SPRING 2016 VOLUME 1 ISSUE 1

The UNIVERSITY of OKLAHOMA
College of Arts and Sciences
One College, Infinite Possibilities.

School of Library and Information Studies

In this Issue:

Alumni Spotlight: Daniel Spencer 2

OUSLIS Alumni Board 3

SLISebration 2016 4

Alumni News 5

Koh (left) with co-investigator, Amanda Kordeliski, school librarian at the IMLS funded Irving Middle School Makers Fair in Norman on December 16, 2014.

To learn more about Dr. Koh's project click to: https://infocreatingbehavior.wordpress.com/

Information-Creating Behavior in Learning Labs and Makerspaces with SLIS Professor Kyungwon Koh

OU SLIS is pleased to report on the exciting work of assistant professor Kyungwon Koh, whose research explores how teenagers informally learn and create information in learning spaces in libraries and museums called Maker Spaces or Learning Labs. Koh's work aims to answer questions about the nature of information creation, the skills necessary for youth to engage in information-creating behavior, and prospects for advancing education and the cultivation of such skills for practical application.

In 2014, Koh received the Early Career Development Grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) for a three-year research project. With partnerships between OU SLIS, Norman Public Schools, and the Oklahoma Climatological Survey, Koh has been investigating the way in which middle school students create STEM-related information, particularly meteorology, in school libraries. She and her graduate students also travelled to collect data at the Teen Studio at Anythink Library in Thornton, Colo., one of the 24 Learning Labs funded by IMLS and MacArthur Foundation. This ongoing research will extend analysis to other Maker Spaces and Learning Labs, comparing and contrasting school libraries, public libraries, and museums. Koh aims to find ways to design better informal learning environments for the cultivation of skills necessary for youth to flourish in an information society.

OU SLIS Students Making a Difference

There is a new student group in OU SLIS: Information Professionals for Social Justice. The group's president, MLIS candidate Katherine Hickey, says, "the purpose of IPSJ is to a) educate information professionals about issues of social disparity as they relate to information access and representation, b) identify and engage social justice issues at the University of Oklahoma, c) participate in the larger movement for social justice within the field of library and information studies."

Students hold two meetings per semester and discuss academic articles related to social justice and contemporary libraries, with particular emphasis on applying a social justice perspective in library science education and in the Norman community. In addition to meetings, the group also organizes educational events. OU IPSJ's first campus-wide event took place in November, in which activist Alison Macrina of the Library Freedom Project presented exciting and crucial information on digital rights and privacy in libraries, with particular emphasis on marginalized communities.

The group aims to be inclusive both of future librarians and archivists, so articles and discussions are catered to those interested in issues affecting both disciplines. Hickey says that in the future, the group anticipates more journal club meetings, featured talks, and workshops. They hope to grow and to empower information professionals to identify and address social justice issues in meaningful and enduring ways.

Follow and like them Facebook:
https://www.facebook.com/groups/lissocialjustice/

Pictured from left to right: SLIS Students for Social Justice Arielle Vaverka and Nichole Umayam.

Daniel Spencer, MLIS 2005, Optimizes Our Online Shopping Experience

In his time since earning his MLIS from OU in 2005, Daniel Spencer's professional journey has been an example of the expanded role of information professionals in the world today outside of the traditional context of the library. For the past three years, Daniel has worked at the Amazon headquarters in Seattle as a taxonomist (officially titled "browse developer"). With a team of about forty developers, he works to classify new products, manages search features and developing more robust tools for browsing, builds category structures, and works with other sectors within the company to move the company forward. In addition to the Seattle office – Amazon's largest taxonomist branch – the company has teams Japan, China, and India, which is indicative of the sheer scale of the operations of which Daniel is a part.

After graduating from OU with a bachelor's degree in linguistics, Daniel moved to northwest France and worked for OU's French department as a primary school English assistant for two years. It was here that Daniel came to believe that his proper niche in the education world is likely more "behind the scenes." He returned to the university and did "a little bit of everything," working in Bizzell Access Services, as a microform technician, and as a night supervisor.

After leaving OU and working as a contract librarian for the Federal Aviation Administration, he and his wife Andrea Zachary, moved to Seattle with their three cats (Kilgore, Katya, and Ivan) to find new work, eventually joining Amazon in the position he now holds.

Despite now working for the largest ecommerce company in the US, Daniel's path was initially geared towards traditional librarianship. His grandmother was a librarian, and he says that information and knowledge were always very important to his family. Asked what brought him to MLIS, he remarked, "I can't remember the exact thought process; it clicked."

When asked about how library studies and librarianship relate to the climate of the private sector, Daniel remarked on several ways in which his experience with librarianship is akin to his work for Amazon. He mentioned that almost all of his fellow taxonomists also hold MLIS's.

And despite company pressure to maximize profit, he remarked that in his department has a "very library attitude," meaning that department operations are geared above all to customer service and the design and maintenance of intuitive, effective data structures that help people find what they need. Daniel believes that the principles of organization and communication that he learned in his library studies are easily translatable to other professional contexts. He even says that he "essentially does reference interviews all of the time." We congratulate Daniel on his successes, and are honored to see tangible effects of OU SLIS education and philosophy in the lives and careers of our incredible alumni.

The UNIVERSITY of OKLAHOMA
School of Library and Information Studies

Meet the SLIS Alumni Board

Carolyn Mahin

Lisa Wells

Kathryn Lewis

Kristen Burkholder

President: **Carolyn Mahin**, Director of Public Services, University of Central Oklahoma, MLIS, 1993
Past President: **Marty Thompson**, Director, OUHSC Bird Health Sciences Library (retired), MLIS, 1972
Vice President/President Elect: **Roni Anderson**, Lead Librarian, , FAA Civil Aerospace Medical Institute, MLIS, 2002
Secretary: **Anne Meeks**, OKC Metropolitan Library System, MLIS, 1995
Treasurer: **Lisa Wells**, Deputy Director, Pioneer Library System, MLIS, 2003

Board Members:
Kristen Burkholder, Access Services Librarian and Associate Professor, Oklahoma City University, MLIS, 2009
Cathy Carlson, Library Media Specialist, Emerson High School, Oklahoma City Public Schools, MLIS, 1997
Walee Chotikavanic, Head of Access Services, OUHSC Bird Health Sciences Library, MLIS, 1977
Kelsey Gourd, Library Media Specialist, Norman Public Schools, MLIS, 2013
Mark Hopkins, Integris Hospital, MS in Knowledge Management, 2007
Sharon Jorski, Librarian, Oklahoma School of Science and Mathematics, MLS, 1978
Kathryn Lewis, Director of Media Services & Instructional Technology, Norman Public Schools, MLIS, 1991
Mary Moroney, Executive Director, Eastern OK District Library System, MLIS, 1987
Sharon Saulmon, Dean Emeritus, Rose State College Learning Resources Center, MLIS, 1974
Cheryl Suttles, Manager, Library Services, Integris Health (retired), MLIS, 1979
Theresa Tittle, Librarian/Selector, Pioneer Library System, MLIS, 2006

Join the OU SLIS Alumni Association

Membership dues are $25 annually or $10 for retirees and first-year graduates.

Your dues help support:
- OLA Annual Conference Alumni Association Reunion
- Dr. Frances Laverne Carroll Student Paper Award
- Outstanding Alum Award
- Irma Rayne Tomberlin Scholarship

To join the OU SLIS Alumni Association, please follow this link:
https://giving.oufoundation.org/OnlineGivingWeb/Giving/OnlineGiving/SLISAlumni

If you prefer to mail your check and contact information to the SLIS office at
401 W. Brooks, Room 120, Norman, OK 73069-6023.

SLISebration 2016!

Our yearly celebration of SLIS students, faculty and alumni, **SLISebration**, will take place on Thursday, March 31, during the annual OLA conference at the Hyatt Regency in Tulsa, 100 East 2nd Street.

The evening of celebration will begin at 4:30 pm with the plenary session "Internet Access Points in Libraries: Bridging the Gap Between the 'Haves and Have Nots." Please join us for a "fireside chat" with Colin Rhinesmith, assistant professor, OU SLIS, and Cheptoo Kositany, deputy director of strategic initiatives, Kansas City Public Library, about the importance digital inclusion.

The annual BPM Initiation and Business Meeting will follow the plenary session, from 5:30 to 6 p.m. for members of BPM, the new initiates and their families.

Meanwhile the traditional OUSLIS Alumni Reception will begin at 5:30 and go until 6:30 p.m., with student awards at 6 p.m.

You do not need to be registered for the OLA conference to attend these events!

Also join OU SLIS at Fresh Takes, the UCD Student Paper Session at OLA. Hear from the next generation of librarians and information professionals about their fresh ideas and research projects! Fresh TAKES will be held on Thursday, March 31, from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m.

While at the conference, come by the OU SLIS table and pick up the newest OU SLIS Alumni t-shirts for only $10, while they last. Proceeds will go towards student scholarships

---

Contribute to the future of the profession by donating to one of SLIS's Scholarship Funds:

- SLIS General Fund
- SLIS 75th Anniversary Scholarship
- Floy Elliott Cobb Scholarship
- Jesse Lee Rader Scholarship
- Lotsee Patterson American Indian Scholarship
- OSLA Scholarship
- Mary Angus Sherman Scholarship
- Roberta Rhodes Allen Scholarship
- Frances Laverne Carroll SLIS Career Scholarship
- OU SLIS American Library Association Spectrum Scholarship Matching Award

For more information about the OU SLIS scholarships please visit:
http://slis.ou.edu/funding

To donate, please follow this link:
https://giving.oufoundation.org/OnlineGivingWeb/Giving/OnlineGiving/SLISAlumni

If you prefer to donate by mail, please send your check, your contact information, and the name of the scholarship to the SLIS office @ 401 W. Brooks, Room 120, Norman, OK 73069-6023.