For The Record

Fall/Winter Edition, 2021
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Welcome to the Fall/Winter 2021 issue of *For The Record*

While COVID has kept life interesting, the development of vaccines brought hope that we can collectively move forward. We have an almost completely new executive on LISAA now, and they’ve got energy and ideas to help our chapter evolve as we look towards the future, and it’s an exciting place to be.

We’ve begun taking more of an approach that’s open to both in-person and virtual alumni. In the past, most of our events were geared towards alums living in the Edmonton area, but we now have members of our executive who are graduates of online cohorts, and able to share the perspective of the many online or distance alumni that we have.

What this means, we’re still figuring out. Hosting virtual events, certainly, but how does it change our ways of communicating and engaging with our diverse and dynamic alumni body? What does it mean about what you would like to see from us? We’re having some conversations around what we want to do next, and we hope to reach out and hear from you in the coming months so that we can make sure to offer enriching experiences and opportunities to connect with other members of our alumni network.

This includes our Celebration event, to come in the new year. This event will incorporate aspects of our Alumni brunch (Distinguished Alumni and Rising Star awards) but also offer the opportunity for you to provide live feedback to us. We’re putting together details for that now, so expect to see some communications around it next month sometime.

Likewise, we have a couple of spots open on our Executive - if you would like to be involved or learn more, please see our call for volunteers on page 14. If you have any questions, please reach out at lisaa@ualberta.net. Thank you as always for your support and involvement in our alumni association, we hope you enjoy this read.
LISAA Updates: New Executive Members

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**Hillary Bennett – First-Year Student Representative**

Hillary is a current student in the online cohort of the MLIS program. She is currently a production assistant for the National Network for Equitable Library Service (NNELS) where she reformats books into accessible epublications, and a Library Assistant at Edmonton Public Library. After receiving her Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology, she spent time working on a crisis hotline where she found great value in connecting marginalized people with resources. She is passionate about LIS community-led librarianship, library and community partnerships, and accessibility technology.

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**Ashley Huot – Second-Year Student Representative**

Ashley Huot is a librarian, artist, and recent SLIS graduate. She received her Bachelor of Fine Arts in Art & Design from the University of Alberta (2011); after several years of supporting arts education and accessible community-based development and education initiatives, she pursued her Masters of Library and Information Studies (2021). She is currently a Humanities Liaison Librarian at the University of Manitoba’s Architecture and Fine Arts Library. She further supports the LIS community as an Associate Editor with *Pathfinder: A Canadian Journal for Information Science Students and Early Career Professionals* and through her work with the Manitoba Library Association’s Prison Libraries Committee. Her professional interests include literacy development, instruction and pedagogy, community and art librarianship, prison libraries, and critical information studies.
LISAA Updates: New Executive Members

Kristine den Boon – Administrative Officer - kristine@marigold.ab.ca
Kristine den Boon graduated with the first online cohort of the MLIS program in 2016. She is a Library Services Consultant at Marigold Library System, where she provides guidance on library operations and procedures, works with member libraries on program development and collection development and maintenance, and works with her colleagues at other Alberta library systems on projects and committees. Her background includes working at Edmonton Public Library and as a purchasing manager for a bookstore chain, and she also holds a Bachelor of Arts degree and Book and Magazine Publishing certificate.

Yang Wu – Communications Officer ywu9@clemson.edu
Yang Wu is an Edmonton native and graduated from SLIS in 2016. He worked in the US after graduation, serving as a Librarian in Residence at the University of Notre Dame in Indiana from 2016-2018, and as the Open Resources Librarian at Clemson University in South Carolina from 2018 on. His work specializes in the promotion and development of Open Educational Resources, and he also has a PhD in history from the University of British Columbia.

Dr. Dangzhi Zhao – Faculty Representative dzhao@ualberta.ca
Dangzhi Zhao is Professor at SLIS. Her research and teaching interests are in the areas of information systems, bibliometrics, scholarly communication, and knowledge network analysis and visualization as well as their application in information retrieval and digital libraries. One of her ongoing research projects is on systematic conscious bias on Wikipedia with funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). More information can be found on her website: https://sites.ualberta.ca/~dzhao/.
Dangzhi Zhao (she/her) Professor at SLIS

I am currently conducting “Fair representation or winner-take-all: Indications of systematic conscious bias on Wikipedia”, a SSHRC funded research project. Information has a clear effect on the choices people make, such as shifting their voting patterns or affecting their medical outcomes. Any critical inaccuracy or bias on Wikipedia, a vital source of information on the Web, may have major negative impact on, and potentially be detrimental to, society even when accidental, but even more so in the form of systematic bias through organized manipulation. It is critical to scientifically investigate systematic bias on Wikipedia to see if its “priming effects on audiences” fall into persistent patterns relevant to political or other agendas.

Included in the dissemination plan of this project is to provide materials to schools and public libraries to help increase awareness of systematic conscious bias on Wikipedia.

SLIS Updates: Faculty/Students

While you have moved to a new stage in your career, innovative research and scholarship and the training of diverse, reflective and inquiring future library and information professionals lives on at SLIS. What are the faculty and students up to?

- continued on next page
H. Isabelle Agnew (she/her, they/them): MLIS candidate, 4th year online student

In my research proposal for LIS 505 I am exploring the role of social workers in public libraries. As free public spaces, public libraries have become safe zones for some of the most vulnerable people in our communities, including those experiencing homelessness, and newcomers, among others. However, librarians, for the most part, lack the training required to appropriately link these individuals to appropriate social services. Enter social workers. Over the last couple decades, public libraries have increasingly introduced social workers into their spaces. Does having a social worker in the public library suit the needs of vulnerable patrons, and do those patrons feel that they have better access to needed services with a social worker accessible? I seek to answer these questions.

Heather McMullin (she/her), MLIS candidate, 3rd year online student

I am doing my SLIS practicum at Cameron Library at the U of A, under the supervision and mentorship of Céline Gareau-Brennan, the UAL business librarian. The library staff at Cameron have all been incredibly supportive and welcoming to me. I have been invited to many different meetings, shadowed people on customer service shifts, chat services, information literacy teaching sessions, and individual student consults.

I am now more than two thirds of the way through, and I have learned heaps of useful practical knowledge, and also had the opportunity to produce a number of deliverables:

- Library Blog post: Fun Facts About Nigeria (with a French translation here);
- Library Blog post: Theatre Through the Years;
- Episode 1 of a library podcast I’m helping produce, called Library Lab Notes;
- A libguide page on conducting primary research for business students;
- A Market Research Primer I designed for MBA students.

The practicum is proving to be even more valuable than I had hoped.

Jason Openo, Assistant Lecturer LIS 504 – Leadership and Management Principles

I recently obtained my Doctorate of Education in Distance Education from Athabasca University. My research explores how online education is represented in current academic strategy and how member institutions of Colleges and Institutes Canada are serving the growing body of part-time faculty teaching primarily online. The document analysis highlights emerging purposes of professional development, such as Indigenization and internationalization, and the email interviews with directors of Canadian teaching and learning centres reveal formidable barriers to providing professional development opportunities to part-time faculty teaching online, but also innovative solutions to meet the needs of part-time online educators in Canada.
An update from University of Alberta Libraries

Céline Gareau-Brennan is a librarian with University of Alberta Libraries and an alumna of SLIS (‘17 MLIS/MBA). Hannah Madsen sat down for a chat with her to discuss her role at U of A Libraries, the ways in which COVID has affected everything from day-to-day life at the libraries to the definition of a “library”, how the restructuring around the UA campus has been felt in the Libraries, and where she sees UA Libraries going from here.

H: Let’s start with the basics. What is it that you do, and what is your job description?

C: I am a librarian at the University of Alberta Library. Librarians often have liaison areas, which are responsibilities to a specific faculty, and my liaison responsibility is with the Alberta School of Business. I am also co-chair of our Entrepreneurship and Innovation library team, which is a new initiative, and very exciting! A lot of my day consists of helping students, faculty and staff with their research, with their projects, with any way they want to access information from the library. This might mean helping them find a specific resource that’s perfect for them, or helping them do research more broadly. Another part of my job is being on teams within the libraries to make sure that our services really are great for students and faculty.
H: What is your favourite part of your job?

C: I keep learning every day. There are two other parts that I really love about my job. The first part would be that I love hearing about other people’s research. I really really love hearing about research projects – that ongoing learning, I’m always learning new things, especially in the business and information world, as you know, things can change so quickly. Getting used to new databases, or showing them to students, getting introduced to new and innovative projects, those all help me keep learning. My second favourite part of my job is – I had been front line staff for libraries and I really liked that - but what I really like as a librarian, is that you get to make system-wide decisions that influence the whole library and you get to see that bigger-picture perspective.

H: How has COVID-19 affected your daily life?

C: When COVID hit, for a while all of us were working from home. Now our information specialists, the front-line staff who are behind the front desk and answer questions over chat, are back in the library, and librarians come in when we have classes to teach or when we might need to be on campus. It’s been a really strange experience. I had to switch to teaching online within the first two weeks of COVID, and I recognize my privilege in that I am able to do most of my work successfully from home and I live in a context in which it is relatively easy for me to do so. I will say too that a big positive to come out of this is that there are real advantages to meeting with students online rather than in-person. It’s easier for them to schedule that, and because they have their computer, I can send them a link and right away they’re opening it rather than trying to watch over my shoulder and see what I’m doing.

I also found that I collaborated with people that I wouldn’t have thought of otherwise because we were in physically separate locations. The removal of physical boundaries due to COVID, though, removes that kind of constraint in a way.

H: How has the University’s academic restructuring affected your role and your team?

C: I experienced significant change because I accepted a reassignment from a librarian at the Bibliothèque Saint-Jean to a librarian at the Cameron Sciences, Engineering, & Business Library. So I changed teams and the Faculty I work with during the pandemic. Some information literacy principles really ring true in all fields but there are differences and nuances for different disciplines.

H: You mentioned thinking strategically from a UAlberta Libraries perspective about where you’re going. Where do you think the Library is headed?

C: It’s hard to know for sure because there are a lot of unknowns. On a less positive note, we are more limited by post-secondary budget cuts, so in terms of that, which means we might see cuts in collections or services we offer. On a more hopeful note, I think that there is a growing sense of the importance of librarians’ work as being more interdisciplinary. In addition to our liaison model of librarianship, the UofA Library is creating more teams to work across many different units. I’m really excited for my work on the Entrepreneurship & Innovation library team - we get to work with some really amazing people across the library and the university. I’m also curious how with COVID in the mix, libraries will continue to evolve our spaces. For a long time now we have been a digital library and with COVID, we’ve really explored what that means, but I think in the next few years, there will be a lot of conversations around space, too.
I am a full-time film classification officer for the Government of Alberta in Edmonton. While this is not a traditional librarian path or career, my job involves research as well as information management. There are 3 classification officers for the province, I am lucky to be one of them!

A day typically at the office consists of watching and classifying two films according to the Alberta Film Classification regulations—film ratings in Alberta are legally binding.

Once we’ve watched and classified a film, we write a spoiler-free report of what content appears in the film such as sexual content, nudity, violence, coarse language, and mature subject matter.

With theaters being closed due to COVID, we had very few new titles to classify so I took on a research project, looking at the history of Alberta Film Classification, which was originally a censorship board that started in the 1920s!

Over the past year, I was able to identify over 100 previously banned films from the 1920s up until the end of legal censorship in 1984. I also was able to determine how many films were classified per year, how many films were banned, and how many cuts/eliminations were required in order to pass for screenings, as well as why certain content was banned or cut. I find this work rewarding and very interesting and, while I already had a Master’s degree in film, I feel that my time at SLIS made me even more qualified for my unique position.

Lindsey Campbell (2018 SLIS graduate)
A group of alumni working at the University of Alberta Libraries took on an interesting project in April of 2020, when lockdowns forced them to shift to working from home. Initiated by interest in data-physicalization projects they set out to capture Canada’s Covid-19 cases in swatches of yarncraft. The project aims to capture the ongoing COVID-19 case numbers from province to province, within strips of knitted or crocheted yarn pieces that use a colour code. The swatches will then be stitched together at the end of the pandemic to form a blanket. This interest in data and data-instruction was initiated by staff in the library’s new Digital Scholarship Centre, where the team was looking for different ways to teach information and data literacy. The purpose of the project has been to experiment with different ways of representing data and information. Our aim has been to learn about epidemiological data, educate our community about COVID-19 and, also, to work together in capturing a moment in history.

The team of stitchers included a number of SLIS Alumni:

Lucinda Johnston (MLIS 2018), Natasha Nunn (MLIS 2019), Hanne Pearce (MLIS 2010), Sarah Polkinghorne (MLIS 2007), Maria Tan (MLIS 2012), Connie Winther (MLIS 2001)

The project has drawn national attention and been featured in the news. This February the team concluded their stitching after a full year. While the pandemic has continued past February 28th, 2021, stitching for a full year allowed the team to bring the project full circle, while also providing us all with closure - while also ensuring the swatches didn’t get too long! From a logistical perspective, the project has provided insight into how data physicalization can translate into future learning experiences for students. It is hoped that this fall the swatches will be brought together, to be displayed for a while in the University of Alberta’s Digital Scholarship Centre. The final blanket has already found a future home in the new pandemic collection of the Royal Alberta Museum, where curators will preserve and care for it, so that it may hopefully teach future generations about this unprecedented time in history.

For those interested in more details, project leader Hanne Pearce and Peter Binkley presented a video at the most recent AAAL meeting and is available via YouTube here: https://youtu.be/Va_qce52IEo
In 2020, I was the research librarian for the Alberta Strategy for Patient-Oriented Research (AbSPORU), where I helped doctors, researchers, and clinicians conduct systematic reviews, scoping reviews, rapid reviews, literature reviews, environmental scans, and more. When everything shut down in March of last year, critical care doctors from the University of Alberta came to our group for help with a rapid review to help them understand how to best treat Covid-19 patients so they could be adequately prepared when the first wave hit. I liaised with other expert searchers who were doing similar research at the CDC in order to craft a thorough and complex search strategy for the group, and then I ran it through the databases and exported the results to the team. They went on to analyze all the studies and data and made suggestions to other frontline doctors at the University of Alberta Hospital for best practices for this new subject area and hopefully improved patient outcomes during this scary time. This project has since evolved into a living systematic review that is periodically updated with the latest information. (Protocol published here: https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/11/1/e042008).

Unfortunately, due to budget restraints, my librarian position at AbSPORU was cut, but I was able to find another position with them, where I am currently working as the Training Coordinator/E-Learning Specialist for their Capacity Development platform.
For the past 10 years I have been actively involved in my Bonnie Doon Community League, lately combining my love of black and white photographs with the local history of the area. My grandson attends the nearby Rutherford Elementary School and I considered how we can encourage children to be interested in history and nature. Park Adventures was conceived, the team was recruited, and I applied to the Edmonton Heritage Council and the Edmonton City as Museum Project (ECAMP) for funding. Taking place outdoors, with only a small group, we were able to complete the project over 2020/2021, with only minor delays. Riverford Productions filmed and produced the micro-documentaries, and we were fortunate to have Amber Paquette, Indigenous Peoples Interpreter and Edmonton’s Historian Laureate, on our team. All our project meetings took place over Zoom.

Here is the result: two short videos. Enjoy, but don’t skip the credits – it was a huge team effort involving hundreds of volunteer hours!

1) Gallagher Park features brickmaker Pete Anderson and his son Bert (WWI). Diana Tirlea, Royal Alberta Museum, identifies the local woodpecker species. [https://vimeo.com/513660979](https://vimeo.com/513660979)

2) Tubby Bateman Park features Tubby Bateman and the 1920’s Edmonton Journal bicycle races, and Amber Paquette, who talks to the children about the importance of the buffalo to the Cree and Metis people. [https://vimeo.com/544009629](https://vimeo.com/544009629)
Why do I volunteer with LISAA?

We asked some of our executive members some questions about their experience with LISAA so that we could share what it’s like to be part of the exec with all of you. We currently have a couple of open positions and would love to see some new faces!

What led you to volunteer with LISAA?

Kristine - I was looking for an opportunity to volunteer in some capacity when the email with the callouts landed in my inbox. The available positions fit my skill set, and I liked that it wasn’t a huge time commitment.

Yang - I moved away from Edmonton for many years after graduating, and am always looking for ways to reconnect with the city. I really enjoyed my experience as a student in SLIS from 2014-2016 and would like to contribute to its growth and dynamism.

What have you found as a volunteer?

Hillary - Volunteering with LISAA has helped me to develop a sense of community and camaraderie with other SLIS professionals. As an (online) student representative, it is inspiring to see how our SLIS community can continue to grow and develop beyond our time at school. It feels empowering to be part of creating opportunities to foster that community development.

Ashley - As a recent SLIS graduate, volunteering with LISAA has provided me with opportunities to stay connected to SLIS, current students, and other alumni.

Hannah - Being on the LISAA exec has allowed me to stay connected with our community, to give back in a small way, and to gain a greater understanding of the many exciting things that our members are up to!
Where would you like to see the chapter go?

**Hillary** - I think that COVID-19 has opened our eyes to how we can reach beyond our Edmonton or Alberta borders to SLIS professionals that live worldwide. Our chapter has a lot of "new-blood" and I think we’re looking for even more new members who have creative ideas and unique talents.

**Ashley** - While LISAA activities have been previously primarily focused in Edmonton, with the shift to remote work and communication, as well as SLIS’s great increase of online program graduates, I am excited about the opportunities to engage alumni in more virtual/digital methods. Our Alumni, particularly of the online program, are spread out across the country and globe. Fostering connections between geographically dispersed alumni provides some interesting opportunities to learn about LIS trends, issues, and innovations.

**Kristine** - As a graduate of the first online cohort, I felt like LISAA wasn’t really meeting my needs with the focus on Edmonton and in-person activities. The pandemic has broadened the scope to be more virtual and inclusive of graduates who were either never based out of Edmonton, or have moved for their career. I look forward to seeing how the chapter can continue to expand this scope and draw in alumni from everywhere.

**Yang** - I would like to see greater outreach to alumni outside of Edmonton and efforts to engage them in LISAA activities.

**Hannah** - I would love to see more of a focus on inter-organizational events and initiatives that are partnerships between SLIS and LISAA, or LISAA and LISSA, or all 3. We have such a rich network of alumni, academics, and students, and there’s a strong potential to share knowledge and experiences!

What would you say to people who are interested in potentially volunteering with us?

**Hillary** - When I first learned about an opportunity with LISAA as a busy student I felt daunted by the idea of taking on another commitment. However, I’ve found that my concerns were unfounded. LISAA isn’t about formulaic events or prescribed commitments, rather we invest our time and resources into creating opportunities and events that we find inspiring and that we think will be meaningful to the other alumni in our community.

**Ashley** - While LISAA has some regular established activities, this is a group where people can come forward with their ideas, talents, and interests. There is a lot of opportunity to build new events, projects, and opportunities for alumni to connect with and learn from one another.

**Kristine** - There is a lot of room within LISAA to bring your unique experience, skill set, and ideas to the table. The sky is the limit in terms of what we can do when it comes to events and projects, and the more individuals we have participating, the wider our reach will be to connect with the alumni.

**Yang** - Don’t feel that you are not needed if you don’t live in Edmonton. I am amazed by how much I and other non-Edmonton residents can contribute to LISAA even though we could live thousands of kilometres away. Join us and stay in touch with SLIS and its alumni community.
Your Alumni Association, Your Voice: Join Us!

Join our friendly group of volunteers to help make an outstanding community of U of A library and information professionals!

- Flexible hours for volunteer positions!
- Write your own position description!
- Host interesting events!
- Meet exciting alumni!

Join us today!

Add your voice to ours - email lisaa@ualberta.net for more details about available positions and to learn more.