Academic libraries across the nation share a deeply held commitment to providing access to information and responsibly archiving it. Unfortunately, many of these institutions including UIC face a growing crisis limiting their ability to provide the materials and resources that students, researchers and clinicians depend on to share and ultimately create knowledge. In an environment of flat budgets and skyrocketing costs of materials in which users need an ever-increasing number of new information products, libraries must make tough strategic decisions about maintaining and expanding collections.

An important factor in the crisis for the UIC University Library is that three publishers accounted for 45 percent of collection expenditures in fiscal year 2019: Reed-Elsevier, Wiley Blackwell and Springer Nature. These three publish many of the prestigious academic journals in which the majority of researchers document and share their discoveries and also rely on to sustain and advance their careers. Consequently, they have the ability to set price increases above the usual rate of inflation. The publishers vet the quality of faculty work prior to publishing and then place the research behind a “paywall,” even when the research was funded with taxpayer dollars. Users of the journal or their libraries must then pay for a subscription or license to access the research. Under this model, libraries with limited budgets have been forced to decide whether to pay hefty subscription fees or discontinue carrying materials. For the last ten to twenty years, these publishers have marketed their journals to libraries in large packages that are attractive due to lower inflation (averaging 3 percent instead of 6 percent for individual titles) but then lock libraries into less flexibility combined with ever increasing charges.  

(Story continues on p. 4)
In this issue

See p. 8 to learn more about the Library’s exhibit on the fight for gender equality in Illinois and the people who tirelessly advocated for years for ratification of the ERA in the state.

Mission
Empower the UIC community to discover, use and create knowledge.

Vision
A world of equal access to information and resources where everyone is inspired to achieve their goals.

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Where does the time go? I have been University Librarian at UIC for more than 15 years. When I joined, UIC was poised to make the leap to a nationally known premier public research university. Economic downturns, state budget issues and leadership changes slowed but did not stop the progress. Today, UIC has emerged stronger and better than ever—a research powerhouse dedicated to educating economically and racially diverse students and eliminating disparities wherever they may be.

Late last spring, I announced to campus colleagues that I had decided to retire at the end of June 2020. As I look forward to retirement, I realize how privileged I have been to have been a part of the transformation of UIC. I am also grateful to all of our donors and friends who have supported the evolution of the Library over these years.

With your support, the Library accomplished major steps in ensuring equal access to information through providing electronic information resources that are available every day, all day, from wherever our students and faculty may be.

The Library continues to be an indispensable partner in research and education, broadening and deepening our interactions with award-winning faculty and clinicians and building partnerships with advising and cultural centers to enhance student success.

Your generosity will continue to enable the Library to respond with agility to the needs of our community. From creating vibrant learning spaces to building relevant collections, the Library has developed a momentum that mirrors our great university. We have renovated all of our facilities and quiet study areas used by students from the first day of the semester. We have expanded hours and increased the online availability of our reference team. We have increased focus on special collections and unique resources. We have expanded our outreach in consumer health, data management and Chicago history. And we are creating services to increase the digitization of our own unique collections while providing support to faculty and students exploring the use of technology in their research and scholarship.

We have accomplished so much together, but there is still much to do in the months and years ahead. Please know that your ongoing dedication to the Library means the world to me and to our community. Your support transforms lives.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Mary M. Case

University Librarian and Dean of Libraries

Library welcomes new head of Special Collections and University Archives

Pamela Hackbart-Dean joined the UIC University Library as the head of Special Collections and University Archives and a tenured full professor as of Aug. 16, 2019. Prof. Hackbart-Dean comes to UIC from Southern Illinois University Carbondale (SIUC) where she was the director of the Special Collections Research Center in the Morris Library since July 2006. For the past year, Prof. Hackbart-Dean has also served as interim head of Information Resource Management, and from May 2015-March 2017, she served as co-interim dean of the Library at SIUC.

Among her many accomplishments at SIUC, Prof. Hackbart-Dean continued to build world class collections; planned and implemented systems to manage collections, provided access to finding aids, MARC records, and digitized materials; developed a preservation lab for sound and film collections; and assisted with the design of a renovated Special Collections facility and oversaw the relocation of staff and operations to that new space. Prof. Hackbart-Dean also developed a community archives program for documenting the African American experience in Southern Illinois. She was an extraordinarily successful fundraiser, having secured almost $2.3 million in grants and individual gifts.

Prof. Hackbart-Dean has been an active scholar throughout her career, co-authoring the foundational book in archives (How to Manage Processing in Archives and Special Collections (SAA, 2012)), along with numerous book chapters and articles. She writes and presents frequently on processing archival collections, managing collections and donor relations. Prof. Hackbart-Dean has also developed the curriculum and been an active instructor in workshops vetted by the Society of American Archivists (SAA) offered throughout the country multiple times a year over the past decade. Prof. Hackbart-Dean has been deeply engaged with the SAA since 1988, serving as the chair of several sections and committees and a member of the Council. In 2017, she was named a Distinguished Fellow of the Society of American Archivists.
Beyond the paywall

Challenges and opportunities facing library collections

(Continued from p.1)

Electronic books are currently available in a variety of different models, and packages (instead of title-by-title selection) are sometimes offered, resulting in libraries having to make difficult choices and paying increased costs if only some of the titles are desired. For example, the UIC University Library subscribes to the Access Pharmacy database because it is the only way to get some core pharmacy books in e-book format which are highly used and in demand. One other issue with some electronic resources, especially e-books, is that usually they cannot be loaned to other libraries, greatly weakening the sharing networks libraries have had in place for decades. In addition, electronic resources are often rented rather than owned. The Library does not own the books in Access Pharmacy, and we are not able to preserve various editions for our historical collection unless we also purchase print copies. The Library prefers not to pay for the same information in various formats, though there are occasions where some users will request print while others request electronic versions. Libraries also grapple with many new products coming on the market each year that users request but that are often out of reach unless they cancel an existing subscription. Streaming media, digital newspapers, new clinical tools, new types of databases, electronic data sets, etc. are all desired by library users.

But if cost is such a barrier to accessing electronic materials, why don’t libraries simply purchase traditional hard-copy formats instead? Printed books and other materials can be purchased once and used over and over by numerous users. But library users often prefer electronic materials because they can be accessed anywhere. Some heavy users never enter a library building nor do they need to, since so much library information is now online. This is a benefit to the medical student on rounds, the undergraduate working on a paper at 2 a.m. or the distance education student who lives far from the library. Also, an e-book can be used by many users in one day, while a print book can be checked out to only one user at a time. New types of databases offer compilations of archival materials from multiple collections at various institutions on topics like the World’s Fair or African American Communities. Researchers prefer to access these sets because they are searchable, easy to use and help save a lot of time over visiting various archives. Often, libraries repurchase materials in new formats. The set Early English Books used to be offered on microcards and researchers could only access them by using a special machine at the library. Today these book sets are available electronically, which is much more practical and convenient for researchers, but costly for libraries to acquire, especially since they already invested in purchasing the materials on microcard. The UIC University Library would like to purchase the digital versions of the Chicago Sun-Times and the Chicago Tribune (which it already has in microfilm), but the six figure price tags have been out of reach. Electronic databases often have annual access fees in addition to the cost of the product.

Consortial groups and academic institutions have taken a stand against the big publishers’ pricing and lending models and issued public statements against practices that hinder libraries in their efforts to provide access to electronic collections. For example, the provosts of the Big Ten Academic Alliance issued a statement (go.library.uic.edu/bta) affirming their commitment to “sustaining and advancing equitable modes of sharing knowledge.” The University of California (UC) has gone head to head with publishing giant Elsevier and as of this writing is no longer contracted with the company to provide direct access to articles. The UC Berkeley Library suggests that its users contact them for information on alternative routes to accessing Elsevier materials, such as looking for articles that have been published through open access platforms or online repositories, acquiring materials through interlibrary loan or by contacting the author(s) directly to request copies.

Like many other libraries, the UIC University Library’s purchasing power has declined due to resource inflation and nearly flat budgets over the past 14 years. To mitigate the situation, the Library has worked to leverage purchasing through deals with partners like the Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois (CARLI), the Greater Western Library Alliance (GWLA) and the University of Illinois system, among others. These include renegotiating packages when possible and cancelling resources to stay within budget. In doing so, the library always attempts to acquire the best mix of resources to serve user needs.

In addition, the Library has launched several initiatives to attempt to change the scholarly publishing ecosystem:

INDIGO - Since 2006, INDIGO (INtellectual property in DIGital form available online in an Open environment) has been UIC’s institutional repository. Open access resources are free and carry legal permission for open use. They can be shared and adapted freely. INDIGO allows faculty to deposit scholarly materials, including articles, data sets, presentations and web-based publications and creates permanent links to their works.

OPEN ACCESS JOURNALS - The Library also publishes seven open access journals using the Open Journal System created by the Public Knowledge Project. A key component of open access initiatives is the Library’s critical role in educating researchers about copyright issues to ensure that scholarly work can be made widely and freely available through open access platforms. Researchers are often unaware of the intricacies of publishing agreements and unwittingly fully transfer copyright to the publisher, which ultimately limits the dissemination and potential impact of their work. Under the guidance of librarians, scholars can learn about how to acquire a contract with publishers that lets them retain their right to reuse the work in future teaching and research.
“Developing the class for the first time without the limits of a textbook allowed me to use my own creativity to build a course that I believe more closely mirrors the characteristics of UIC students than a textbook-based class. For example, students enrolled in HN202 have a vast variety of racial/ethnic/immigration backgrounds that may not be best served by culture and food textbooks that approach the topic through a U.S./White European-centric perspective.”

— Giamila Fantuzzi, Professor, Kinesiology and Nutrition and Director of Graduate Studies, Kinesiology and Nutrition; and 2017-2018 Open Textbook Faculty Incentive Program awardee
Recognizing outstanding student library research

Announcing the 2019 UIC University Library Research Awards recipients

In June 2019, the UIC University Library presented its third annual awards to recognize outstanding student library research completed using Library collections and research tools. Student applicants described their projects and articulated how they used library resources and services in their research processes. The four awardees each received $300. The application cycle for the 2020 UIC Library Research Awards begins in April 2020. Further details will be forthcoming in January 2020 on library.uic.edu.

BEST USE OF UIC LIBRARY RESEARCH TOOLS AND MATERIALS AWARD

Arjun Mitra (Graduate) Department of Managerial Studies
“Gender, Upper Echelons and Achieved Status Loss”

Arjun Mitra is a PhD candidate in Organizational Behavior and Human Resources. Together with Prof. Steve Sauerwald, in an essay titled “Gender, Upper Echelons and Achieved Status Loss,” Mitra examined gender-based pay disparities in executive compensation. They challenged a common belief that women in leadership positions are more likely to act as allies and advocate for other women executives. They found that female directors do not advocate for female executives when the female directors experience an achieved status loss. Arjun used a broad range of library resources and services, including Hoover’s Online, Mergent Online, Nexis Uni, ExecuComp, Compustat and ISS Governance. He also learned new skills from the business liaison librarian, Marcia Dellenbach, who helped him to navigate business databases.

Niki Chokshi (Undergraduate) Honors College
“The Effects of Graph and Contradiction Complexity on Text/Graph Contradiction Identification”

Niki Chokshi’s essay, “The Effects of Graph and Contradiction Complexity on Text/Graph Contradiction Identification,” extended prior work on graph and text contradictions with the goal of learning whether participants can reliably identify what is contradictory between a text and graph when explicitly told the material is contradictory. Her primary finding was that “participants were likely to get more answers correct when there was a linear trend contradiction in the less complex graph, but not when more complex.” The essay was aided by such library resources as PsycARTICLES, PsycINFO, PubMed and Web of Science. Niki also relied on the “Chat with a Librarian” service and individual consultations with a liaison librarian. She concluded, “The library’s resources of databases, explanations, workshops really just made my paper stronger.

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS AND UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES STUDENT RESEARCH AWARD

Hilary Short & Kristin Smith (Graduate) School of Design
“Desk as A Stage: A Recontextualization of Objects with the International Design Conference in Aspen”

In a Master’s of Design core studio, Hilary Short and Kristin Smith explored the role of designer as archivist, examining the papers of Nancy Emmons, a member of the International Design Conference in Aspen (IDCA). Through the papers, they began to appreciate the work involved in mounting an international design conference in the pre-electronic era of the 1950s to the 1980s. “We were struck by the sheer amount of printed correspondence. The tactility of the paper itself was a joy to encounter—especially not having had personal experience with a typewriter and carbon copies.” Hilary and Kristin created the installation “The Desk as a Stage” displaying a variety of objects from the office of the early IDCA events reinterpreted by millennials. For example, the Rolodex, “a physical object of organization and... symbol of a social network becomes a homogeneous, grey, jumbled mass of information, a contradiction of the organized system or network” that was its original function. A globe that represents power and relativity is split into segments disregarding real boundaries and borders; the installation invites viewers to construct their own geography based on their experiences of marginalization and relationships. “Looking through the material remains of the IDCA archive...allowed us to envision material forms and platforms with which to comment on the underlying historical evidence.”

Lauren “Lulu” Lundgren (Undergraduate) Department of Sociology
“F***ed Either Way: Sex Work, Violence and The State”

Lauren Lundgren’s project compared research on sex work and violence from nearly one hundred years ago to contemporary statistics, policies and laws. Lauren used the Juvenile Protective Association Papers, reviewing 93 reports of commercialized prostitution written between 1922-1933; the reports include information on cabarets, saloons, gambling and furnished rooms. The collection also contains transcripts of street interviews and first-hand accounts from police, brothel owners, cab drivers, chauffeurs, sex workers and clients. One major finding from these historical documents was that cooperation from police actually decreased violence against sex workers. Lauren contrasts this with observations from contemporary sex workers that the police and the state pose the greatest concern to their well-being. Lauren commented, “My research process was equally tedious and detail-oriented. It required careful collection of data and organization in order to draw accurate and meaningful connections. It taught me the importance of refining the ways in which I framed my research, as well as making it accessible and interesting to others.”
Library partners with Institute for Humanities to enhance digital humanities efforts at UIC

New Digital Scholarship Hub to launch in fall 2019

The Digital Humanities Initiative is supported by the University of Illinois System Presidential Initiative to Celebrate the Impact of the Arts and Humanities (go.library.uic.edu/piah) and is a collaborative effort by the University Library and the Institute for the Humanities (huminst.uic.edu/). The Digital Humanities Initiative provides technical resources and consultation for humanities scholars at UIC to develop new methods and technologies in their current research, to create new paradigms in future scholarship and to increase graduate students’ exposure to digital techniques to enhance competitiveness in the job market. The Presidential grant funding supports workshops for faculty and students, a postdoctoral fellowship and a digital humanities conference. Through such efforts, the Initiative hopes to expand the dissemination of humanities research across digital platforms and enhance its impact by reaching larger audiences on a regional, national and global level.

In late fall 2019, the Library will launch the Digital Scholarship Hub in the Richard J. Daley Library to develop a greater digital scholarship presence on the UIC campus that will help bring the scholarly work of faculty and students in all disciplines up-to-date and pave the way for future projects. Visitors to the Hub can meet with librarians and Digital Humanities Initiative staff members for help with digital humanities, digital scholarship, scholarly publishing, GIS (geographic information system) and other projects. Equipment available at the Hub includes GIS data visualization displays, 3D printers, a sewing machine, computers with software for data and text mining and a laser cutter. The Hub will be regularly staffed by Digital Scholarship Research Coordinator Brian Atkinson and Postdoctoral Research Associate in Digital Humanities Hannah Huber, along with several graduate assistants.

For more information about the Digital Humanities Initiative and the Library’s Digital Scholarship Hub, contact Brian Atkinson, digital scholarship research coordinator, at brianatk@uic.edu.

Learn more about the Digital Humanities Initiative at dhi.uic.edu.

Library opens Single Step Foundation Digitization Studio

Thanks to Single Step Foundation’s generous support, the University Library has been able to further enhance its commitment to digitizing its collections by outfitting a new digitization lab with state-of-the-art equipment including high resolution-cameras, lighting, a copy table, hardware and software best suited for efficient high-volume workflow with interchangeable components for digitizing different formats including large and small scale photos and documents, bound volumes, maps and blueprints and film negatives and positives.

Launched in spring 2019, the new Single Step Foundation Digital Imaging Studio Suite at the Richard J. Daley Library enables the Library to digitize more than 600 unique special collections documenting Chicago’s diverse political, social justice, education, health sciences and local community history. Many of the items in the Library’s special collections are one-of-a-kind and currently only accessible to researchers by appointment at one of the Library’s reading rooms at either the Richard J. Daley Library or the Library of the Health Sciences-Chicago.

Digitization of materials not only brings the collections to greater numbers of people, but also ensures that archives are preserved for future generations. Many of the materials high on the Library’s priority list for digitizing include rare books, fragile one-of-a-kind historical documents and materials that are prone to deterioration from frequent use.

Miguel Vazquez, Digital Imaging Specialist II

“We are grateful to Single Step Foundation for their generous gift to the UIC University Library to help preserve and make accessible to researchers and teachers around the world our unique historical documents that tell the stories of the people who have made Chicago the vibrant world-class city it is today,” says UIC University Librarian and Dean of Libraries Mary M. Case.
Almost a hundred years after an Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) was first proposed, the United States Constitution still does not guarantee legal equality for women and men. A new library exhibit traces the century-long battle over the Equal Rights Amendment, which was approved by Congress in 1972 but was never ratified by the three-quarters of states required to make it part of the Constitution. Illinois became an important battleground, but the state legislature voted to ratify the ERA only in 2018.

The exhibit, "ERA YES! The Fight for Gender Equality in Illinois," describes the battle over the ERA as a debate about what it meant to be a woman and what it would mean to be equal. Are women different from men? Does equal mean the same? Some argued that the law should treat everyone equally and this should be enshrined in the Constitution. Others, including some women's rights groups, argued that women are different from men. Laws about working conditions, marriage and sexual assault protected women and should treat them differently.

Supporters said that the ERA would not make men and women the same. Equal rights would mean the same opportunities and the same justice for everyone. They saw a constitutional guarantee of formal equality as key to addressing pay disparity, unfair divorce and family laws and discrimination in finance, education and workplaces. Many ERA advocates also challenged cultural ideas about women, men and families. They saw legal equality as part of a broader movement to liberate women from discriminatory social, economic and political institutions.

A portion of the exhibit also explores the campaign against the ERA in Illinois, which was led by Phyllis Schlafly, a conservative lawyer and activist. "Women should not be equal to men," Schlafly argued. Instead, women enjoyed a special, protected status in American society and in the family, so "it would be taking a step down to go for equality." Her organization called “STOP ERA,” was an acronym for “Stop Taking Our Privileges.” Turning discussion away from abstract notions of justice and legal equality, STOP ERA focused on charged issues that made good sound bites. They claimed the ERA meant women would be drafted and forced to work instead of being housewives. Gay marriage would become legal. Separate men’s and women’s bathrooms would be illegal. Schlafly said the ERA would destroy what she saw as traditional gender roles and family structures.

“ERA YES!” features photographs, strategy documents, campaign materials and protest memorabilia from the women who fought to make gender equality part of the Constitution. It includes more than 100 original documents and artifacts from twelve manuscript collections held in the UIC University Library’s Special Collections and University Archives. These materials highlight the wealth of records from twentieth century women politicians and activists and important women’s rights groups like the National Organization for Women, the League of Women Voters and ERA Illinois, which are available to researchers and the public at UIC.

The memorabilia on display in the exhibit includes an ERA coloring book, ERA jewelry, and a twelve-foot-long protest banner carried during rallies in the 1970s. Among the documents exhibited are several from Chicago political personalities. Letters from former Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley and U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin express their views on the amendment, and questionnaires completed by former U.S. Sen. Carol Mosley Braun and former Chicago Mayor Harold Washington reveal their views on a range of women’s issues. Also on display are records of an ERA letter writing party at Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle’s house held several years before she first ran for office. Although the Equal Rights Amendment was never ratified, feminist organizers credit the ERA movement with uniting a broad range of women’s groups and prompting more women to run for office.

“ERA YES! The Fight for Gender Equality in Illinois,” is located in Special Collections and University Archives on the third floor of the Richard J. Daley Library. The exhibit is open to the public during Special Collections and University Archives’ regular hours and will be on display through December 2019.
ERA ADVOCATES REUNITE

An Equal Rights Amendment ratification reunion event was held on June 14-15, 2019 at the Richard J. Daley Library in which approximately 70 advocates who fought for the passage of the amendment in Illinois gathered to share their stories with one another and “pass the baton” on to the current generation of women’s movement advocates. In conjunction with the event the UIC University Library recorded the oral histories of four notable women who participated in the ratification movement:

Anne Ladky – Ladky is a nationally recognized expert on workforce development and higher education access, equal opportunity policy, job quality and issues affecting low-paid working women. Ladky was executive director of Women Employed from 1985-2016 and is currently on the Executive Committee of the Chicago Community Trust. Her contributions to the ERA effort included serving on the Steering Committee of the 1976 National Rally for Equal Rights in Springfield, IL.

Heather Booth – Booth has been an active proponent of civil rights, feminist and progressive political causes for more than five decades. Booth founded the Midwest Academy to train community organizers and still serves on their board of directors. Her work for the ERA included coordinating the 1976 march in Springfield, IL, and influencing organized labor to support the effort.

Mary Jean Collins – Collins had a long career in the National Organization for Women (NOW) and its Chicago Chapter and served on the boards of other organizations that advance the causes of women, people of color and LGBTQ communities. She is currently on the board of the Veteran Feminists of America. She worked to organize ERA marches in Chicago and nationally.

Linda P. Miller – Miller is a former head of maternal and pediatric health programs for the Illinois Department of Public Health and Mount Sinai Hospital. In working for the ratification of the ERA, Miller held various leadership roles in Illinois NOW and was active lobbying for the ERA among Illinois legislators, particularly during the time she lived in the state capital, Springfield.

Other notable attendees of the reunion included the current Chicago National Organization for Women President Paloma Delgadillo; UIC Assistant Vice Provost for Diversity and Community Engagement Caroline Swinney who was a volunteer and staffer for the ratification movement; and former IL Rep. Barbara Flynn Currie who served in the Illinois House of Representatives from 1979-2019 and introduced bills to ratify numerous times.

Materials related to ERA ratification in Illinois recently donated by the advocates supplement the Library’s rich ERA Illinois and the National Organization for Women-Chicago Chapter Records. The newly acquired items include buttons, pamphlets, photos, audio tapes of interviews of women who were active in the campaign and audio tapes of legislative hearings. In addition, materials from the “Thompson Trail” document the activities of an entourage of women who followed then-Governor Jim Thompson to picket at his public events and ask for his support in passing the ERA. For more information about these collections, contact Special Collections and University Archives at (312) 996-2742.

Congress set a deadline of 1982 - but only 35 states had ratified the amendment. Illinois became an important battleground, but the state legislature only voted to ratify the ERA in May 2018.
Alchemy, The Great Work

Exhibit illustrates alchemy’s influence on pharmacology and medicine and highlights Library’s rare book collections

By Megan Keller Young

Little is known about early alchemy but it is thought to have emerged sometime prior to the 4th millennium BC. Though alchemy is often considered part of mysticism and the occult, that is not the whole story. The roots of alchemy are linked to mysticism, but alchemists’ observations and experiments during the Renaissance provided a basis for valid scientific experiments and significantly influenced pharmacology and medicine. This influence is displayed in “Alchemy, The Great Work,” an exhibit comprised entirely from holdings dating from ca. 1600-1900 from Special Collections and University Archives at the Library of the Health Sciences-Chicago.

Many alchemists during the Renaissance were also physicians and believed that nature contained many substances and objects with useful medicinal qualities and properties. Experiments on the impact of herbs and metals on the body were guided by the idea that biological processes like digestion and circulation echoed the movement of the planets. Alchemists saw the forces of nature as equal to the forces of the human body and believed these forces could be understood chemically. Portions of plants, animals and minerals could be used to create medicines by the discerning alchemist who was guided by nature, not ancient texts.

Alchemy was nothing if not a curious entity, the cryptic language alchemists often used was eventually edited out of the resulting pharmacologies, material medicas and herbals. And technologies were fundamental to the development of modern pharmacology. Other scientific developments grew out of alchemists’ experiments and observations. Alchemists seeing plants benefit from light and water came to a general understanding that chlorophyll reacted with “something in the air.” Jan Baptista van Helmont discovered what came to be called carbon dioxide in about 1640 while burning charcoal to test its properties. The alchemists’ findings came to serve as practical examples in many fields, including chemistry, botany, pharmacology and biology. Through this collected knowledge, alchemy has profoundly impacted science.

Alchemy is famous for allegedly being able to create gold. Many alchemists constantly searched for a substance, most commonly known as the "Philosopher's Stone," capable of turning base metals into gold or silver. The Philosopher’s Stone was never found, and no claims were ever proven. Attempts to create gold were largely abandoned by the seventeenth century.

Viewers of “Alchemy, The Great Work” will gain a general overview of alchemy and learn about selected famous alchemists and the impact of alchemy on medicine, specifically pharmacology. The oldest book in the exhibit is Ioyfull Newes Out of the New-Found Worlde, printed in 1596. Other notable texts include Nicholas Culpeper’s English Physician and Complete Herbal (1790), The Art of Distillation: Or, a Treatise of the Choisest Spagyricall Preparations, Experiments and Curiosities Performed by Way of Distillation (1664), and Ortus Medicinae (1667) by Jan Baptista van Helmont. Two handwritten dispensatories by Edward Stuchlik, a 1904 College of Pharmacy graduate, are also on display.

Displaying these texts within the context of the alchemy exhibit allows medical historians and others to appreciate their impact on modern pharmacology and medicine.

“Alchemy, The Great Work” is on display at the Library of the Health Sciences-Chicago on floors 1-3 and is open to the public during regular library hours through Dec. 2020.

For more information, contact Special Collections and University Archives at (312) 996-8977.

Visit Special Collections and University Archives at the Library of the Health Sciences-Chicago to view “Alchemy, The Great Work.”
Bobby J. Smith II, Ph.D., Chancellor’s Postdoctoral Fellow of African American Studies, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

By Bobby J. Smith II, Ph.D.

The University of Illinois at Chicago’s Short-Term Travel Fellowship has given me the exciting opportunity to explore their wealth of materials on the African American experience in Chicago. Specifically, my time visiting Special Collections and University Archives at the Richard J. Daley Library has been devoted to examining such materials for my new project tentatively titled “Food Justice, Race Relations and the History of African Americans in Chicago.” This project documents and investigates how debates around what we know today as “food justice” shaped and contributed to the history of African Americans in Chicago and the nation. It interrogates how African American community organizations worked to address the interaction between food security, race relations and economic advancement in historical contexts.

When most people learn about the history of African Americans in Chicago, it is often through narratives that examine how this population migrated from the South in the early 1900s and fought for civil rights, education and desegregation through the 1970s. Yet, buried in these narratives are traces of food politics that (re)shape and challenge our understandings of the Chicago civil rights era. From the mid-1960s to the early 1970s, groups like the Chicago Urban League, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and the Illinois Chapter of the Black Panther Party addressed food issues in their communities.

While each of these groups had separate platforms, the politics of food united them in groups like the Chicago-based Coordinating Council of Community Organizations (CCCO).

Although this is the first phase of my research for this project, it is clear to me that the materials in the UIC University Library’s Special Collections and University Archives are foundational for understanding the African American experience in Chicago. Specifically, the extensive records of the Chicago Urban League are critically important. Founded in 1916 during the first “great migration” of African Americans from the South to the North, the Chicago Urban League conducted detailed research on the transition of African Americans from rural to urban contexts. They also documented the ways in which issues of race, segregation and inequality manifested within this transition. Working closely with the University of Chicago, the Chicago Urban League conducted numerous community studies that captured not only the day-to-day sociopolitical and economic realities of African American communities, but also shed light on the food realities of these communities. To fully understand this, it is important to read the records of the Chicago Urban League against materials located at UIC such as the Black History Collection and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee Collection. It is equally important to visit other collections in the city such as the Vivian G. Harsh Research Collection of Afro-American History and Literature at the Chicago Public Library’s Carter G. Woodson Regional Library on Chicago’s South Side.

As the largest African American history and literature collection in the Midwest, the Harsh Collection complements the materials available at the UIC University Library on the African American experience. At the end of this first phase of my research, I had the opportunity to examine materials that clarify documents I found in UIC’s special collections. For example, while combing through the Chicago Urban League records, I found several folders about the SCLC’s Operation Breadbasket. While Operation Breadbasket was largely an economic rights campaign embedded in the Chicago Freedom Movement under the direction of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Jesse Jackson and Al Raby, this campaign also included concerns at the intersection of race, food, hunger, inequality and poverty. Such concerns were taken seriously by African American women in SCLC and created a stage for them to take a central role in the direct action and strategic efforts of the Chicago Freedom Movement. Thus, to get a full picture of the relationship between food justice, race relations and the history of African Americans in Chicago, it is important to use UIC as a foundation and then extend beyond those materials. What I found by doing this is that African Americans understood food realities through the lens of poverty and hunger produced by unparalleled segregation, political instability and inequality. This analysis of food echoes even louder through the contemporary work of Chicago-based groups like the Urban Growers Collective, Sweetwater Foundation and a host of other organizations that are led by African Americans. In this way, my project provides historical context to such efforts and contributes to the texture of present struggles for food security—often located in the discourse around “food deserts”—in African American communities in Chicago and throughout the nation.

Research at UIC:
- Chicago Urban League Records
- Black History Collection
- Student Nonviolent Coordinating Collection
- Southern Regional Council Records
Congratulations to
The Image of Research
2019 winners!

The Image of Research is an annual interdisciplinary exhibit competition organized by the Graduate College and University Library to showcase the breadth and diversity of research at UIC. Each year, students enrolled in a graduate or professional degree program at UIC are invited to submit an image or short video they created along with a brief précis of how the image relates to the student’s overall research. A multi-disciplinary jury reviews the submissions and awards prizes to 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners and three honorable mentions for still-image submissions, and 1st and 2nd place winners for moving images submissions. Criteria for judging include: the originality of the image and the research it represents; the relationship between the image and the student’s research; and overall aesthetic appeal of the image.

The winning entries are currently on exhibit at the Daley Library and in the Library of Health Sciences and are featured on light pole banners around campus. Winners, finalists and a wide selection of other entries received for each year’s competition are posted to an online gallery in the Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois (CARLI).

Still Images: First Place
“Combination Immunotherapy in Pancreatic Cancer”
Daniel Principe, Administration, Medicine, Life Sciences

Moving Images: First Place
“HiVolt: A Rapid HIV Viral Load Test”
Dani Bergey, Biomed and Health Info Sciences, Biomedical Visual, Life Sciences

For the full list of winners, honorable mentions and finalists, as well as descriptions of their projects, visit grad.uic.edu.