



UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN
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BY THE BOOK

NEWS FOR DONORS TO THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

SPRING 2020

An empty Murray Library on March 20, 2020.

DAVID BINDLE

Still here for USask—from home

In the last edition of *By the Book*, I discussed the importance of the library's ability to adapt to the changing needs of our university community.

I'm proud to say we work hard to meet this mandate every single day. But as our library, our university and the entire world responds to the COVID-19 outbreak, the need for our library to adapt was, and remains, urgent. Further, the rapidly changing needs of our university community are not exactly what any of us could have envisioned.

We have, though, adapted. In a matter of days, we closed six of our seven physical locations to protect the well-being of our faculty, staff and students; adjusted our service availabilities at the Murray Library to support social distancing, before eventually closing it, too; and transitioned our employees to a work-from-home model.

For many years, the library has provided a robust suite of services and resources

online, and as our campus community moved to online classes and remote work, we moved quickly to make our online services and resources more visible and usable for our library users.

We had to make difficult, but necessary, decisions in a very short period of time, all while closely following the guidelines from the provincial health authority and university leadership.

Collectively, we all have much to be proud of. I am extremely proud of the way that our employees have adapted so quickly, ensuring the library can continue to offer the same kind of excellent service delivery that USask has come to expect.

While we are as committed as ever to supporting USask's academic needs from our respective homes, we are sad that our spaces were not available during this crucial time in the academic year, when so many of our students write final exams. As our faculty and staff prepared

for exam time, they too were forced to adapt to an all-online environment.

As a friend of the University Library, you know the palpable impact your support has on students, whether you are financially supporting a collection or giving the gift of your time to support our student programs like *Take a Break at the Library* (which unfortunately had to be cancelled due to the closure of the university). But we all must continue forward, envisioning the time when we are together again doing the work we love in support of our university.

In the meantime, we are grateful for your support during this unprecedented and challenging time. We look forward to re-opening our library spaces and welcoming back the USask academic community. ■

Melissa Just, MLIS, EdD
Dean, University Library

Medley of manuscripts

Meticulously hand-scribed on animal skin parchment in the Middle Ages, a collection of medieval manuscripts that have withstood the test of time were on display through the winter at the University Library.

Crafted in the decades and centuries before the creation of the printing press, the university's eclectic collection of historical texts and tomes range from one-of-a-kind missals and the ornate Otto Ege leaves, to remarkable reproductions of priceless manuscripts originally painstakingly produced by monks in monasteries across Europe.

"When you are holding the only one of its kind—something unique—it is pretty special," said David Bindle, a librarian in University Archives and Special Collections. "You think of all the grubby little hands that have held these darkened page corners over the centuries and it makes you wonder about the people who came into daily contact with it."

Bindle is the curator of the exquisite exhibit, *The Medieval Manuscript: The Codex of the Middle Ages*, which was on display in the Link Gallery in the Murray Library. It features the university's Otto Ege leaves—a package of prized pages dating as far back as the 12th century—as well as Bindle's astute acquisition of the 550-year-old *Brendan Missal*, a liturgical book—in Gothic script—for



celebrating daily mass. It was found in the remnants of a German church and is the oldest intact original manuscript in the university's collection.

"There is a lot of detective work that could go into it," said Bindle. "Inside the front cover is a list, basically an inventory of items that were found in this church dedicated to Saint Brendan, and I would love to see somebody actually locate where the church once stood. The missal has survived the generations and I am looking forward to somebody doing some real forensic inquiry on the manuscript, to see what more they can tease out of it."

The Ege leaves are also rare remnants of the Middle Ages, 50 individual pages (leaves) from 50 different disassembled manuscripts which were placed into 40

boxes that were sold largely to libraries and museums across North America.

"Very few libraries are able to afford a complete original manuscript to look at and study, so to create a collection where you get a piece of all of these different manuscripts of different eras, that is quite something," said Bindle. "We are one of the luckier institutions in Canada to have one these collections compiled by the medieval art historian, Otto Ege."

The medieval manuscripts are also regularly accessed by USask students in classical, medieval and renaissance studies.

"We bring them out quite often," said Bindle. "When students are able to connect with these unique pieces of history, it's often an inspirational experience." ■

University Library announces acting dean

Charlene Sorensen began her term as acting dean of the University Library on May 1.

Charlene assumes this role while Dr. Melissa Just, dean of the University Library, serves a term as the University of Saskatchewan's interim provost and vice-president academic.

An integral part of the University Library's operation and evolution since first joining the team in 2006, Charlene's leadership experience includes her continued work as associate dean and her previous tenure as interim dean in 2016.



In her career at the library, Charlene has performed expertly in a variety of roles and has had significant involvement in

strategic planning and oversight of library collections.

Prior to joining the University Library, she worked with Health Canada and the National Research Council of Canada Institute for Scientific and Technical Information (now the National Science Library).

With a wealth of experience and versatility in librarianship, Charlene holds a Master of Library and Information Science degree from the University of Western Ontario, in addition to a Bachelor of Arts (honours) degree in classics from USask.



“SSAIL encourages students to express themselves and demonstrates the power of art.”

ALISON PICKRELL



The Impact of a Wall Areej Fatima



Joe Carter Chuck Wong



SMOKE Julia Wang

The impact of SSAIL

On March 11, the Murray Library once again introduced some new artwork from local high school students.

The art exhibit is part of the Secondary School Art in the Library (SSAIL) initiative, a partnership between the Department of Art and Art History, Student Recruitment, and the University Library, which began in September 2015. SSAIL introduces students from a local high school to art and art history offerings at USask and provides them with the opportunity to showcase their finished pieces at the library.

Each fall, Student Recruitment and the Department of Art and Art History connect with a local high school art teacher who has expressed interest in the project. Workshops are offered to the high school art class to help the students develop their skills and to promote USask’s visual arts programs. The students create a piece of artwork during the fall semester that is of importance or meaning to them and provide a reflection to accompany their piece.

This year’s artwork comes from students at Centennial Collegiate in Saskatoon focusing on the theme of “Impact”.

“SSAIL encourages students to express themselves and demonstrates the power of art,” said Alison Pickrell, assistant vice-provost, strategic enrolment management. “It is an opportunity for USask to engage with secondary students and showcase the opportunities we offer to study the visual arts and the history of art. Students also learn about the important learning services and supports offered by the University Library.”

“This art from these talented high school students makes our library space more inviting and vibrant,” said Christine Drever, operations manager of the Murray Library. “It is gratifying to see the pride these students have as their creativity is featured among the many artwork we display at the library.”

The students were honoured at a reception in the Murray Library where their framed works were unveiled on the first floor. ■

University Library supports students in need

With the need for student emergency funding never greater than today, the University Library proudly supported the Nasser Family Emergency Student Trust with a \$5,000 gift of its unrestricted donor funds. The Nasser Family Emergency Student Trust provides support to students experiencing financial and personal crises as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Thank you to all our donors for supporting the library and our students!

To learn more about SSAIL and see this year’s artwork, visit libguides.usask.ca/SSAIL.



Your support of the University Library ensures our students continue to have access to the services, resources, and functional spaces that support their successful university experiences.

To make your gift to the University Library, visit library.usask.ca/giving

For more information about how you can support the University Library, please contact:

Luke Muller,
Director, External Engagement

306-966-1192
luke.muller@usask.ca

“The library has played an important role in my life as a student and has significantly influenced my growth as an individual. The support of library donors is paramount for the success of students and I am grateful for their generosity.”

JOSH LIPKA, STUDENT CASUAL LIBRARY ASSISTANT AND RECIPIENT OF THE LINDA FRITZ SCHOLARSHIP FOR LIBRARY ASSISTANTS



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