Message from the PPIRS Chair
Erin Ackerman (she/her/hers)
The College of New Jersey

Dear PPIRS colleagues,

What a remarkable year this has been. Like so many others, I find myself constantly reflecting professionally and personally on the dramatic changes of the past year and wondering what the coming summer and new academic year will hold. I have been honored to serve as PPIRS Chair this year and to witness the tremendous work being done by PPIRS committees and volunteers.

Our associational life in PPIRS was already trending toward a largely remote network pre-pandemic, as technology made it easier to connect virtually throughout the year (and shrinking travel budgets made it harder to regularly get to conferences). For me, PPIRS has always been an important part of finding my place in ACRL and helping me do my job better. In this often very isolated year, I have been even more appreciative of the creativity and dedication of our PPIRS volunteers to developing ongoing opportunities for meaningful connection and learning. We have seen a spring of exciting programming and outreach efforts, with wide-ranging discussions, workshops, and networking both within PPIRS and with other units of ACRL and ALA. Thank you to all of the PPIRS committee chairs and volunteers for their commitment and hard work on behalf of our section. Thank you also to those who have volunteered to serve next year and congratulations to our newly elected PPIRS officers.

There are still many exciting things happening as we head into the late spring and summer, including professional development offerings, a virtual social event, and the PPIRS-sponsored program at ALA Annual, “Confronting the Myth of Neutrality: Academic Libraries, Advocacy, and Free Speech.” We will also present the 2021 PPIRS/Sage-CQ Press Marta Lange Award to Jill Severn, Archivist and Head of Access and Outreach, University of Georgia and Director, Russell Forum for Civic Life in Georgia. A new PPIRS discussion group on Preparedness and Security has recently formed; contact Abby Adams (aadams5@albany.edu) to join.

At the next meeting of the PPIRS executive board, I will be proposing a task force to work on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) within PPIRS. Please consider volunteering to work on this task force and/or to share your feedback with us. Contact me at ackermae@tcnj.edu to get involved. Librarians from the PPIRS community are also invited to join two discussion groups being organized by our “cousins” in GODORT. One is for BIPOC librarians to connect with other BIPOC members, another is for people with disabilities or neurodivergence to discuss issues in government information support. For more information on these discussion groups, please contact Lynda Kellam (lmk277@cornell.edu).

More information on these and other events will be posted to the PPIRS listserv and the PPIRS ALA Connect. If you are not already a member of the PPIRS listserv, I strongly encourage you to join. Because our listserv was not on ALA’s listserv system, it has been able to continue despite recent tech changes at ALA. The PPIRS listserv is a great resource for learning about events and asking questions of the PPIRS community. (And it won’t overwhelm your inbox). The listserv is opt-in, so please consider signing up. More information on joining is available here.

I hope to see you at our upcoming events and hear from you about PPIRS. Best wishes for a happy and healthy spring and summer.

Sincerely,
Erin
In October 2020, I was selected to serve as the PPIRS liaison to the American Political Science Association (APSA) for a term running until August 31, 2023. I am delighted to be in a position to serve the section in this capacity, as well as to represent our section in the ACRL Liaisons Assembly Committee. My appointment as APSA liaison occurred shortly after APSA’s 2020 annual meeting entitled “Democracy, Difference, and Destabilization,” which I attended virtually. Since then, I have been active in meeting stakeholders and APSA staff who are very excited to build connections with political science librarians through PPIRS.

The APSA annual meeting was held entirely online through virtual panels and keynote sessions. Amidst the turmoil of the Covid-19 pandemic and racial justice protests in summer 2020, the conference pivoted to address these pressing social concerns. The Presidential Address by Dr. Paula McClain, “Crises, Race, Acknowledgement: The Centrality of Race, Ethnicity and Politics to the Future of Political Science,” was a searing indictment of the long history of racist and xenophobic treatment of minorities and immigrants in America writ large and of African Americans in the discipline of political science particularly. Dr. McClain has established an APSA taskforce to examine the effects of systemic racism within the discipline and potential remedies. APSA president-elect Dr. John Ishiyama was part of an interesting panel I attended called “Rethinking the Undergraduate Political Science Major” which was one phase of a long-term effort to recommend changes to discipline curricula. I also took part in the APSA Teaching and Learning mini-conference (TLC) on Saturday, and found that many educators shared the same struggles of adapting their face-to-face instruction to the online learning environment.

In December, Erin Ackerman introduced me by email to APSA’s president, Janet M. Box-Steffensmeier, and executive director, Steven Rathgeb Smith. Through this connection, I set up a meeting with the APSA publishing director Jon Gurstelle, and the director for teaching & learning, Tanya Schwartz, in January. We discussed many promising areas for future collaboration including information literacy programming/publishing, civic engagement activities, data literacy projects, and scholarly communications. The APSA Educate online platform which debuted in early 2020 is now well-stocked with blog posts, essays, and open-access teaching materials for political science educators and will be an important place for librarians to locate resources for faculty and make their own submissions: https://educate.apsanet.org/. I also described the work of the PPIRS Ad hoc Information Literacy Framework committee and they are very eager to help promote the final product in numerous ways when it is ready.

In March, I met with Bennett Grubbs, the editor of APSA Educate, to discuss more discrete ways of librarians becoming more involved and participating in the community of educators publishing on the blog and repository. He encouraged us to reach out with any ideas for posts or materials, and especially seeks reports on successful efforts with political science faculty and librarians working with collaborative and interactive pedagogical techniques. Grubbs would also welcome advice on OER searches and channels to add their open access APSA resources and textbooks. He is very receptive to any proposals we may have to contribute content to APSA Educate (or ways to increase its visibility and distribution).

I have discovered many exciting avenues to pursue in my first few months in this liaison role to develop lasting partnerships and resource sharing between our organizations. If you are interested in being connected to anyone I know at APSA, or have an idea for a collaboration, feel free to reach out to me at kmacvaug@gmu.edu.
The Professional Development Committee had an active year. With gratitude for all who attended, facilitated, responded to polls, and otherwise engaged, here is a look at where we’ve been and a prompt to keep us moving forward together.

**Webinars**

In the fall of 2019, the members of the PPIRS professional development committee had a discussion about the lack of training around international relations (IR) and commented that it would perhaps be good to have a boot-camp to facilitate more professional knowledge around this topic. Rather than wait to institute this, the committee decided they would facilitate more knowledge building by reaching out to the Dag Hammarskjöld Library of the United Nations to see if they would provide a webinar on their organization and about their role in international relations. This would be the first of many webinars and the beginning of engagement with the membership in this way.

Unfortunately, the NCLA GRS “Help I’m An Accidental Government Librarian” committee had the idea to have a webinar on the same topic at around the same time; the committee then pivoted to present *An Introduction to International Relations by James Church and Kenya Flash*. This would be the first of several webinars by the professional development committee. These were designed as ways to enhance knowledge on topics related to international relations and were open to the public. Subsequent topics included *Fundamentals of International Law part I* by Nadine Hoffman and Olivia Ivey, and a two part International Data series facilitated by Jennifer Huck, data librarian at the University of Virginia. Upcoming webinars include Navigating the WTO facilitated by Katherine Rewinkel El-Darwish, WTO librarian, and Fundamentals of International Law part II, TBD. The committee is still determining whether they will continue the webinars, and if they do, whether they will still focus on International Relations and/or International Law in the future, or if they would consider other topics.

**Discussions**

As the budget implications of COVID-19 dominated higher education news in spring and summer of 2020, the PPIRS listserv turned active with questions around struggles to protect valuable resources or how to navigate research assistance in their absence.

In response, the Professional Development committee launched a discussion series *Resource Decisions in Tough Economic Times*. Through the design process, it became clear that not only is this a discussion to facilitate conversations on how to think about retaining or giving up a resource, it could be a great tool for helping newer librarians identify key sources within Political Science, Policy, and International Relations. While designed as a confidential space for librarians to share their experiences, the themes and lessons learned are worth sharing out with the larger community.

One discussion, facilitated by Michelle Baildon, Collections Strategy Team Lead Librarian at Harvard School of Design, did not focus on actual selection or discard, rather it focused on how to plan to have a more diverse collection. Key steps include identifying what is actually meant by diversity in your organization, reviewing what you have within your collection, and working with departments who are interested in underrepresented or marginalized groups to enhance representation within collections.

Subsequent topics focused on (de)selection around a theme with facilitation from around the PPIRS community. These include Subject Specific Databases (Sandy Hervieux and Sean Leahy), Congressional Sources (Chris Palazzolo and Brea Henson), Legal Sources (Nadine Hoffman and Elizabeth White), and Public Policy Sources (Jim Church and Sandy Hervieux).

From these discussions, the committee identified several recurrent themes including:

- From negotiations with vendors to communication with faculty and other constituents, organizational structure, culture, and dynamics matter. Membership in a consortium may come with benefits of shared negotiating/purchasing power and can absorb some of the heat from a controversial cut. For an individual librarian, it can be challenging to advocate for a niche use case to such a large body with a zoomed out view of users’ needs. Even so, if you have to make a painful cut, there is probably someone on the listserv who has walked that road. Reach out!

- Content overlap analysis is time consuming, especially with the rapidly changing landscape of public/free availability of Congressional, legal, and other government documents relevant to PPIRS work. Curation across multiple government platforms and application of metadata and search filters is an important value add for some, but an unaffordable luxury for others. Unique and important content can be hard to walk away from, even if the price is high and difficult to negotiate down.

- Many institutions look at cost-per-use data, but recognize that it may be incomplete, inaccurate, or otherwise not telling the whole story. Curricular needs and faculty feedback are essential.

- Our colleagues are doing great work building custom search engines like the Think Tank Search from the Harvard Kennedy School and GODORT’s NGO Search. Keep them coming and share them with the listserv when you do!

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**Looking Back and Planning Ahead:**

**Reflections from the Professional Development Committee**

*Olivia Ivey, Brea Henson, Kenya Flash - On behalf of the committee*
The committee believes there is strength in continuing these discussions due to the following factors:

- There is membership overlap between the Professional Development committee and the Vendor Relations committee - which is great! Tight budgets are not going away. PPIRS is poised to support its members in navigating resource management, including the vendor relations elements.
- It is a great venue to share or encourage others to engage in detailed content comparisons.
- Seeing one another outside of big conferences helps spread practical knowledge while building community. Participation has served as a reentry point for PPIRS engagement. After stepping up to co-facilitate a session, Chris Palazzolo volunteered to join the Professional Development committee for the next cycle.

The professional development team is excited to continue developing programming that enhances knowledge within PPIRS. Please contact our upcoming chairs Nadine Hoffman and Sean Leahy to discuss planning for the 2021-2022 academic year.

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Member News and Upcoming Events

Congratulations to Brett Cloyd! Brett will be promoted to “Senior Librarian” effective June 1, 2021. This is the highest ranking for academic librarians at the University of Iowa. Brett was also elected to be the UI Libraries representative to the University of Iowa Staff Council. It’s a 3-year term to the shared governance body for UI Professional & Scientific staff. The Staff Council works with University leadership to discuss policy, resources, and services, and advocate for staff. Learn more about Staff Council at: https://staff-council.uiowa.edu/about-staff-council. On either May 24 or 25th, Brett will be giving a talk to the Phi Beta Delta Honor Society Online Conference. This group is an honor society for International Scholars. Brett will be talking about ways that librarians can support international education on campus. Brett plans to talk about how he works with academic programs like International Studies and International Relations, supporting students applying for Fulbright awards, and serving on the board of the Iowa City Foreign Relations Council.

The PPIRS Membership Committee invites you to attend the PPIRS virtual social, PUB-STYLE GROUP TRIVIA!

The social will take place in June 2021 before ALA Annual. The date, time, and additional details will be announced on the PPIRS listserv and ALA Connect. Stay tuned and we look forward to seeing you there!

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Join your colleagues for the 2021 ALA Virtual Annual Conference, June 24-29, 2021! This event is packed with educational programming, Featured Speakers, 250+ exhibitors, and so much more. Be sure to check out the listing of high-quality programs and discussion forums from ACRL member units! Register today!
As many academic libraries were forced to close due to the COVID-19 pandemic, librarians had to find alternatives to print resources for their users. Given the high interest in Open Educational Resources (OERs), the Vendor/Publisher Liaison and Review Committee met to discuss the different resources available to the fields of Political Science, Policy, and International Relations. Below are the committee’s overviews of three websites that curate OER content: Merlot, OASIS and OER Commons.

**Merlot**

The MERLOT collection (https://www.merlot.org/merlot/) was started by California State University in 1997. Over the years, it has grown and added new partnerships, expanding on its original areas of focus to become a substantial collection of OERs and accessibility resources. It requires users to become members via email address and displays other members listed by discipline as well. While most of the content is available without cost, some resources and course materials require payment.

Any member of the site can add content, submitted with the relevant metadata. The uploaded materials are reviewed by the site’s editors, and contributors can opt to have their materials peer reviewed by the editorial board members within each discipline area. The majority of the content in the Political Science section is not peer reviewed, but almost all of it is free. Roughly two thirds of the content is posted under Creative Commons licensing.

The material types include case studies, subject collections, full courses, textbooks, reference materials, and a handful of other resource types. Users can filter by material type, intended audience, and features such as peer reviewed or editor ratings. The political science content is nested under Social Science rather than as a stand-alone section. However, the keyword search plus limiters allows users to narrow their search parameters pretty effectively.

Most of the content is intended for teaching rather than research purposes. However, several subject bibliography collections could also be used for research purposes. Most materials are intended for use at the college level, although some are targeted toward middle school, high school, and professional audiences. Currently, MERLOT has roughly 1,000 total results classified under Political Science, but more materials are being added.

Overall, the MERLOT PoliSci collection freely provides a number of useful resources. The textbooks, bibliographic collections, presentations, and reference materials are likely to be most useful to the members of PPIRS. Since the collection is largely dependent on what people choose to upload, the site has significant gaps in some niche categories. Regardless, it is certainly worth checking out for political science instructors and professors looking for OERs to use in class.

**OASIS**

Openly Available Sources Integrated Search (OASIS; https://oasis.genesee.edu/index.php) is a product of SUNY Geneseo’s Milne Library. It aggregates open content from 100+ sources, currently standing at more than 388,000 records. OASIS is dominated by primary source material from the Library of Congress (about ⅔ of its total content) and by public domain books from Project Gutenberg (about ⅔ of its total content). The rest of its content consists of OA books and a variety of curricular materials, including full open courses, open textbooks, research assignments, and individual learning objects.

Nearly 2,000 OASIS records are tagged as political science content. Most are OA books from JSTOR. The political science collection also includes 150 open courses from MIT and a few dozen research assignments from Project CORA and learning objects from the Wisconsin Technical College System’s Wisc-Online. Topics cover a wide range, including political theory, US politics, state and local politics, voting and political behavior, international relations, political history, and research methods. The open textbooks that it harvests from MIT OpenCourseWare, OpenStax CNX, Delft University of Technology, and elsewhere are primarily undergraduate texts, but include a number of texts for master’s and upper-level undergraduate courses.

Political science and social science content are not the focus of OASIS overall, which has far greater coverage of humanities content, such as historical and literary sources.

Because of its heavy curricular components, one might believe that OASIS aims to gather open content for teachers. Its homepage features shortcuts to access Textbooks, Courses, Course Materials, and Interactive Simulations. However, the volume of primary sources and public domain books speak to OASIS’ stated purpose, “to make the discovery of open content easier.” The best way to describe OASIS might be as an agnostic and universal open content aggregator.

OASIS creates unique records for most items that it aggregates. These records contain minimal metadata fields, including title, author, resource type, source of the content, and a description. Importantly, each record also includes the relevant Creative Commons license, alerting users to their rights and responsibilities when using this open content. The record link to the content at its original source (e.g., modules from Open Stax are linked from the CNX website; books from OAPEN are linked from the OAPEN website). Links are stable.

The OASIS interface includes a number of faceted options for winnowing your results, including the ability to narrow by source type, subject, license, and source. You also can easily search within your results. The interface includes a button to email an item’s record to yourself or a colleague. A small subsection of the content -- about 600 items -- have been professionally reviewed. The interface allows you to filter for these reviewed items. OASIS does not enable users to search or sort by creation date. Our analysis did find a number of DOAB books from 2020 within OASIS, but none of the 2021 DOAB books, indicating that OASIS is updated frequently but not automatically.

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OER Commons (https://www.oercommons.org) was launched in 2007 by ISKME, a global nonprofit that supports innovations in education. This repository contains a digital library of teaching and learning materials and is also intended to be a collaboration platform for instructors and educators. OER Commons contains over 50,000 OERs that are free to use, and its collections keep growing. It’s possible to view the resources on the platform but it requires the user to create a free account to be able to download them.

The political sciences resources are nestled under the social science category, which contains 4,521 resources. OER Commons contains 740 resources for political science, and materials are available for all levels of instruction from preschool to graduate education and even adult education. In addition to a vast coverage of educational levels, OER Commons also contains a wide variety of types of materials such as assessment, case studies, full courses, lectures, lesson plans, modules, primary sources, syllabi, textbooks, and much more. Although most resources are in English, OER Commons also contains materials in other languages such as Arabic, French, and Spanish.

OER Commons enables users to create and upload their own educational resources in two ways: by using the Open Author platform where the user can create an entry for their own resources or by uploading the link to the resource if it is housed elsewhere.

This repository creates its own records for the resources, which contain limited metadata such as an overview of the resource, subject, level of instruction, material type, author, date, and language. It also includes the Creative Commons license information of the resource or material. Although it does not provide permalinks, the links to the resources are stable. The resources also receive subject tags and it’s possible for users of OER Commons to add comments to the resources. Social media sharing is also embedded in the platform.

It’s possible to browse resources by subject area or material types. A basic search bar is available as well as an advanced search feature. The advanced search includes multiple features such as searching by keywords, subject area, educational use, material type, educational level, license type, and more. The facets available to narrow down a search are also extensive and include similar options as the advanced search. It is also possible to browse collections created by OER Commons such as their textbook collection.

Overall OER Commons contains a wide variety of resources that could be useful to the PPIRS community. Although its primary aim is to support teaching and learning instead of research, it could offer valuable materials for college and university faculty members. (continued next page...)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Platform/vendor</th>
<th>OER Commons</th>
<th>Merlot</th>
<th>OASIS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Major Areas of Coverage</td>
<td>Political Science and law, of all levels from pre-school to adult education</td>
<td>Political science and US Government, primarily for instructional use at the college level</td>
<td>All topics of political science, especially scholarship, undergraduate instruction and graduate instruction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Geographic coverage (strengths)</td>
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<td>Largely US. Some international coverage, but without consistency</td>
<td>Largely US</td>
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<td>Dates of coverage</td>
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<td>Oldest uploads are from 1999 and 2000, but much of it is regularly updated. There are some archival collections, but most information is within the last 3-5 years</td>
<td>Started in 2018. Content ranges from 2021 all the way back to public domain books in Project Gutenberg.</td>
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<td>Update frequency</td>
<td>Whenever people add new content</td>
<td>Whenever people add new content</td>
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<tr>
<td>Types of materials included</td>
<td>Textbooks, learning objects such as modules, assessment, data</td>
<td>Case studies, subject collections, full courses, textbooks, reference materials, etc.</td>
<td>OA books, public domain books, learning modules, open textbooks, lesson plans, research assignments, and primary source material.</td>
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<td>Number of political science titles</td>
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<td>Materials accessible for free</td>
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**PPIRS Pro Tips: Call for Advice**

**What advice do you have for up-and-coming political science librarians?**

To encourage the sharing of ideas, the Vendor/Publisher Liaison and Review Committee has created PPIRS Pro Tips. There you can answer either (or both!) of the following two questions and view others’ answers:

What advice would you give a brand new librarian who was starting a job as a subject librarian for poli sci, policy, or international relations?

What resources (e.g., databases, free website) should they absolutely learn, and why?

**We hope you enjoy this opportunity to learn from one another!**

To share feedback, please contact Mark Robison (mrobiso2@nd.edu) or complete this form online.

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**Off-RoadShows**

ACRL’s traveling RoadShow workshops are on hold until it's safe to resume large in-person gatherings, but we're working to bring you the same great content through virtual experiences. These "Off-RoadShows" will continue to help academic library professionals tackle the greatest issues facing the profession today. Host a multi-day virtual workshop for your library or organization! Learn more at ala.org/acrl/offroad.
Tips & Tricks for Zoom Security

By Nadine Hoffman, Danya Leebaw, and Kenya Flash (on behalf of the Professional Development Committee)

Following the Professional Development Committee’s “Zoom bombed” webinar on October 22, 2020, many lessons were learned.

As background, an invited speaker was presenting on international datasets for the social sciences. About 15 minutes after the start, with 115 legitimate attendees, the webinar was taken over by unwanted intruders, “Zoom bombers.” These unwanted intruders staged a takeover of the meeting, with hateful and offensive images posted on the screen and audio used to speak over the presenter and hosts, saying racist and sexist slurs. In addition, the bombers took over the screen names of legitimate attendees and put offensive statements in the chat. Legitimate attendees and the committee members valiantly attempted to identify the bombers and remove them from the meeting. Unfortunately, identifying and removing the Zoom bombers—particularly as they assumed the names of legitimate attendees—proved impossible. After what felt like a long minute or two, the invited speaker ended the webinar. The committee and speaker regrouped, worked with the section’s leadership to communicate with attendees and members, then rescheduled the webinar for November 19.

The Committee used this unfortunate incident to add extra security measures for subsequent webinars and discussions. We are sharing these below in the hopes that what we learned will be helpful for others in avoiding similar problems in the future.

**Recommendations for Zoom Security**

**All Events**

- Be wary of automatic registration processes
- Use a passcode that isn’t included in the URL
- Use the waiting room feature with manual check against registrations
- Cut off registration an hour or two before the event and consider lock/close the meeting
- Request attendees to ensure the link in their calendar is not public.
- Turn off the ability for attendees to change their screen names, chat with anyone but the host(s), share screens, show images on their profile, or record.

**Formal Webinars**

- Use Webinar version of Zoom with “panellist” role for co-hosts
- All chat messages also go to the panellists, but panellists can communicate with each other separately

**Informal Discussions**

- Have multiple co-hosts to act as “bouncers” & ensure they feel comfortable with the settings so they can remove anyone quickly
- Disable screen sharing & annotation
- Set mute on entry
- Consider requiring everyone to have a Zoom account, called “authenticated user”

**Other Lessons Learned**

Not many people have access to the Webinar version of Zoom, and institutions have different protocols in place for Zoom hosting roles. When putting these measures in place, you need co-hosts in order to admit everyone and ask people to join early to avoid taking away time from the webinar or discussion (or plan for a longer event). Regardless of which option you use, make sure to communicate with attendees before and during your event.

We are thankful to our invited speaker for her quick judgment in shutting everything down gracefully. We are also grateful for the understanding shown by the webinar attendees. While the Zoom bombing was deeply upsetting for everyone present, we acknowledge that it was even more painful for attendees whose personal identity was specifically targeted through racial, ethnic, and misogynistic slurs used by the bombers.

We all want to take the easy road, but doing that can lead to painful experiences for organizers, speakers, and attendees. We can’t stress enough working as a team and having multiple co-hosts so we can win the Zoom bombing battle!
2021 PPIRS Marta Lange/SAGE-CQ Press Award

Jill Severn

A message from Jill:

I am honored to receive the 2021 Marta Lange/SAGE-CQ Press Award, and I’m exceedingly grateful to Dr. John Maltese and his colleagues at the School of Public and International Affairs (SPIA) at the University of Georgia for the nomination. Of course, I must enter the caveat that my work is tied up inextricably with the creative and diligent efforts of colleagues at the Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies and the University of Georgia Special Collections Libraries as well as the many faculty partners at SPIA with whom I have collaborated in myriad ways over the years. This award recognizes all of our efforts to explore what collaboration and cooperation between libraries and scholars can achieve.

When I began working as an archivist in the Russell Library, a political archives at the University of Georgia, in the late 1990s, I remember thinking that most of our researchers would likely be political scientists and their students. At the time, the Russell Library had one of the largest of collections of congressional materials in the southeast as well as a wide array of related materials from elected and appointed officials, journalists, and civic and lobbying organizations. This attracted a steady stream of scholars and students from around the country, but very few of them were political scientists. Indeed, I discovered very quickly that, far from being our best customers, political scientists rarely used the archives. I discovered a couple of reasons for this paucity. The idiosyncratic and selected nature of archives—they have what people saved and not everything that ever existed—was often ill-suited for the quantitative analysis of large data sets that scholars working in political science often sought.

Equally, at this time most of our existing collections were still largely paper-based, which made them time-consuming to code and analyze. Similarly, we were not yet prepared to provide access to the born-digital records that were increasingly coming in as part of new collections.

While we worked on ways to encourage more use of our collections here at UGA, we began a robust effort to engage a small but growing group of political scientists across the country who were increasingly turning to congressional collections to inform their work, most notably, Sean Kelly and Scott Frisch who co-authored Doing Archival Research in Political Science, published by Cambria Press in 2012. We also collaborated with our colleagues in professional organizations such as the Congressional Papers Roundtable of the Society of American Archivists and the Association of Centers for the Study of Congress (ACSC) to contend with preserving and providing effective access to born-digital material, such as constituent mail, and to develop outreach that engaged the public and encouraged collaboration with political science scholars and students. I also began a small campaign to meet in person with SPIA faculty who were teaching in areas where I thought Russell collections might be useful. One such encounter was with Dr. Keith Poole upon his arrival to campus in 2010. This meeting led to a collaboration to connect the Congress & History Conference with the ACSC Conference, both held in Athens on the University of Georgia campus in 2012. These two conferences brought political scientists and archivists together to talk about shared interests and new opportunities. The connections made during this conference endured. When Russell Library expanded its participation in ACSC’s Congress Week events in 2013, we turned to SPIA faculty members like Audrey Haynes, Anthony Madonna, and Michael Lynch to develop lecture programs on aspects of Congress. We worked with SPIA to cosponsor lectures that attracted high profile speakers like Lynn Vavrek and John Sides of the Washington Post’s Monkey Cage.

(Pictured: Dr. Audrey Haynes)

Working on these collaborative programs provided entrée for me to begin talking with some SPIA faculty about more ways to work together to enhance learning opportunities for students. Together we began designing sessions that used materials from Russell Library collections to frame course topics like nuclear proliferation and civil rights legislation with a wide range of perspectives and types of materials to contextualize the overall course content. This was certainly progress, but not nearly enough progress.

(continued next page…)
In 2012, the special collections departments of the University of Georgia Libraries moved into a purpose-built facility that included ample instructional space and enhanced access to collections. In 2014, the launch of Brooklyn Historical Society’s landmark project, TeachArchives.org, affirmed many of the approaches that I had been testing with SPIA and other departments across UGA. Based on two years of comprehensive research and analysis, TeachArchives.org found that students “were more engaged with and excited about their coursework, showed improvement in key academic skills, and achieved better course outcomes than their peers” following in-depth encounters with archival materials. Armed with this research and a growing demand from faculty across campus for more in-depth encounters with special collection materials for their classes in our instructional wing, my colleagues creating a program for teaching faculty to explore archives-centered engagement as a high-impact learning practice and to apply this knowledge to developing their own archives-centered courses.

In 2015, the University of Georgia Libraries and the UGA Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) established the Special Collections Faculty Teaching Fellows Program for full-time faculty to participate with archivists in the University’s special collections libraries in intensive workshops to adapt an existing course or to develop a new course with an archives-focused approach to pedagogy and content. All fellows received $2000 to enhance the development of that course.

We designed the Fellows Program curriculum to encourage instructors to leverage the unique and engaging materials of special collections to help their students build techniques of careful observation and critical analysis, which are foundational, interdisciplinary skills. In many ways, thinking through the program’s curriculum helped to refine my own thinking about how to make the encounters with archives relevant for a much wider array of disciplines than those, like history and English, who generally work closely with archival materials. Certainly, this process helped me consider how to make the Russell Library’s political collections more useful to SPIA faculty. A great example of in-depth work with SPIA faculty is a recent collaboration with Dr. Margaret Ariotti, a member of the International Affairs Department who teaches courses focused on Africa Policy. As a Special Collections Fellow, she designed a series of sessions focusing on U.S. policy, diplomacy, and public opinion related to Africa during the turbulent decolonization and post-colonial periods using primary sources from Russell Library collections. To illuminate students’ reading of Susan Williams’s Who Killed Hammarskjold?: The UN, the Cold War and White Supremacy in Africa, Dr. Ariotti selected materials reflecting a broad range of perspectives and accounts surrounding the suspicious death of U.N. Secretary Dag Hammarskjold in central Africa in 1961. Students analyzed and discussed the documents in small groups before piecing together the documents to illuminate the Hammarskjold case and consider the arguments and evidence presented by Susan Williams. By all accounts, it was a lively and informative class session, but more importantly, it enabled students to practice observation and analysis in a collaborative environment, which are precisely the skills they will need for future careers in the state department or other public policy positions.

Of course, many of the students in this course and others in SPIA may not focus on archival research beyond their time with us, but by building awareness of the value of using archival materials to sharpen critical thinking and enhance understanding of more traditional types of data, I hope to encourage more of my SPIA colleagues to experiment with archives-centered learning in their teaching. (Pictured: Dr. Margaret Ariotti)

“Power, Resistance, Leadership.”
June 8 – 10, 2021

Thanks to the over 350 of you that have already registered for the RBMS 2021 Virtual Conference. There’s still time to get the best rates! Early bird registration ends May 28, 2021! Join us to critically examine the existing power structures that have shaped and continue to impact special collections and archives. This conference will explore the power dynamics within our profession and the ways in which we experience, exert, and/or defy power. Come hear stories of resistance, large and small, successful or not. Learn practical tools and strategies, and explore thought-provoking ideas. We hope you will be inspired to help make transformative change in our field!
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**Guidelines for Contributors**

The deadline for the next edition of the *PPIRS News*, subject to decisions by ACRL, will be announced on the PPIRS Discussion List.

Email articles, illustrations, and correspondence to newsletter editors: Christopher Lemery and Kaci Resau

Suggested length: Short pieces, 250-500 words, longer pieces, 1-3 pages.

Write in short paragraphs. Use the most direct, energetic style you can muster. Have a point, and don’t be reluctant to have a point of view, too. Write as an analyst or critic, or at least as a journalist, not a booster.

Write to be useful to the membership. The format and publication frequency make features the strength of the newsletter. The PPIRS listserv is the best place to post, discover, and comment on breaking events. The [PPIRS website](https://www.ppirs.org) is the official repository of official reports and meeting minutes. - [Newsletter Archives](https://www.ppirs.org/newsletter-archives)
ACRL Books

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