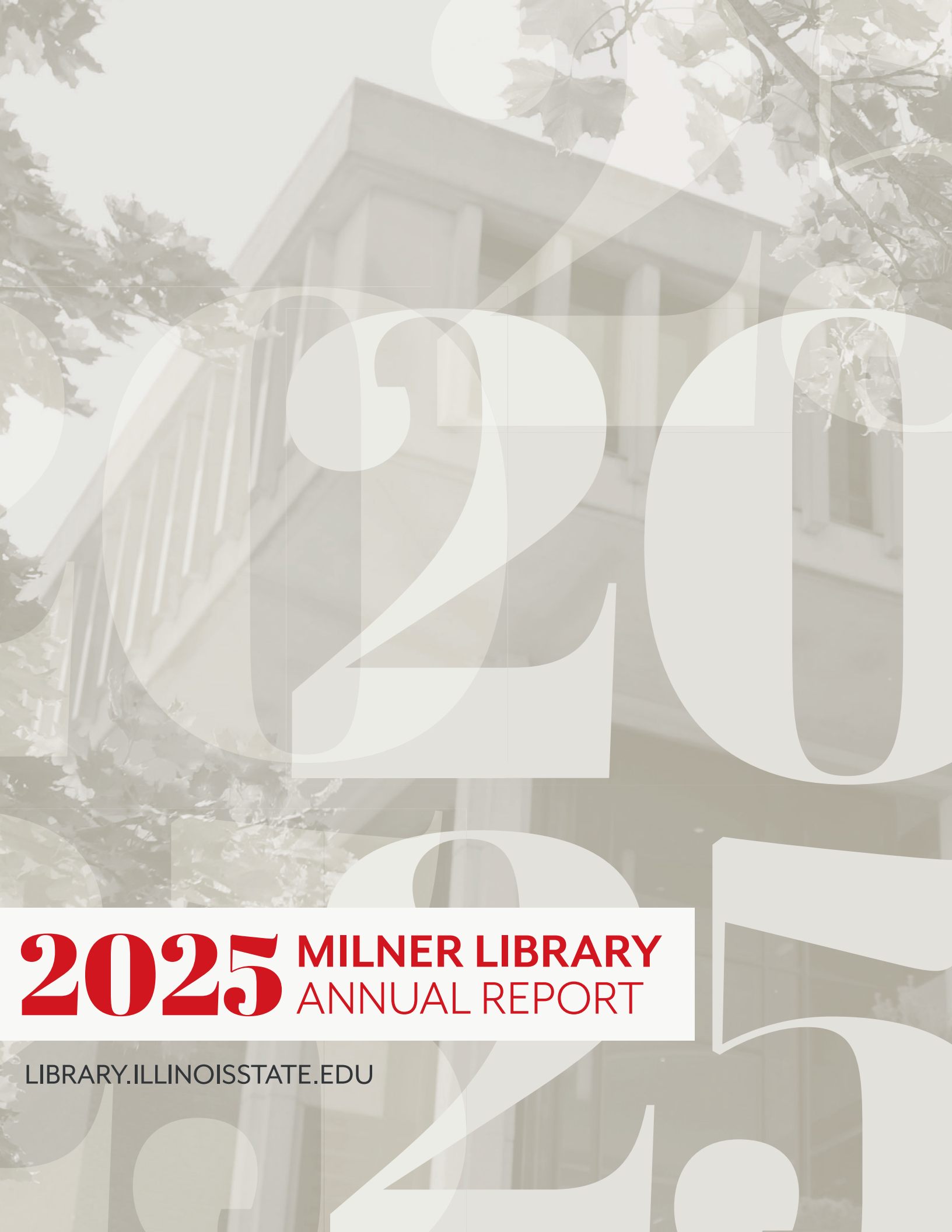




2025 MILNER LIBRARY ANNUAL REPORT

LIBRARY.ILLINOISSTATE.EDU

Milner by the Numbers

Resources for our patrons

913,456

print books

379

databases

933,103

e-books

3,007

students benefitted from textbook affordability initiatives

\$1.3M

approximate savings by students using free e-book textbooks

Here to help

6,648

reference questions answered

399

teaching sessions offered by Milner faculty

551,054

visitors to Milner in FY25

100th

article published through open access agreements

(details on pg 5)

Dr. Carrie Forbes named new dean of Milner Library



In February 2025, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, Dr. Ani Yazedjian, named Dr. Carrie Forbes the dean of Illinois State University's Milner Library, effective July 1, 2025. She succeeds Dr. Dallas Long, who has served as dean since July of 2020.

Forbes has worked as an academic librarian for 25 years and has published several articles and edited volumes on the changing nature of public services in libraries. Her most recent edited monograph, *Academic Libraries and Collaborative Research Services*, focuses on changing academic library roles and how the nature of collaborative work in libraries is helping to reshape institutional research practices.

"Dr. Forbes brings extensive administrative experience in academic libraries to her new role as the next dean of Milner Library," said Yazedjian. "She also brings a strong background in assessment, collaborative research initiatives, student-centered community engagement, and education policy all of which will enhance the library's role in supporting student and faculty success. I also would like to express my appreciation to Dr. Dallas Long for his invaluable leadership and commitment to Milner Library."

Forbes currently serves as the dean of the School of Undergraduate Studies and the University Library at Southern Oregon University. Under her leadership, Hannon Library has made significant strides in enhancing its services to support both student learning and faculty research. Previously, she served at the University of Denver Libraries as the associate dean for Student and Scholar Services and a professor of library science. While there, she co-led the development of

the library's strategic plan and committee and developed the Joseph I. Moreland Fund for Information Literacy Programs through donor funding, which provides stipends to faculty for information literacy course development.

Prior to this leadership role at the University of Denver Libraries, Forbes also served as instruction coordinator and reference librarian, coordinating a growing library instruction program to fully integrate research skills into a wide variety of academic programs.

Earlier in her career, Forbes served in a variety of roles at Ferris State University in Big Rapids, Mich., including distance education librarian, and assistant professor, and assistant coordinator of library instruction. In these positions, she provided leadership, coordination, training, and teaching to advance and promote the literacy program across the university.

"I am honored and excited to join Illinois State University and contribute to the ongoing success of Milner Library," said Forbes. "I look forward to working with the dedicated team at the library and across the university to ensure that Milner Library continues to be a hub for academic excellence, innovation, and collaboration."

Forbes was elected to the Board of Directors for the Association of College and Research Libraries, has served on several other national committees, and is a member of the Board for the Friends of the Ashland Public Library. She is co-editor of the journal, *Collaborative Librarianship*, an open access, peer-reviewed publication focusing on the scholarship of collaboration and the sharing of resources and expertise within library and information science and related fields.

She earned a bachelor's degree in history from Western Michigan University, a Master of Library Science from Indiana University, a master's degree in higher education from University of Denver, and a Ph.D. in education (curriculum and instruction) from the University of Denver.

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PRESERVING PRIDE

Oral histories project documents history of Illinois State's LGBTQIA+ community

Illinois State University, home to one of the first queer college organizations in the country, has a long history of impactful LGBTQIA+ students and staff on campus. Yet Milner Library Digitization Coordinator Karmine Beecroft struggled to find historical documents representative of Illinois State's LGBTQIA+ community, despite the ISU Gay Liberation Front student group, known today as ISU Pride, **launching more than 55 years ago**.

"I was noticing these gaps (in Illinois State history), and I was trying to create digital collections that allow people from various communities at the University to see themselves in this institution," Beecroft said. "I just wasn't able to find those documents in some cases, and so, in order to help that along, I needed to take a more active role."

Beecroft connected with longtime Illinois State/LGBTQIA+ community leaders Dave Bentlin '88 '92 and Barb Dallinger '81, M.S. '01, to help identify alumni and former staff for the University's Alumni Oral Histories project.

"One of the reasons why I wanted to revive this project was to focus on alums from marginalized communities," Beecroft said.

Over the past four years, Beecroft oversaw 66 interviews with 64 people, including nearly 20 members of the LGBTQIA+ community. Among the project's participants was **Alfred Karge '73** who, along with Terry Farrelly (later known as deg farrelly), established Homophile ISU, which grew out of the ISU Gay Liberation Front, during the post-Stonewall political movement.

Karge recounted his experience as a student in the early 1970s, marred by being outed and harassed by fellow residents in Watterson Towers with little help from university administration. After briefly transferring to Southern Illinois, Karge returned to Illinois State where he helped grow Homophile ISU into a dynamic, but initially unregistered, student organization.

"We didn't want to be registered because that meant names being put down," Karge said. "And at that point ... you're (at) a teachers college. You don't want people knowing if you're a teacher that you might be gay, so no names could be put down. Well, no names meant no recognition, which meant no student funds being allocated to you. So we had no money.

"(We thought) Let's put on a drag show," he continued. "And we did ... We were getting more and more members. And then ... **we went on radio**, we brought **Barbara Gittings** to campus. We accomplished a lot in a couple of years."

Under Karge's leadership, Homophile ISU became the Gay People's Alliance (GPA) and, in 1973, Illinois State administration approved the group's request to become a funded registered student organization (RSO). But this turning point in Illinois State/LGBTQIA+ community history faced an immediate challenge.

After getting wind of the University's newest RSO, state Rep. Webber Borchers introduced a bill, which was later defeated, to condemn student fees going to support the GPA.

Alumni Oral Histories project participant **Ellen Jahn**, who arrived at Illinois State in 1970, said she thought the University was "wonderful" for allowing GPA to establish in the early '70s,



Karmine Beecroft, Milner Library's digitization coordinator, is working to preserve historical documents and oral histories from alumni from marginalized communities.

a time when "homosexuality" was still considered a mental disorder by the American Psychiatric Association.

"And I just so admire the University for not backing down with the political pressure," Jahn said. "And if I can also add, the Student Counseling Center was wonderful for me because, while I was a freshman, my parents found some things at home that outed me to them and they freaked. And I went to the Counseling Center, and they assigned a woman to sit and try to mediate with the three of us, and she also did some one-on-one work with me around that time and afterwards."

Despite her generally positive experience, Jahn transferred from Illinois State following her junior year partially because of an incident with a homophobic professor.

By the late-'70s, GPA continued to grow and engage in more campuswide events, including National Blue Jeans Day in 1977 and again during 1986-97, which was part of a national movement for LGBTQIA+ students and supporters to wear blue jeans.

"But the point of it was to show several things," said **Denise Goff '86, M.S. '04**, during her oral history interview. "One was to let lesbian and gay people know that there are some supportive people out there, willing to wear blue jeans in support of us. Also, deciding what to wear causes everyone, no matter what their sexual orientation, to think about how other people will react to them based on what they're wearing that day. And then also to allow straight people to think about how others will react to their perceived sexual orientation and also to experience having to alter their normal behavior to avoid being perceived as gay."

Activism, such as participating in National Blue Jeans Day, combined with education, such as facilitating the Speakers Bureau, were cornerstones of GPA, which became ISU Pride in 1995.

Through the Speakers Bureau program, GPA and Pride members volunteered to speak about their experiences as members of the queer community.

"It was just a panel of students, usually four of us that would go into classrooms, we would share our coming-out stories, we would answer questions, and it was all about raising awareness, like letting people know who may have thought they didn't know anyone who was LGBTQIA+ ... that no, you probably do. And if you didn't, now you actually do because we're sitting in front of you," **Jonathan Crowley '07 '07** said during their oral history interview.

"Like, we are your classmates, we are your friends, we are your peers, and here is what we have experienced in life—the good, the bad, the ugly, (and) here's how your actions or someone you know, their actions, may be impacting us."

More than 55 years after the ISU Gay Liberation Front became one of the first student groups of its kind in the country, members of Illinois State's LGBTQIA+ community continue to connect and engage through ISU Pride and **Queer Coalition (QC)**, a group derived from the Triangle Association, an employee resource group established in 2004.

A founding board member and the current QC co-president, Beecroft said they are proud of their work documenting underrepresented voices through the Alumni Oral Histories project.

"I created this project because I wanted to make it clear that queer people have always been a part of Illinois State's history," Beecroft said. "And even if that's not appearing in official written records, we still have these elders' memories to draw from, and their stories are an integral part of what has made this institution."

Listen to full interviews and read transcripts from the **Alumni Oral Histories** project housed online in Illinois State's ReD digital repository. Beecroft is not currently accepting more interviews; however, alumni with Illinois State/LGBTQIA+ artifacts or documents that they are willing to donate are encouraged to **contact University Archives**.

Milner Library’s Circus Wardrobe Collection open for research

Illinois State University’s Milner Library has concluded a two-year, grant-funded project to organize, research, and describe the Ueckert Circus Wardrobe Collection.

The collection is an unparalleled assemblage of circus costuming, accessories, and props dating from the 1880s to the early 2000s. It includes over 1,200 artifacts from many notable American circuses and features everything from functional staff uniforms to elaborate works of wearable art. Over the course of the project each item’s provenance and history were researched, and a full conservation assessment of the collection was completed. The work culminated in a **comprehensive, item level finding aid** that is available to researchers.

In the summer of 2023, textile conservators Coleen Callahan and Shea Masterson from Costume and Textile Specialists visited Milner Library to inspect the collection and perform a full conservation assessment. Along with conservation and display guidance, they offered insight into historical costume construction, materials, and design. They also supplied a

hands-on workshop for library personnel on mannequin dressing and display. Select wardrobe pieces can now be viewed in the floor 3 stairwell of Milner Library.

Researchers Rainie Themer Bosquet and Maritza Atayde spent two years researching and documenting the history of individual wardrobe pieces. Bosquet and Atayde used resources in Milner Library’s existing Circus and Performing Arts collection to identify who wore items, when they were worn, and for what performances and circuses.

“Researching the pieces of wardrobe in the Ueckert Circus Wardrobe Collection was a challenge, but it was also so rewarding to discover the histories of each of these pieces,” said Bosquet, the lead researcher. “The Ueckert Circus Wardrobe Collection is home to not only exquisite examples of circus wardrobe but also to hundreds of stories about the circus artists, time period, and culture. I am thrilled that I had the opportunity to work so closely with such a unique collection for the past two years.”

The Ueckert Circus Wardrobe Collection will be of interest not only to historians of the circus and performing arts but also to textile and costume researchers.

“I’m excited about the research potential and the learning possibilities that this world-class collection offers,” said Maureen Brunsdale, Milner’s Special Collections librarian. “The sky is the limit with regard to the topics and fields of study these materials could provide,”

Milner Library’s Digitization Center is in the process of photographing significant pieces in the collection. When completed, those will be accessible through the Milner Library website. Visit the **Ueckert Circus Wardrobe Collection finding aid**, and reach out to **Maureen Brunsdale** with questions about the collection.

This project was supported in part by the Federal Save America’s Treasures grant administered by the Institute of Museum and Library Services.



Journey back to the 1990s with the Vidette Digital Archive

The **Vidette Digital Archive** has reached an exciting milestone with the long-awaited addition of nearly 2,000 issues of Illinois State University’s historic student newspaper dating from the 1990s. This digitization project spanned 34,522 pages, bringing the totals for the online collection to 8,185 issues and 108,650 pages covering the years 1888 to 2000. A collaborative effort between Milner Library’s Digitization Center and Veridian, the hosting solution provider, this project has been in the works since early last year.

Readers exploring this digital archive will find a daily record of the world as seen from the vicinity of Illinois State University, including detailed coverage of campus happenings, local news, and items of interest to the growing student body. Copious ads from the era recall long-gone businesses and enduring classic destinations, while opinion columns offer a glimpse into

the concerns and debates of the time.

The 1990s proved a transformative decade for Illinois State University and the world, with economic shifts, cultural changes, and advancements in technology shaping daily life. Issues from the 1990-91 school year covered topics such as the **death of artist Keith Haring from AIDS, an early virus infecting “microcomputers” around campus**, and **German reunification**. Later in the decade came several momentous changes for the University, including the **abolition of the Board of Regents** and the addition of the **Mennonite College of Nursing**. In 1998, the **Big Red Marching Machine performed** in the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade, an experience many of the 270 participants **remember to this day**.

Users may notice that as with the 1980s issues, select articles have been removed from the digital versions. This is because the *Vidette* relied heavily on news agency content during this

period in addition to its own reporting; in some cases 50% or more of the issue was written by reporters contracted to companies like the Associated Press and United Press International (UPI). In order to comply with copyright law while making the issues available online, student employees in Milner Library’s Digitization Center painstakingly reviewed each page and removed articles credited to non-Illinois State creators. Anyone who needs access to unredacted content for research purposes is encouraged to submit a **Digitization Request Form** or contact Digitization Center Coordinator Karmine Beecroft directly at **kbeecro@IllinoisState.edu**.

This expansion marks a significant step forward in preserving and providing access to the historical record of the *Vidette*, ensuring that students, researchers, and alumni can continue in their exploration of the university’s rich journalistic history.

Illinois State authors publish 100th Milner-supported open access article

Illinois State University authors and Milner Library hit an exciting milestone with the publication of English Studies doctoral student Audrey T. Heffers’s article **“Imaginary Margins: Disability Poetics & Reinventing the Page”** in *New Writing*, the 100th article accepted and published under **open access agreements** negotiated by Milner Library. **Authors from all colleges** have benefited from these agreements, and over 60 students have authored or contributed to works published since the first agreement was signed in 2021.

Publishing open access removes barriers for readers and increases the visibility of scholars’ work, benefiting researchers at every stage of their career and promoting equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility in research.

“Accessibility helps us to think about who can participate in particular spaces and particular conversations,” Heffers says. “I consider access in terms of disability, but also in terms

of how we can encourage more engagement between academia and the public; open access scholarship is key to this goal.”

Milner Library currently offers publishing support under agreements with ACM, ACS, Annual Reviews, Cambridge University Press, Company of Biologists, IOP, Microbiology Society, Royal Society of Chemistry, Sage Publications, and Taylor & Francis. With article processing charges (APCs) averaging upwards of \$3,000, open access publishing is often cost-prohibitive for scholars without institutional support. To date, Milner’s agreements have covered **APCs totaling over \$350,000** for the ISU community.

“This is a really fantastic program,” said Professor of Psychology Dr. Jeffrey Wagman. “These are journals that I would publish in anyway, and now my students and I have the opportunity to make our work available without

a paywall barrier. This is, of course, beneficial to me and my students in making our work more visible to a larger audience. But it is also a large step forward in promoting equity and transparency in scientific research.”

Heffers adds, “As a disabled scholar working at the intersections of creative writing studies and disability studies, I appreciate Milner’s dedication to making scholarship more easily available to as many readers as possible.”

Works published open access via these agreements are deposited in a **collection in ISU ReD** on behalf of the authors, though authors are invited to deposit works not published open access to increase the availability of their scholarship. The Scholarly Communication Team is available to answer any questions about ISU ReD and open access agreements and may be reached at **isured@IllinoisState.edu**.

Sensory pod increases access for neurodivergent students at Milner Library

This semester, Milner Library added a unique looking set of furniture to the northeast corner of the fourth floor, which is designated as the quiet floor. This “sensory pod” combines adaptive chairs, low lighting, and a circular partition to minimize visual distractions. Designed to better accommodate the needs of neurodivergent students, such as those with ADHD or autism, the pod contains two types of seating: soft rocking chairs for people who concentrate best while stimming and convertible lounge chairs, which allow users to stretch out. Both sets of chairs are legless and low to the ground; this has been demonstrated to assist those with proprioceptive processing issues who might otherwise feel unsteady on taller seating.

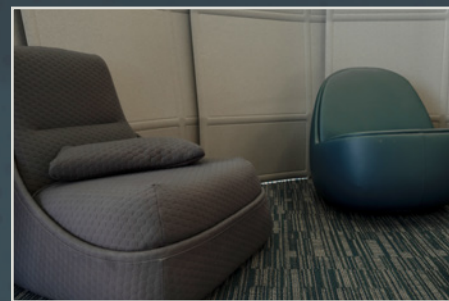
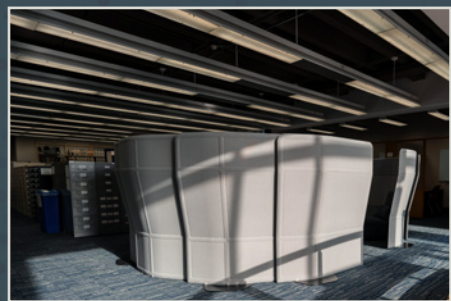
Sensory-friendly spaces have seen an uptake in diverse contexts over recent years. They are now being widely adopted across many sectors of public life, ranging from K-12 environments to stadiums, arenas, and concert venues. Several sensory rooms aimed at youth have popped up around Bloomington-Normal, and seven local organizations, including Miller Park Zoo, Bloomington Police and Fire Departments, and Grossinger Motors Arena, have taken steps to become Sensory Inclusive Certified through KultureCity.

Public and academic libraries have also embraced this trend. The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, for example, coordinated with their autistic students in 2020 to create

seven sensory rooms throughout campus. These rooms are frequented by students of all backgrounds and have been demonstrated to reduce stress and anxiety. At the University of St. Francis in Joliet, student Morayma Barron noted that patron response to the sensory room her team installed in the library was “very positive.”

“Survey responses included comments such as, ‘I feel much better after spending 10-15 minutes in the room,’ and ‘the room calmed me before my quiz,’ to ‘I have ADHD and I felt like I could understand the lecture so much better after spending time in the sensory room,’” Barron said.

Milner Library’s sensory pod joins a growing list of adaptive, accessible, and assistive options within the building, including wheelchair-accessible study carrels on the sixth floor and soundproof study pods with adjustable lighting on the fifth floor. As furnishings continue to be refreshed throughout the building, care has been taken to accommodate bodies of all sizes and abilities. In addition, the library’s Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access Committee conducts bi-yearly Multicultural Organizational Development scans of Milner’s public areas with the aim of enhancing all users’ experiences. Their most recent report notes a variety of accessibility features throughout the library, as well as areas for improvement.



Chloé Vicente arrives from Chile as Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence

In July 2024, Chloé Vicente joined Milner Library and the School of Teaching and Learning as a Fulbright scholar-in-residence, making her the first Chilean to receive a Fulbright award in library science, and the first Chilean to be a Fulbright scholar-in-residence.

As a child of academics, Vicente’s family moved around to different countries, and books always went with them. She remembers how heavy they were to carry, but how important they were, as were the libraries she often visited.



“Whether I’ve been working in public, academic, or school libraries, I know my passion remains the same,” she said. “Libraries have been my safe space, and I’m committed to creating the same sense of belonging, security, and discovery

for others. We are built from what we read and the diversity of knowledge we have been exposed to.”

Since 2020, she has served as media center director in **The International School Nido de Aguilas** in Santiago, Chile. She is a specialist in library service administration, human resources management, and information resources in educational institutions. She has coordinated various innovative projects related to the modernization of library management models.

Vicente has master’s degrees in foreign languages, literatures and civilizations, and romance studies from the University de La Sorbonne in Paris, France; a master’s in human resources from the Universidad Adolfo Ibáñez in Santiago, Chile; and a diploma in documentary analysis of school library collections from AteCra in Chile.

During her tenure at Milner Library, Vicente committed to fostering close collaborations with the library team to refine and enhance organizational structures and workflows, drawing upon the wealth of knowledge and best practices she learned from her global background in library management. She also worked to explore ways to enhance resources for diverse student populations and implement culturally responsive practices that make Milner’s library services more accessible and relevant to everyone.

Vicente is one of 43 Fulbright scholars-in-residence, and among 1,000 foreign faculty and professionals who taught and pursued research in the United States the past academic year through the worldwide Fulbright visiting scholar program.

The Fulbright scholar-in-residence program brings visiting scholars from abroad to U.S. colleges and universities, helping institutions internationalize curricula, campuses and surrounding communities, and diversify the educational experiences of students, faculty, staff, and stakeholders.

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New Hires

Tracy Berner
Jayna Leipart Guttilla
Kate Tallman

Retirees

Leta Janssen
Jean MacDonald
Vanette Schwartz



**ILLINOIS STATE
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