

# Libra

*A newsletter for faculty and the University community published by the University of Chicago Library with support from the Library Society*

## Introducing Dean Torsten Reimer

*Torsten Reimer joined the University of Chicago as University Librarian and Dean of the University Library on April 22.*

Before coming to Chicago, he served as Head of Content and Research Services at the British Library and Scholarly Communications Officer at Imperial College London. He holds a Magister Artium and PhD in History from Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich, Germany.

Here, Rachel Rosenberg asks Dean Reimer a few questions about his experience as a library leader and his reasons for coming to Chicago.

**What motivated you to consider relocating to the U.S. and to the University of Chicago in particular?**

Since moving to London in 2007, I have worked with many great colleagues in the U.S., making friends from coast to coast, and falling in love with U.S. culture and the country's diverse landscapes. As someone who has studied at and worked in and with world-leading research organizations, I was attracted to the University of Chicago because of its global ambition and dedication to intellectual rigor—and because it is home to a great library with the potential to make a wider impact.

**Aside from the University of Chicago, is there a destination in the city that you are most looking forward to visiting?**

Leaving aside the fantastic theatres, museums, and restaurants for a moment, I am probably most excited about getting my camera out for long architecture walks. I had a chance to



*Torsten Reimer, University Librarian and Dean of the University Library*

photograph Chicago on previous visits, but there is so much more to explore.

**Do you have a philosophy that guides your strategies around information, research, and learning?**

Libraries exist to enable people to make the world a better, more equitable, more joyful place. With everything we do, we have to think about how our actions make a difference in someone's life (usually, but not exclusively) by providing information, spaces, tools, and inspiration. Therefore, my philosophy is to approach libraries from a user needs perspective—but with an understanding that in addition to being service providers we are also partners with our own expertise and intellectual agenda.

# PRESERVATION FOR FACULTY

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS  
ENABLING RESEARCH AND TEACHING  
IN THE MANSUETO LIBRARY

WHEN FACULTY MEMBERS want to analyze and share knowledge of rare and delicate Library materials, expert conservators and digitization staff in the Joe and Rika Mansueto Library are ready to help. By treating original materials and creating high-resolution digital images that can be analyzed in detail online, the Library's Preservation team ensures that collections enable groundbreaking research and enrich the experiences of students on campus and around the world.

The Conservation and Digitization Laboratories in the Mansueto Library—which mark their 10th anniversary this year—have expanded the range and quality of treatments conservators can provide and of digital images that can be shared online.

Here we highlight a few examples of preservation work that enables faculty research and teaching.

## Conservation for Classes in Special Collections

Faculty and students in the Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center often benefit from preservation work that prepares materials for safe examination. One book treasured by music faculty and students—the *Antiphonarium for Matins*, a collection of Gregorian chants—is the largest and heaviest book in the Library's collection. Because its text block had separated from its wooden, leather-covered case, frequent classroom use was impossible until Senior Conservator Melina Avery rebound the book using equipment built by Head of Conservation Ann Lindsey. Classes that come in to see this 52-pound, 83-by-55-cm book can begin to imagine the experience of a choir gathering to sing its music in a 16th-century Spanish church.

## Inspiring the Next Generation of Humanists and Scientists

Ann Lindsey regularly contributes her expertise to Suzanne Deal Booth Conservation Seminars for UChicago students spearheaded by Professor Christine Mehring and taught by Maria Kokkori, UChicago Visiting Lecturer and Art Institute of Chicago Associate Conservation Scientist. Kokkori teaches students scientific approaches to studying art objects and considers the meanings of different materials and how these may change over time in courses on Modern and Contemporary Materialities and the Material Science of Art. “The courses bring science students into meaningful contact with the humanities and vice versa, while enabling undergraduates and graduates to discover a lesser-known career path at a pivotal moment in their studies and internship explorations,” Mehring explained.

Since 2018, Kokkori has asked Lindsey to identify items in the Library's collection that would be interesting for the students to analyze during the seminar. Her suggestions have led to a study of an 18th-century hand-colored map and Wolf Vostell's *Betonbuch* (Concrete Book).

## Digitization

This winter, Professor Michael Suarez came to campus as the inaugural scholar in the Chicago Visiting Scholar Program in Paleography and the Book. While on campus teaching a course that introduced students to many treasures in Special Collections, he became interested in the Library's two copies of the 1543 first edition of Copernicus's *De revolutionibus orbium caelestium* and requested that the Preservation team digitize them for him. “I can use the high-resolution images to look closely at individual elements—even individual sorts of type—for evidence of how the Nuremberg printer Johannes Petrius actually printed the book,” Suarez said.



FAR LEFT: Senior Conservator Melina Avery rebinds the Library's largest and heaviest book, a 16th-century *Antiphonarium for Matins*, so that faculty and students can imagine the experience of a choir gathering to sing its music.

LEFT: A high-resolution image of one of the Library's first-edition copies of Copernicus's *De revolutionibus orbium caelestium* (*On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres*) requested by Professor Michael Suarez and captured by Digitization Manager Christina Miranda-Izguerra in the Mansueto Library.

# DOCUMENTING BLACK CHICAGO

**The Black  
Metropolis Research  
Consortium Wraps  
Up a Grant from the  
Mellon Foundation**

*Through Technology, Sustainability, and Outreach*

BY MARCIA WALKER-MCWILLIAMS, *Executive Director, Black Metropolis Research Consortium*

IN 2019, THE BLACK METROPOLIS RESEARCH CONSORTIUM (BMRC) embarked on a pivotal grant project, “Documenting Black Chicago Through Technology, Sustainability, and Outreach,” funded by an award from the Mellon Foundation. The grant supported two important initiatives that have now come to fruition. First, the BMRC has created educational resources and public programming for potential donors and archivists



**Marcia Walker-McWilliams**  
*Executive Director,  
Black Metropolis  
Research Consortium*

that encourage the caretaking of a more diverse historical record. Second, we have re-envisioned the BMRC’s searchable database of Black historical collections, leading to the launch of a new online gateway in March 2022.

Both initiatives advance the BMRC’s mission to connect all who seek to document, share, understand, and preserve Black experiences. The BMRC has a home at the University of Chicago Library and our members include libraries, museums, universities, arts and cultural heritage organizations, and government archives that provide free access to archival collections on Black experiences.

## **Outreach to Potential Donors and Archivists**

With support from the Mellon grant, T Calvin joined the BMRC as our Community Engagement Archivist. Calvin created a series of workshops to develop skills in collection diversification for staff at BMRC member institutions, as well as workshops and resources to support community members seeking to donate or care for their own legacy collections.



**Ida B. Wells-Barnett** wearing “Martyred Negro Soldiers” button, ca. 1917-1919. The Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center, The University of Chicago Library.

After combing through existing archiving resources and incorporating concerns and perspectives of Black Chicagoans, Calvin developed the Legacy Management Resource Portal in the fall of 2020. It is openly available to the world through the BMRC’s website and is one of our most visited and downloaded resources.

The workshop series on collection diversification and community engagement was aimed at staff in BMRC member institutions to enhance their capacity to build relationships with more diverse donors and to steward Black historical collections. Calvin conducted a community needs and assets assessment among Black Chicagoans and the organizations that serve them and curated the series to address

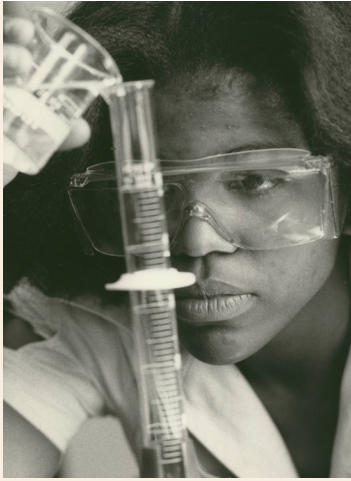
skill gaps that even seasoned archivists may have in cultural competency and collection diversification principles and strategies. The resulting workshops, led by experts, educated more than 100 community members in 2021, focusing on an introduction to archiving, African American genealogy, donating collections to archival repositories, and funding opportunities to support archival work. Most of these sessions were recorded and are now accessible to the world through the BMRC’s website and YouTube channel.



**T Calvin**  
*Community  
Engagement Archivist*

## **A Modern Gateway to Archival Collections on the Black Experience**

The Mellon grant also funded the hiring of Laurie Lee Moses as the BMRC’s Portal Archivist. Moses led the redesign of the BMRC’s existing searchable database to improve the user experience and develop better pathways into the rich



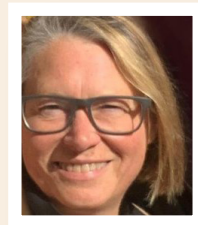
Chemistry student, 1979. Mundelein College Photograph Collection: Nutrition Research, Chemistry Department (#91). Courtesy of the Women and Leadership Archives, Loyola University Chicago.

collections. She has also overseen a refresh of the technology and updated over 1,000 collection records and finding aids to ensure a current and sustainable resource.

The new BMRC Archives Portal, at [bmrc.lib.uchicago.edu/portal](http://bmrc.lib.uchicago.edu/portal), provides a modern gateway for researching archival collections on Black experiences in Chicago and beyond. The launch of the portal follows nearly two years of planning, testing, and implementation led by Moses, with support from multiple team members in the Digital Library Development Center at the University of Chicago Library, including John Jung, and staff from BMRC member institutions. The portal was designed to make researching people, neighborhoods, organizations, events, and topics relevant to Black history much easier for a broad spectrum of researchers, from high school history fair participants to scholars in a wide variety of fields.

The initiatives undertaken as part of the Mellon grant have allowed the BMRC to expand our reach and resources and make significant progress towards our vision of being essential to promoting discovery, preservation, and use of Black historical collections.

*These historical photos and many others can be found at Chicago-area archives with help from the new BMRC Archives Portal at [bmrc.lib.uchicago.edu/portal](http://bmrc.lib.uchicago.edu/portal).*



**Laurie Lee Moses**  
Portal Archivist



African American Pugilist Jack Johnson in Chicago, Illinois, 1910. SDN-051581, Chicago Daily News collection, Chicago History Museum.

## Introducing Dean Torsten Reimer *continued from page 1*

### **As the role of academic research libraries changes, what innovations have been made in recent years that you think are most influencing scholarship today?**

Possibly the most important contribution to scholarship is rethinking the library collection as open data, alongside the wider role libraries are playing in making content across the world findable, accessible, interoperable, and reusable. Research libraries provide and support crucial infrastructure for knowledge sharing globally, and we enable open access to an ever-growing number of scholarly publications. Free access to knowledge not only helps to improve society and address equity issues but also underpins data science and techniques such as text and data mining.

### **In what ways would you like the University of Chicago Library to play a strategic role on campus and in Chicago?**

On campus I see a growing role for the Library as a partner in the research process, in particular in areas related to data management, digital scholarship, and scholarly communications. Working with partners across the campus, we need to make it as easy as possible for faculty and students to manage and share their data and publications, reducing the complexity in areas like open access, funder reporting, and research information management. Faculty and students should be freed from as many administrative tasks as possible, and that requires linking systems and workflows across the University. The best way to do that is to be involved as early as possible in the research process, and from a position where we can help advance scholarship beyond just providing infrastructure.

We also need to keep developing our collection to make a contribution to addressing key research and societal challenges, for example in areas such as climate change, racism, and digital literacy and ethics. Looking beyond the campus itself, I see a role for the Library to be a window into the exciting research coming out of the University, and to be a helpful neighbor and partner in the South Side community. Libraries have long aspired to provide open and equitable access to their services, and for university libraries that—to me—has to be a commitment to the communities in which we live.

# BEING A SOUTHERN ASIAN STUDIES LIBRARIAN TODAY

BY LAURA RING, *Southern Asian Studies Librarian*

In February of 2020, I spent the morning with conservation librarians in Mansueto Library, investigating the material culture history of a rare book from our collections—an early 19th-century Tamil translation of the Gospel of Mark. Using microscopy, we were hoping to see what the binding could tell us about the book's journey from a missionary press in India to the library of its former owner—a bestselling, U.S. pro-slavery author in the antebellum South.



**Laura Ring**  
*Southern Asian Studies Librarian*

**B**EING A SOUTHERN ASIAN STUDIES LIBRARIAN TODAY requires precisely this kind of interplay between the old and the new, the local and the global. Our South Asia collections have great historical depth, bringing together some of the earliest published material from and about the region, from philological and religious texts to colonial government documents, missionary tracts, and travelogues. Importantly, these collections are not static; we continue to purchase materials from the antiquarian market that fill gaps in our holdings, and where such materials cannot be purchased, we work with partners around the world to acquire microfilm or digital copies. We also receive such materials through gifts, of which our Tamil Gospel of Mark is a likely example.

But we are also committed to creating new points of entry to our historical collections, even as scholars design new ways of studying them. In addition to microscopy and other forms of material analysis, the creation of digital corpora allows scholars to experiment with new forms of visualization, mapping, or computational analysis. We also work to enhance user discovery of our South Asia materials, bringing our “hidden collections” into the light through collaborative and grant-funded metadata initiatives.

This approach—one oriented to the future as well as the past—applies to our contemporary collections as well. We collect deeply across the geographic and linguistic breadth of South Asia, in all topics, ranging from the scholarly to the popular, recognizing that the popular culture materials of today—ephemeral publications, posters, pulp fiction—will be the primary sources of tomorrow. Another key element of our collection strategy is asking whose voices are missing from our collections. We pay particular attention to collecting works by and about marginalized groups, putting forward perspectives that have long been underrepresented in library collections.

At the same time, we recognize that much of contemporary creative expression and social discourse is happening not in print media, but online, in small or independent websites that are at great risk of disappearing. In addition to collecting print and other traditional forms of media, we participate in web archiving projects, preserving things ranging from government documents to web content by community organizations and dissident political groups.

Finally, even as we are guided by the current and future needs of our faculty and students, we try to adopt a more nuanced and expansive understanding of the communities—both local and global—that we serve. As stewards of one of the premiere South Asia collections in the world, we feel a strong responsibility to make our materials as accessible as possible to scholars across the globe—and especially for scholars in South Asia. Welcoming visiting scholars and fielding queries from scholars in South Asia is a regular part of our work. Moreover, we have taken leading roles in collaborative Open Access projects—like the South Asia Open Archives—that aim to digitize South Asian studies materials and make them freely available online, for the benefit of all.

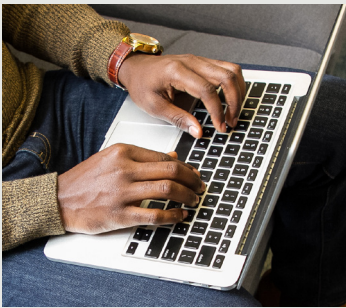
But the responsibility that stewardship of this collection brings extends not only 10,000 miles away, to the Indian subcontinent, but to the local Black communities of our own South Side neighborhoods. While our investigation of the Gospel of Mark in Tamil is ongoing, its provenance tells us that this book is caught up in the history of slavery and anti-Black racism in this country—and its pseudoscientific defense. It is a reminder of how connected we are, locally and globally, and the deeply intertwined nature of the history we hold within our stacks.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** *Laura Ring has served the Southern Asia collection at the University of Chicago since 2008. She was appointed Southern Asian Studies Librarian—and head of the collection—on February 1, 2022.*

# New Library-Funded OPEN ACCESS PUBLISHING OPTIONS

BY THE TRANSFORMATIVE AGREEMENTS WORKING GROUP

Jessica Harris (Chair), Greg Fleming, Jenny Hart, Catherine Mardikes, Cecilia Smith, Deb Werner, and Barbara Kern



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The University of Chicago Library has been entering into transformative agreements—also known as **Read and Publish agreements**—that allow UChicago students, faculty, and staff to publish their research as open access without needing to pay article processing charges (APCs). These agreements, covering journals in many disciplines across the humanities, sciences, and social sciences, are part of the UChicago Library's commitment to broad, open, and equitable access to research and publishing.

## The Public Library of Science (PLOS) Agreement

UChicago Library's latest agreement with PLOS and the BTAA (Big Ten Academic Alliance) provides Library-funded open access publishing options for all PLOS journals. This agreement applies to all University of Chicago faculty, students, and staff.

PLOS is a nonprofit publisher of twelve open access journals ranging from biology and medicine to climate and sustainability. Previously, our 2021 agreement allowed University of Chicago affiliates to publish in *PLOS Biology* and *PLOS Medicine*. As of April 1, 2022, affiliates can now publish an unlimited number of articles in all twelve journals without an open access publishing charge to authors. Articles are published with a CC-BY license. These journals include *PLOS One*, *PLOS Neglected Tropical Diseases*, *PLOS Genetics*, *PLOS Computational Biology*, *PLOS Pathogens*, *PLOS Digital Health*, *PLOS Medicine*, *PLOS Biology*, *PLOS Sustainability and Transformation*, *PLOS Global Public Health*, *PLOS Climate*, and *PLOS Water*.

## The Cambridge University Press Agreement

The Library's Read and Publish Agreement with Cambridge through the BTAA, provides Library-funded open access publishing in Cambridge Hybrid and Gold OA journals and 219 additional journals for faculty, students, and staff at UChicago. Learn more at R&P Resources for Librarians at <https://bit.ly/CambridgeRP>.

As part of this agreement, the Library has gained access to 219 additional journals. These journals are included in the agreement so that faculty, students, and staff will have full open access publishing rights without needing to pay APCs.

## The Wiley Agreement

The Wiley Agreement, reached through the BTAA, provides free open access publishing in Wiley hybrid journals for a limited number of faculty, students, and staff at the University of Chicago through December 31, 2022. Note that this agreement does not include open access publishing in Wiley's gold open access journals.

Once all credits are used, UChicago authors are eligible for a 10% discount on APCs in any Wiley hybrid journal.

## Learn More about Our Transformative Agreements

To date we have entered into six open access, Library-funded agreements, including with ACS (American Chemical Society), Microbiology Society, PLOS, Royal Society, Cambridge, and Wiley.

More information is available from the Library website on Publisher Open Access Agreements and Other Open Access Initiatives. If you have any questions, please reach out to our Transformative Agreements Working Group at

[transformative-agreements@lib.uchicago.edu](mailto:transformative-agreements@lib.uchicago.edu).

