




MILNER LIBRARY

Annual Report
Fiscal Year **2023**

TEN
Library of Congress
Teaching with Primary
Sources grants totalling
\$273,760

30 Librarians
40 Staff

 **3D**
PRINTING
665 Print requests
6,962 Hours of printing



~366,000
articles downloaded



~100,000
e-books used



~43,000
views of streaming media



~245,000
searches in top 10 databases

534 
Instruction sessions



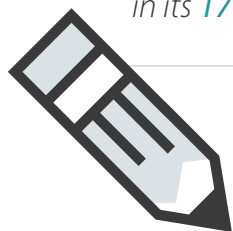
 **11,145**
Learners



Student Art Exhibition Areas
and an exhibits program
in its **17th** year

Textbooks available
at **no cost** to students
Percentage of all textbooks assigned in Spring '23

37%



Partnering with **Graduate Writing Tutors** and
Julia N. Visor Center to provide space and resources
for writing help and general education tutoring

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Milner Moves

New Hires

Anna Twiddy

Theresa Denham

Krysta Mapes

Michelle Neuffer

Christopher Leggins



Helping students navigate changing information landscape

Information fluency and identifying misinformation are increasingly critical skills in today's media landscape. Evolving social media sites, "fake news," growing distrust of academic institutions, and the 24-hour news cycle have made for an information landscape that changes rapidly and leaves little time for evaluation. A 2010 Project Information Literacy survey found that 41% of students struggle to determine the credibility of web-based sources and 61% face challenges when attempting to filter out irrelevant information—figures which surely have only risen in the past decade.

Interactions at Milner Library's reference desk indicated that Illinois State University students were also seeking guidance when it came to critical information consumption. In fall 2022, Milner staff responded to by launching a new 3-credit hour interdisciplinary course: *Information, the Internet, and You: Becoming a Critical*

Consumer and Creator, which teaches students how to find, critically examine, and produce information in a variety of formats and contexts. This is the first course at Illinois State University explicitly focused on information fluency skills, which are applicable (and critical) to any course or major. The course was originally intended for second-year students preparing for upper-level courses, who have traditionally struggled to make the leap from general education courses to advanced courses in their major. In practice, instructors have found the course to be popular with first-year students who are just beginning the transition to college coursework.

Discovery services and user experience librarian Lindsey Skaggs, who developed the rationale for the course

and taught its inaugural sections, said that the course was unanimously approved by the university's Council on General Education because of the need in the curriculum. "Developing

and teaching this course was challenging but immensely rewarding," Skaggs said. "At the end of the course, we have students submit a final 'personal reflection' with their biggest takeaways, and several of my students responded that this course changed the way they think about social media

and misinformation—they pause to think before they share something online. That felt like a huge win."

The course will continue to be offered to first- and second-year students to prepare them for upper-level coursework. In the future, Milner hopes that the course will become a required part of the general education curriculum.

"students responded that this course changed the way they think about social media and misinformation"

Supporting research with OPEN ACCESS

Librarians at Milner Library regularly hear from faculty who would like to make their research Open Access, or available online for anyone to read at no cost. That can be easier said than done, however, as some publishers charge author fees to publish their work Open Access, which provides income that would otherwise have come from subscribers. Milner Library negotiated multiple agreements with publishers this year to make publications by Illinois State University authors open access without paying article processing charges.

A three-year deal signed with Company of Biologists—a charity and non-profit publisher of scientific journals—increases Illinois State’s access to their content and allows University scholars to make their accepted articles openly available. The deal also allows unlimited waivers of publication fees (which are typically charged by these journals) for Illinois State scholars that are corresponding authors on accepted articles in any Company of Biologists journal.

In addition, the library has signed a two-year agreement with Annual Reviews, another non-profit science publisher. Since 2017, Annual Reviews has used an Open Access journal funding model called Subscribe to Open, which relies on sufficient library subscriptions to convert gated journals to Open Access volume-by-volume. If the journal maintains subscriptions at a level to sustain its operational costs, the current year’s volume becomes Open Access. The 22 Annual Reviews journals included in this deal run on the Subscribe to Open model, so Illinois State’s subscriptions are helping to make research published by Annual Reviews—including articles written by University scholars—available to everyone.

Finally, new agreement between Milner Library and Taylor & Francis offers the Illinois State University community access to the publisher’s Education Collection of scholarly journals, as well as an allotment of Open Access publishing fee waivers for Illinois State authors. Illinois State corresponding authors who have an article accepted in any of Taylor & Francis’s 2,000 Open Select journals (not just education titles) are eligible to publish their research Open Access. The agreement quadruples the number of education-related titles from Taylor & Francis that the Illinois State community will now be able to access from 55 journals to 221.

As articulated in its 2021-2026 Strategic Plan, Milner Library is committed to increasing support for the research and creative productivity of University scholars—whether students, faculty, or staff. Members of the Illinois State University community interested in publishing material, books or otherwise, as an open resource, can reach out to Milner’s Scholarly Communication Team at isured@ilstu.edu. Many options are available, including publishing in **Milner’s Institutional Repository, ISU ReD**.



Floor 5 refreshed with new study spaces

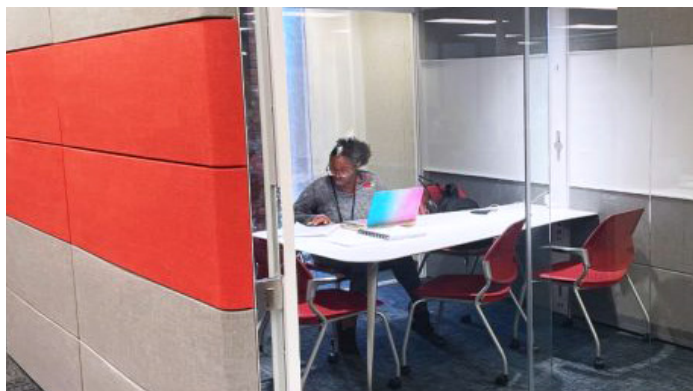
Library users were welcomed back to Illinois State University in fall 2022 with brand new study pods on the library's fifth floor.

This addition has been one of many recent renovations in the library. Milner has been consistently modernizing many facets of the space to better suit student needs. Before the start of the fall semester, Milner saw the installation of new carpeting on its first floor, as well as the completion of the tunnel on the west wing of the library next to the grand staircase. This newest addition comes after student requests for private study spaces that can accommodate small groups.

According to Dallas Long, dean of Milner Library, the student response to the pods' implementation was unexpectedly immediate. "We installed them in late June, which is typically the library's least busy time of year," noted Long. "But right away, students were in them."

The pods have a sleek and modern look with many design choices that optimize the studying experience. There are motorized vents in the ceiling that automatically circulate the air every few minutes, allowing for increased sanitation. Despite the glass walls, they are nearly soundproof so that noise from the outside does not leak in. The built-in adjustable lighting allows for increased energy efficiency and better student accommodation.

Because of the pods' popularity with students, two acoustic study pods intended for group study were installed on Floor 5 in Summer 2023. An additional seven group study pods and three solo study booths are planned for installation in Summer 2024.



Rose Sammons, a senior majoring in political science and communications, uses one of the study pods.



Internship gives students hands-on archives experience

The Jeffrey Johnson Archives Internship Fund was implemented for the first time this year, enabling scholarships to support a student interning at the Dr. Jo Ann Rayfield Archives.

University Archivist April Anderson-Zorn says that the internship "has provided a needed and welcome financial safety net for students who take the (often) unpaid leap into internships." Recipients of the inaugural internship were Illinois State University students Jake Hermes and Madison Bobrytzke, who continued her internship into the fall 2023 semester.

Anderson-Zorn continues, "We value all our interns and strive to give them the best chance to obtain employment in the archives, library, history, and cultural heritage fields after graduation. Mr. Johnson's and Ms. Rayfield's generous support ensures our interns are paid for their hard labor and that we are recruiting and training the best new professionals in these fields. I look forward to the excited faces that will continue to walk through the repository shelves for many years to come."

Providing internship experiences is an important part of Milner Library's strategic plan. To view the 2021-2026 strategic plan, visit bit.ly/MilnerStrategicPlan.



Milner hosts the Central Illinois School Library Book Censorship Summit

In a nation where infringements on the rights of readers are becoming more widespread as book bans and challenged materials rise, preparing professionals to support intellectual freedom thoughtfully and proactively is paramount. According to the American Library Association, “the rights of library users to read, seek information, and speak freely [are] guaranteed by the First Amendment. Intellectual freedom is a core value of the library profession, and a basic right in our democratic society. A publicly supported library provides free, equitable, and confidential access to information for all people of its community.” Libraries’ duties are further expounded upon in the Library Bill of Rights. Librarians are charged with advocating for and steadfastly protecting the intellectual freedom of library users.

Because book bans and challenges have been disproportionately affecting school libraries, Milner Library Teaching and Learning Librarian Caitlin Stewart, Dean Dallas Long, and Digitization Coordinator Karmine Beecroft planned and facilitated the first Central Illinois School Library Book Censorship Summit. The summit focused on book censorship and strategies school librarians can use to defend collections against censorship attempts. The day-long summit, held in January 2023, featured a keynote speaker, a panel of school librarians with experience in these issues, and facilitated group discussions moderated by Milner librarians. The program’s main objective was for participants to critically reflect on the current landscape of censorship and book banning in the state of Illinois and learn methods to

promote intellectual freedom. Areas of focus included responding to official challenges; addressing collection concerns with stakeholders; writing and editing collection development and reconsideration policies; self-censorship; and educating parents on collection-related issues. Forty-five school librarians participated, and they received continuing education credits from the Association of Illinois School Library Educators.

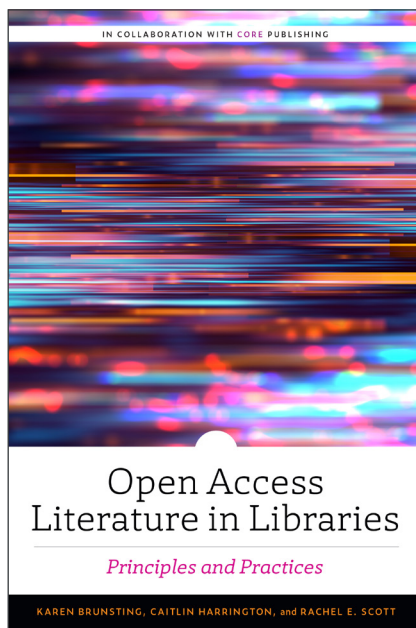
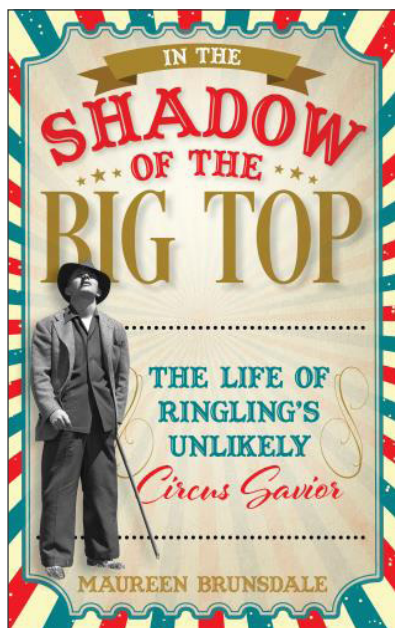
Milner Library follows the American Library Association’s Library Bill of Rights and opposes banning books based on doctrinal objections. More information on the Library Bill of Rights, as well as the American Library Association’s advocacy around censorship, book bans, and intellectual freedom, can be found at [ALA.org](https://www.ala.org).

Milner authored publications

Milner Library Associate Dean for Information Assets Rachel Scott and Head of Special Collections Maureen Brunsdale both recently published books advancing knowledge in their fields.

In December 2022, Rachel Scott published *Open Access Literature in Libraries: Principles and Practices* with co-authors Karen Brunsting and Caitlin Harrington. Published by ALA Editions, *Open Access Literature in Libraries* “use[s] a holistic approach that walks readers through the steps of integrating OA resources into library collections and supporting OA initiatives irrespective of budget, institution type, collection size, and staffing. Explaining definitions and models of OA, types of OA support, the tensions between free-to-read and libre OA, and other key topics broadly.”

Maureen Brunsdale published *In the Shadow of the Big Top: the Life of Ringling’s Unlikely Circus Savior* in May 2023, which brings the American circus to life through the figure of Art Concello. Concello was a Bloomington native and trapeze artist whose eventual work behind the scenes shaped the circus industry as we know it. “Bloomington-Normal and Illinois State in particular have such a deep connection to the circus,” Brunsdale said. “We honor that in lots of ways, but many people here don’t even realize the sheer amount of history that was made in our own backyards.”



Travis Givens, Elizabeth Babin, and Lindsey Skaggs are among those who shared their advice for aspiring library workers.

CAREER PANELS

Milner Library hosted free panel presentations in October 2022 with the aim of assisting attendees in answering the question, “What can I do with a career in libraries?”

Panelists representing a variety of departments and specialties described their work, explained the paths they took to arrive at their current positions, and gave advice to those wishing to explore library work as a career. Attendees learned about trajectories available with and without a master’s degree in library and information science (MLIS), as well as opportunities outside of libraries for those with education or experience in the field. Admissions officers from the MLIS programs at University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and Chicago State University were also available to answer questions.

In lieu of a formal Q&A, attendees were invited to network with the panelists and enjoy light refreshments following the presentation portion of the event.



**ILLINOIS STATE
UNIVERSITY**
Illinois' first public university.

Milner Library

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