-Bytes

THE SCHOOL OF INFORMATION NEWSLETTER

December 2020

From the Director

While this year has certainly presented students, faculty, and staff with incredible challenges, resilience abounds. I continue to worry about many who are caregivers in the home while trying to press on with their jobs or their educational plans. But I'm impressed with and completely amazed at the endurance of all – staff are running the show remotely, students are reaching their goals amid emotional strain as well as health issues of their own or in their peer groups, and faculty have worked tirelessly to move courses online. Courses I'd never assumed we'd run online – virtual reality, human-computer interaction, high-level data science – are drawing more students than ever and those students are excelling in their work. All of our faculty and staff have been incredibly nimble and successful this year – that translates directly into students' success and achievement. It's impressive to bear witness to such unbelievable educational work.

I appreciate our iSchool community as we continue to work toward our iSchool vision for a diverse, equitable, and inclusive future empowering everyone through information.

Be well,

- Catherine Brooks

-Bytes from Friends

A Librarian's Journey - A story from a graduate from the very first cohort of librarians trained at the University of Arizona

By Nan C. Schubel

I'm retired now, but once I was where many of you are—starting my work at the University of Arizona in what was then the Library School. Times and means have changed for sure, but opportunities still abound.

I graduated with an MLS in 1971 and took the train to New York City. I had my diploma in hand, and my first job in NY was at a branch of the New York Public Library in the Bronx. I rode the subway to work, quite a change for a girl who grew up in Tucson. I worked at NYPL for four years, getting experience in various neighborhoods, working with teens and adults in reference services. As New York was going broke in a major recession, they let go of any employees with fewer than five years. I didn't take it personally, but I felt sorry for my new home.

Looking for a new job turned out to be easy when one of my library school professors called to tell me she met the president of Scholastic Magazines at a conference in Chicago. He was looking for someone to establish an education library as they pursued moving into the basal textbook field.

I had worked in the Education Library at the U of A while I was putting myself through college, so she thought I was perfect for them. Then, I worked for Reader's Guide, I certainly had fun there indexing such journals as The Atlantic and Time. Does the Reader's Guide still exist? Anyway, I wanted to be back in a library.

My next job was at Young and Rubicam ad agency as a reference librarian. I learned how to search electronically on Dialog databases, and Nexis. I got some of the oddest requests imaginable from those creative ad execs.

More years later as I became active in the Special Libraries Association, I learned of so many different kinds of libraries and services. My next job, and the place I retired from, was with the accounting firm, Arthur Young. I was a business librarian, researching information on many different kinds of businesses and clients of the firm. Eventually I became the head librarian of the national office of the firm, managing multi-million dollar contracts for their offices around the country.

When AY merged with Ernst & Whinney, becoming Ernst & Young, I was invited to join the legal department of the firm. Since I had no legal experience, the firm sent me to Columbia University library school to take a course in legal librarianship. So yet another special kind of library work: public library, publishing company, advertising agency, indexing and legal specialities. It was all a journey I enjoyed immensely and it kept me employed for 50 years. Good luck on your journey. ■

Thank you Nan!

Your recent endowment and estate gift in support of future librarian training is a strong kick-off for our 2021 50th Anniversary of librarian training/degree completions here at the University of Arizona!

Celebrating the class of 1971 and beyond!

Knowledge River has been awarded a $778,000 Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program grant!

The Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), supports developing a diverse workforce of librarians to better meet the changing, learning, and information needs of the American public.
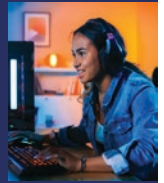
Berlin Loa, the leader of the program, highlights the importance of this grant to keep advancing on the understanding of the intersections between Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) communities. "That means that they take their cultural awareness into huge organizations and start to work from the inside to help others in the organization recognize how BIPOC communities are involved in every aspect of American society".

This grant recognizes the uniqueness of "Knowledge River: National Impact on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Libraries, Archives and Museums" program in fostering ethnic diversity of professionals working in libraries, archives, and museums (LAM), and supports up to 45 new scholars over three academic years to develop their professional careers, contributing to long-term retention in the field.

It is a holistic program to advance in the inclusion of underrepresented communities in the field. Project components include, scaling KR curriculum to be delivered to non-KR students and practicing librarians increasing cultural awareness across the field, and a longitudinal program survey to gauge impact and inform broader LAM field principles and practices. ■

More information at:

https://bit.ly/2Kwjf59

https://bit.ly/2J0AXO4

New undergraduate certificate on Data Science and Visualization.

This new certificate appeals to a wide variety of learners from across the campus, those that may not find other UArizona data science programs accessible given their own hesitancies, their course pre-requisites, or their familiarity with big data.

In particular, the Data Science and Visualization certificate trains both 1) technically-minded students the nuances associated with successfully developing and communicating data methods and results for non-experts and the general public, and 2) less technically-minded students the basic skills necessary for gathering insights from data.Dr. Nicholas Di Rienzo pointed out that the classes offered include introduction to data science, data mining, machine learning, data engineering and data visualization, all courses are geared towards equipping students with data science skills to address real-world questions and data sets. ■

More information at: https://bit.ly/37bachI

The iSchool is happy to announce two new degrees and a new undergraduate Certificate in Game Studies

The BA in Games & Behavior, BS in Game Design & Development, and the undergraduate certificate in Games and Simulation will allow UA students to gain a wide variety of skills in these popular and growing fields.

Students can receive a Bachelor of Arts degree in Games & Behavior that provide them with a broad understanding of important design principles and human behavior in games, and the implications of gamification in society. Students can take advanced classes in topics such as Gamification in Society, eSports Industries, and Monetizing Independent Games.

The Bachelor of Science degree in Game Design & Development will provide students with the design and development skills necessary to create virtual interactive environments that span across devices and platforms. Students will take classes in an introductory Game Design course, as well as explore areas such as Human Computer Interaction and Game Development.

In the Certificate for Games and Simulation, students will complete 12 units of courses to prepare them for both technical skills and to understand the basic principles necessary for making ideas come to life in a digital space. Students will take core classes in Game Design, electives in 300 and 400 level classes focused on various game industries and programming, and choose electives from ISTA, Game Development, or e-Society in a focus of their choosing.

Students can declare the majors/certificates now and incoming freshmen are able to apply and be admitted to these programs. For more information, curriculum details, and requirements please visit our undergraduate website or make an appointment with Undergraduate Academic Advisor Laura Owen. ■

(website:https://ischool.arizona.edu/declare, Laura Owen's info at:

https://ischool.arizona.edu/people/laura-owen)

The Graduate Program in Human Rights Practice and the iSchool are offering a new Graduate Certification in Human Rights and Technology

In recent years, advancing human rights using information and communication technologies has proven essential.

Now, to address this need, a graduate Certificate in Human Rights and Technology is being offered by the Human Rights Practice program together with the School of Information at the University of Arizona.

The iSchool participated in developing a comprehensive graduate certificate on Human Rights and Technology. This certificate is focused on assessing the critical intersection between technology and human rights. The iSchool is offering a new course, INFO 536, entitled "Data Science and Public Interests", designed by Dr. Nicholas DiRienzo, who adds "the goal of the course is to teach human rights and public interest practitioners the role of data science in these fields and how to apply the methods to their own questions now and in the future. The class is geared towards new learners and will teach them the data science methodology and coding skills by working through real-world datasets."

In fact, INFO 536 draws on the use of modern data science methods to help learners make socially responsible decisions and mitigate harm that arises from issues like bias, discrimination, and threats to one's personal privacy. More and more individuals are needing to make data-driven decisions in a wide variety of contexts including non-governmental organizations, not-for-profit industries, human services, environmental organizations, refugee camps, and more. Students in this class will thus learn about data science and how it can be utilized in contexts where socially-good decisions are desired and emphasized. This active learning class is designed for students who have an interest in the topic but who may have little to no previous experience with data science or programming. ■

iSchool Faculty Research Blitz

On December 4th, thirteen members of the iSchool Faculty gave presentations and answered questions about their current research at The University of Arizona.

If you missed this opportunity to tune in with the fantastic work taking place at the iSchool, you can watch the recording at: https://youtu.be/ituNO13CvnU?t=1

We are thrilled to recognize the iSchool's outstanding seniors:

Outstanding

Jake Heller
Leadership and Community Engagement

Allison McNally
Outstanding Senior

Sean Current
Outstanding Senior, Excellence in Research

Sophia Orlando
Excellence in Research

Congratulations on your retirement, Professor Richard Chabran!

It is been almost 20 years ago that Professor Chabran embarked on pursuing his ardor for increasing the number of librarians who could provide information services to and for the Latino and Native American communities. He was aware of this limitation for Latino and Native American librarianship a long time before Dr. Carla Stoffle called him to be part of the team working in what is now the Knowledge River Program and the School of Information. His vast experience as chair of the California Community Technology Policy Group (CCTPG), along with his work coordinating the Chicano Studies Research Library at UCLA from 1979-1995, were instrumental for the School to be awarded the first IMLS grant and recruit the first cohort of Knowledge River students.

On his retirement, Professor Chabran added "I am thankful for the chance to learn with my students about Native knowledge frameworks and to work on the classroom projects. I will forever remember all of the wonderful graduate students that I have worked with and continue to support Knowledge River. In my retirement, I plan to spend more time with family, continue to work as a Knowledge River advisor, and work with the Latino Digital Archive Group." This is an exemplary career path in supporting Latino and Native American access to information resources and closing the digital gap in the country. We are pleased to have had Professor Chabran among us these years and we wish him the best times ahead. ◼

Dr. Diana Daly recently launched iVoices

iVoices is the recently launched student media lab, supported in part by a three-year Center for University Education Scholarship (CUES) fellowship and a growing team of undergraduate and graduate instructors, media producers, and curators. iVoices channels knowledge shared through students' stories into new media, curricula, and scholarship, by transforming the large General Education course Social Media and Ourselves into a student-centered think tank and digital media lab supported by a community of scholars. Data based on students' development and media creations in iVoices will shed light on how experiences with technologies shape student learning, and illuminate novel technology practices and meaning for new media scholarship. Congratulations! ◼

https://adobe.ly/33zDbuK
https://bit.ly/2KMp1Qf

Dr. Knott, congratulations on your fellowships!

iSchool professor, Cheryl Knott, has received research fellowships from the New England Regional Fellowship Consortium and the Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society. Both support her work on a book tentatively titled "Environmental Projections: How the Limits to Growth Books Changed the Way We Think About the Earth's Future." ◼

Dr. Lenhart was awarded the School of Information Teaching Excellence Award.

This distinction recognizes the outstanding work that Dr. Lenhart has been doing in teaching, mentoring, and supporting students' career paths. Her students added that she is the kind of professor that works with them to ensure they reach their full potential. For Dr. Lenhart, "that's as much a testament to our students' and their commitment to their education and coursework as it is anything about me. Many of them do the extra "work" of attending virtual office hours or emailing about interesting news or documentaries or what have you. It makes my job fun and I am quite grateful to work with such bright, resourceful, and talented people." ◼

Dr. Wetherell used her science communication skills to present fascinating findings on National Geographic.

Dr. Meaghan Wetherell appeared in the 3-part series "X-Ray Earth" which aired on National Geographic last summer. Her episode, "Volcano Apocalypse," focuses on the far-reaching impacts of eruptions of the Yellowstone hotspot. She was asked to speak about the fossils preserved at Ashfall Fossil Beds State Historical Park in Nebraska, which consist of an entire herd of ancient rhinos. The eruption responsible must have rained out ash for months, devastating animal and plant populations across the United States. Though beautifully preserved, these fossilized rhinos paint a dismal picture of the impacts of a similar eruption in the future. ◼

Introducing the iSchool's newly appointed Director of Graduate Studies, Prof Jamie A. Lee!

Dr. Lee is Assistant Professor of Digital Culture, Information, and Society in the School, where their research and teaching attend to critical archival theory and methodologies, multimodal media-making contexts, storytelling, and bodies.

She is an Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) Early Career Grantee, through which they are conducting research on community-based archives and archival description practices, as well as a Faculty Fellow of the Haury Program for Environment and Social Justice.

Recently, Dr. Lee read from their forthcoming monograph, Producing the Archival Body (Routledge, 2021), as an invited scholar at CUNY-Queens Archival Technologies Lab's 'New Work' Initiative. Lee's book creatively connects a Critical Archival Studies approach to the ways they think and write about archives, how they make archives, and how they teach archives. Critical Archival Studies, as a sub-field of Archival Studies, demands transdisciplinarity. Producing the Archival Body is created through such a transdisciplinary perspective that aims to interrogate the power that circulates throughout archives. Lee's work reveals the urgency and importance of social justice in, to, and through archives. Lee connects their transdisciplinary theoretical approaches to their own contemporary practices in ways that include, what Lee explains, "action-oriented research with respect, so that community members are included in the design and development of the mission of the archives; the pedagogical, so that community members and students work and inform each other in the archives; the technological, so that, through the principles of social justice media, I can share my technological expertise with communities to facilitate their own oral history productions and always through a gesture of solidarity; and the transformational and transformative, so that together we are reflexive and open to being changed and to making change." ◼

Q&A with an intern – Paige Carlson at Marvel Entertainment, LLC

Our MLIS students are out in the world gaining valuable internship experiences at all kinds of libraries, archives, museums and more! Recently, current MA student Paige Carlson completed an internship with Marvel Entertainment, LLC as their Library Intern.

Q: How did you get your internship?

Paige Carlson: Disney has a frequently updated internship and job portal. The job was listed and I applied as quickly as I could – by the next week the listing was taken down. I was able to do the interview by phone, and then it was about three weeks before I got the call that I had gotten the internship.

Q: Why were you interested in this position?

Paige Carlson: I am a long-time fan of comic books. I grew up with Marvel heroes like Spider-Man and Hawkeye, and I always enjoy opening a new comic. I would love to continue to be able to help with the production of comics that mean so much to me, and many of the people working in Marvel are very open to talking to you about their career journey. Everyone I worked with at Marvel started there as an intern. Further, having Marvel on your résumé can be powerful.

Q: What were your job duties?

Paige Carlson: Every week on Thursday we get what is called a "bundle." Those are all of the comics coming out the next Wednesday. As a library intern, you are in charge of cataloging and putting away the comics in that bundle. When cataloging you also note the characters in the comics so you "have" to read them. Other than that, you get frequent requests from editing, special projects, digital media, and new media for books for reference purposes.

Q: What advice do you have for other students?

Paige Carlson: Apply. Apply. Apply! If you don't ask, they can't say yes! They might say no, but then you just apply again. I've been applying to Disney and its affiliates for years, and being rejected stings but at least they saw my name. It is always worth it to just send in an application. ■

ALEXANDRIA FRIPP

A Master's student committed to community building and equity is one of the 2020 ALA awardees

The American Library Association (ALA) Spectrum Scholarship is annually awarded to Master's of Library and Information Sciences (MLIS) students who are dedicated to making a positive impact in library and information fields. Alexandria is in her second and final year of the MLIS program with a focus on and intent to work in an academic library setting. She is overjoyed to be a part of the Spectrum Scholar program since she wants to empower students of color through their academic experience through representation and library services.

For Alexandria, as a first generation college student, this scholarship provides much needed financial access and connection with a network of peers and mentors from diverse backgrounds. Although the Covid-19 outbreak and the ongoing challenges, Alexandria has had affirming interactions in this space and she is thrilled to attend future virtual events with the cohort in order to build community. "Hopefully by the time of the ALA Annual Conference, COVID-19 will be handled well enough to be able to attend in person" she added. ■

Congratulations Alexandria!

iSchool doctoral candidate Dr. David Sidi is part of UAZ's 2020 Spanning Boundaries Challenge winning team for the project "Developing Socially-Aware Quantitative Intuition." David is also a research fellow this year working with Dr. Catherine Brooks and faculty in other colleges on interdisciplinary research relative to the new Center for Quantum Networks, here at the University of Arizona. ■

This is exciting work and great news.

https://cues.arizona.edu/person/david-sidi

-Bytes from Alumni

Alumni Spotlight on Miguel Figueroa

Miguel Figueroa, MLIS Class of 2003 and Knowledge River Graduate - President and Chief Executive Officer of Amigos Library Services

Miguel Figueroa has recently accepted the position of President and Chief Executive Officer of Amigos Library Services, a library consortium group based in Dallas, Texas that serves the southwest. Figueroa was a long time employee of the American Library Association, working as the Director for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services as well as the Center for the Future of Libraries. We recently sat down with Figueroa to talk about University of Arizona memories, building a career, and advice for current students.

On his time at the School of Information:

Miguel Figueroa: The real core component for me was the Knowledge River Program. It put me in touch with Brook Sheldon, who was the Dean at the time at the School after he had formed the program, and Carla Stoffle, the then-Dean of Libraries. They just had such an incredible reach across the profession. It's really amazing how many U of A folks rise to prominence at the national scale. So they were able to put me in touch with lots of different people. […] I think one of the other things I appreciated at the U of A was that the guidance counselors, the faculty in the school: they really wanted us to take advantage of the things that were happening on campus to supplement our understanding of the field. I still remember taking a course through the Mexican American Studies program on research methods. I still go back to the readings because it was just something that could only happen on the U of A campus and that's why it was so deep and rich, I think.

On career advice for current students:

Miguel Figueroa: The default advice is to always find mentors or to have conversations with people who are more senior to you. The program offers you opportunities to continuing to talk to your peers, the people that you graduated with and went through the program with. Many of them have become my best friends, others are people I admire in the profession. I still recall in our first and second year outside of the graduate program, having that person to go to and say, "this is what I'm experiencing right now, this is what I'm learning right now, these are the jobs that are interesting to me." I think it's possible to get competitive in the job market but I think there's a lot of advantage to trying to be collaborative.

On his perspective for the future goals at Amigos Library Services:

Miguel Figueroa: I think libraries are much more about experiences, they're about the sort of liaison services that library staff provides for staff or students to know how to manage their research and data. The collection is still important, but it's a lot more about the process of information acquisition and the experiential learning that starts to happen that takes it from information to actual product or knowledge. So, we can start looking at how we support more open systems that allow our libraries to work together for, like open education resources, or digital assets, or some of the self-created knowledge that libraries are managing from their campuses, or from their communities and trying to figure out what those opportunities might be. I'm trying to think about how we can support libraries in their efforts to provide instruction, programs and those kind of things. And that's kind of a different model of thinking, because we have to figure out which assets are replicable across our network, but also which are just unique to what one individual library might be doing. So that sort of landscape is tough to navigate, but I think that's where I want to get towards. ■

Thank you to the administrative staff
for the work that you do every day
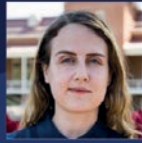
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Academic Advisor

Amy Gordon
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