff have worked tirelessly to assess challenges with the video collection and develop our partnership model. The results of this learning—conducted through online focus groups, workshops, discussions, and virtual retreats—will not only inform the Libraries’ campus and community partnerships and advance our capacity to offer important audiovisual collections online, but will be widely shared for the benefit of other colleges and universities worldwide. Our planning grant ended in December 2021 with a final report to be published in the spring.

“We’re so grateful to the Mellon Foundation for this opportunity. Through shared learning and planning, we will strive to make the Libraries’ support relationships—both with Furious Flower and other campus collaborators—more coherent, inspiring, and impactful.”

~ Bethany Nowviskie, Dean of Libraries

Dr. Lauren Alleyne, Assistant Director of the Furious Flower Poetry Center.
**Usage by Other Communities**

- Interlibrary loans to other institutions: 10,765
- JMU Scholarly Commons Downloads: 538,337

**Collections Inventory**

- Books (volumes) 606,801
- eBooks (titles) 496,307
- JMU Scholarly Commons items held 21,258
- eJournals (titles) 164,287
- Databases 320
- Audiovisual (volumes) 37,963
- Streaming Audiovisual (titles) 274,698
- Music scores (print & online) 50,276
- Manuscripts & Archives (collection count) 437

JMU Libraries also offers millions of additional resources found in online databases, including over a million streaming music albums.

**2,725,000+ Items in our collections**

**Budget**

- Personnel (including fringe benefits) $4,272,785
- Materials $10,529,234
- Operations and Maintenance Expenses $1,048,072
- **Total Budget**: $15,850,091

**Collections Usage**

**Usage by JMU Community**

- Research Databases 977,381
- Full-Text Article Downloads 631,209
- E-Media Usage 81,376
- E-Book Usage 72,993
- General Circulation Checkouts & Renewals 24,429
- Interlibrary Loan (for JMU) 11,669
- Equipment Loan 4,568

Electronic usage data only includes platforms that provide COUNTER-compliant statistics.

This map represents the locations from which articles in our Scholarly Commons are downloaded. The darker gray countries represent more downloads (e.g. readers in China downloaded 31,774 articles) and the orange gradients represent fewer downloads (e.g. readers in Libya downloaded 95 articles).
THANK YOU to our Donors!

We extend our sincere gratitude to everyone who supported the JMU Libraries this year. Thanks to your generosity, the Libraries received over $50,000 in donations from 171 individuals. These included current JMU faculty and staff, former student employees, and other alumni with fond memories of helpful librarians and time spent in our spaces.

Your generosity supports all we do. It fuels the improvements we make to our spaces and collections; it helps us learn and grow; and it sparks our creativity as we imagine new ways to serve the JMU community. Thank you for your gifts!

Memories of pre-COVID life in the Libraries.
Where your gifts go:

1. **Professional development**: Training needs for Libraries faculty and staff were different this year. Undeterred by challenges of the pandemic, and thanks to generous gifts to our professional development fund, we supported registration to dozens of online conferences—helping us keep current in the best ways to serve a campus that needed us more than ever.

2. **Student scholarships**: Five $1,000 scholarships were awarded to outstanding Libraries student employees from the 2021-2022 academic year:
   - **Blaze Benavides**, a music performance major who works in our Music Library
   - **Julia Chill**, a health sciences major who works in Public Services
   - **Olivia Greco**, a political science and pre-law major who works in Public Services
   - **Rebecca Hamlin**, a psychology and dance double major who works in our Metadata Strategies department
   - **Cody Watson**, a music education major who works in our Music Library

3. **Special projects**: This year, these included seeding the Seed Library, making notable Special Collections acquisitions, programming in the Music Library and gallery, supporting curriculum development for teachers and student teachers working in Virginia’s public schools and more!

To Make Your Donation to the JMU Libraries...

**Online**: Please visit [https://www.lib.jmu.edu/giving](https://www.lib.jmu.edu/giving). Our secure online forms allow you to use a credit card to make a one-time or recurring gift. You’ll receive a receipt for tax purposes.

**By mail**: Please print and fill out this form. Please indicate one of the following funds:

- Libraries Endowment (1000738)
- Peggy Brooks Burruss Special Collections (1000864)
- Martha T Boaz Professional Development (1000677)
- Music Library (1002211)

Please make your check out to the JMU Foundation and mail to:

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Office of Annual Giving  
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Harrisonburg, VA 22807

Thank you!