A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

I am excited to have the opportunity to formally introduce myself as the new dean of Auburn Libraries. Coming from the snow and ice covered roads in Montana and Wyoming, to the sunny and warm Alabama climate has already given me a greater appreciation for Auburn and all it has to offer. I began my role in mid-February this year and have been welcomed by everyone in the Auburn Family. I have a tremendous level of respect for our faculty and staff, and look forward to working together to make the Auburn Libraries an indispensable place for Auburn’s research and teaching resources. I am standing on the shoulders of previous library deans to take the libraries to a new level.

Since March this year, we have been busy working on the libraries’ 2019-2024 strategic plan, which will be released in October. This document will align the libraries’ services, programs, collections, space designs and technologies with Auburn University’s strategic plan. It is an exciting time to join Auburn and I am grateful to be a part of the action in these exciting endeavors. As a part of the libraries’ strategic planning process, we invited the students and faculty to help measure our progress with a survey identifying the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the libraries. The feedback and input will give us a better understanding of their needs and guide how we use our resources to provide the best services and programs accordingly. I am appreciative for their participation on this project.

The libraries’ Tiger Giving Day was a huge success. Your generous support helped fund several sets of exercise work stations for our students this coming fall. These stations will be an excellent way for students to relieve stresses while studying at the libraries for extended periods of time. Several students have already expressed an interest in using these work stations in the fall.

The libraries has been a leader in supporting Auburn’s research and teaching mission, with our top research collections, outstanding service programs and attractive learning spaces. I recently appointed a working group on research support and innovative services to learn best practices in the field. The group has worked diligently, and plans to bring a series of new technologies for faculty and students this coming fall. Your generous contributions have made all of these initiatives possible. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support and the incredible welcome I have received. I look forward to working across campus with our faculty, staff and students.

War Eagle!

Shali Zhang
Dean, Auburn Libraries
Supporting the research mission of the university has always been a high priority for the libraries, but that support has greatly evolved during the past two years.

Since late 2017, the Auburn Libraries have been providing high-level information technology (IT) support and subject-matter expertise to the externally funded Military REACH Project, which is based in the College of Human Sciences (CHS). Originally based at the University of Minnesota, the Military REACH Project moved to Auburn in late 2017 as the result of a successful proposal in response to a competitive funding solicitation from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Department of Defense (DoD).

The mission of the Military REACH Project is to support U.S. military families and family readiness by translating academic research and other resources into practical applications. This means making research both accessible and usable by DoD family support specialists and military families themselves. A key component of the project is the design and development of a publicly accessible, easy-to-navigate library of research publications and other resources on military life and family health, delivered through an attractive, user-friendly website.

This is where the libraries’ extensive experience in designing and building information technology infrastructure, bibliographic databases, information management and delivery systems and user-focused websites came into play.

At the invitation of the project’s principal investigator, Mallory Lucier-Greer of the Department of Human Development and Family Studies, the libraries contributed their knowledge and expertise to the successful funding proposal that brought the Military REACH Project from Minnesota to Auburn. From the beginning of the project, the libraries’ Military REACH support team—Denise Baker, Adam Chalkley, Midge Coates, Michael Stone and Adam Wendling in the AUL systems department, and Nancy Noe in the AUL research and instruction services department—have worked with their counterparts in CHS and the project leadership to build the robust IT and bibliographic infrastructure on which the project rests. This has included setting up and configuring the Military REACH server computers in the OIT data center; creating the infrastructure for the Military REACH publications library in an open-source content management software system; assisting in the development and hosting of the Military REACH website; providing expert guidance on metadata standards, accessibility, usage statistics and social media; training IT support staff in CHS on the tools being used in Military REACH; and helping the Military REACH team transition gradually to a new IT support structure.

Thanks in large part to the libraries’ contributions, the Military REACH Project was able to meet its ambitious goal of launching a fully functioning, publicly accessible website and library of research publications in its first year of funding. The project was recently renewed for a second year under Lucier-Greer’s leadership. The Military REACH Project is just one example of how the libraries are supporting externally funded research, helping to put Auburn on the map as a major research university that is doing work of critical national importance. To learn more about Military REACH research and outreach, visit militaryreach.auburn.edu.

Micheal Stone, Aaron Trehub, Adam Wendling and Mallory Lucier-Greer.
Increased Emphasis on Data Management is Showing Dividends

Ali Krzton, research data management librarian, helps Auburn researchers develop data management procedures for their projects based on established best practices. Most researchers collaborate with others, including postdocs, graduate students, and undergraduates, so making sure everyone is on the same page is critical.

To facilitate this, Krzton has met with several lab groups around campus to discuss the issues they face in managing their data and suggest ways to improve the process.

Last fall, Krzton met with Amal Kaddoumi, professor of drug discovery and development at the Harrison School of Pharmacy, and members of her lab for one such consultation. Kaddoumi researches potential treatments for neurological diseases, such as Alzheimer’s. At the meeting, everyone worked together to understand how data is generated and shared within the lab. They resolved questions about data formats, storage and security, and standardized workflows to reduce confusion.

“When faculty come into these meetings with clear expectations of their collaborators and guide the discussion toward solving known issues, we have a productive session, and that’s what happened here.”

Kaddoumi believes communication within her lab has improved, as graduate students add new results and figures to a group slide show as soon as they are generated. “I really appreciated Ali coming and encouraging my students, and teaching them how to organize their data and files.”

DISCOVER AUBURN LECTURE SERIES

The Auburn Family is interested in all things Auburn. Auburn’s rich history, world-class faculty and leading research are all sources of inspiration and pride to the university. Because Auburn Libraries plays a central role in research and learning, the libraries have presented a regular series of public events titled the Discover Auburn Lecture Series. Discover Auburn features four to five lectures each spring and fall semester, and our speakers range from Auburn faculty to visiting researchers and scholars.

In arranging for lectures, Auburn Libraries’ Greg Schmidt, special collections librarian, locates speakers that will help showcase the university and its land-grant mission of teaching, research and extension. He also highlights the role of Auburn Libraries and its collections in supporting the university’s mission. Ultimately, it is hoped that each lecture of the semester will appeal to a broad audience and will encourage attendees to appreciate the role Auburn has in Alabama, the nation, and the world.

In spring 2019, we chose to invite many speakers from the ranks of Auburn faculty who were awarded funding through the Presidential Awards for Interdisciplinary Research (PAIR) program. PAIR funding is intended to “support ideas that foster creativity, facilitate cooperation and assist Auburn University in reaching new levels of distinction.” Auburn Libraries is proud to support these researchers’ information needs, and we are proud to give them a forum to explain their work to the Auburn Family.

The Discover Auburn Lecture Series is open to the public and includes audience question and answer periods after the lecture. Recordings of past Discover Auburn events may be found at lib.auburn.edu/discoverauburn/.

Astronaut Jan Davis, Olympian Ruthie Bolton and historian Leah Rawls Atkins were among the invited speakers. For Auburn’s sesquicentennial in 2006, invited speakers dove deeply into special collections’ archival records to speak about Auburn history from the civil war through desegregation. Learn more at diglib.auburn.edu/150th/fall_2006.htm.

Auburn’s librarians have also contributed to the Discover Auburn Lecture Series. Some librarians have discussed their research and book publications. Tim Dodge, research and instruction librarian for history and political science, is also a scholar of 20th Century American music. His lively talks on the history of country music and gospel music have included numerous musical excerpts. Other librarians have spoken on the wonderful collections held at Auburn Libraries, including Liza Weisbrod, music and government documents librarian, presented our early 20th Century sheet music collection as a window into understanding World War I. Greg Schmidt and Kasia Leousis have both spoken on the beautiful art and prints found in the Auburn Libraries special collections and archives.

Other librarians have discussed their research and archives. Auburn’s librarians have also contributed to the Auburn Libraries’ archives. For Auburn’s sesquicentennial, librarians discussed their research and archives. Auburn’s librarians have also contributed to the Auburn Libraries’ archives.
STUDY CARRELS DONORS HONORED

In the 1990s, Auburn Libraries began a program to provide a large quantity of individual, private study rooms for faculty and graduate students. These rooms could be checked out for an entire semester, which allowed researchers and thesis-writers to keep their materials and reference books in one location and provided a dedicated space for writing and work. The construction of these spaces was made possible by the generosity of more than 150 donors giving $1,000 each, and these donors were acknowledged with plaques outside each of the carrels. While these carrels served Auburn students and faculty well for nearly 25 years, Auburn Libraries had to remove a majority of them when the library was renovated and the Mell Classroom Building was added in 2017. In 2018, Auburn Libraries erected new signage recognizing those donors and the impact they made on the academic experiences of library users at Auburn. If you or someone you know was an original donor, stop by next time you are on campus and see the names of some of our amazing supporters on the wall across from our circulation desk on the first floor.

STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS

This year, Auburn Libraries awarded three scholarships to students who were exemplary in 2018 for their academic and work achievements. These scholarships were endowed by individuals who have shown great affinity for student achievement and support, and we are so grateful for their generosity. The three scholarships and recipients are:

The Marcia L. and Timothy R. Boosinger Endowed Scholarship – Kyle Sullivan, a circulations department employee and finance student in the Raymond J. Harbert College of Business. This scholarship was given by a former Ralph Brown Draughon Library associate dean and her husband, a former dean of the College of Veterinary Science and university provost. Kyle believes his experience working “front line” for the library has taught him to be more confident interacting with new people and in public situations and has enabled him to improve the academic and user experiences of fellow students who need information and assistance with library services.

The Henry L. Tanner Annual Scholarship – Claire Williams, a circulations department employee and double-major in psychology and exercise science. This scholarship was given by 1966 alumna Loren Tanner in honor of her father. Claire is grateful for the invaluable skills she has learned as well as the leadership and diversity she has worked with in the past six semesters of her employment at RBD.

The Auburn University Libraries Scholarship – Lindsey Baird, a circulations department employee and a history major with a minor in anthropology who is planning to graduate in 2020 and go onto earn her master’s in library science with a focus in archival studies. She is interested in working in an academic library or government archives after she finishes her education, and she credits her student employment at RBD to giving her the critical skills necessary to research, present and interpret data.
The last time you cleaned out your closets, deep in the back, you probably found one or more old bits of media. It might have been a cassette tape or perhaps a computer 5.25” floppy disk. And you probably thought to yourself, “I wonder what is on this?”

At the Auburn Libraries’ special collections and archives (SC&A) department, that day came in 2017 when a large number of audio recordings of Auburn’s Horizons Lecture Series, Auburn Profiles Series, Auburn Conference on International Affairs and various other speeches and programs conducted on campus during the 1960s and ’70s were rediscovered on reel-to-reel tape. Recognizing the treasure trove of history they represented, SC&A was determined to digitize these recordings and once again make them available to researchers. But the Auburn Libraries had not owned a reel-to-reel tape system in a quarter century.

Tiger Giving Day 2018 participants came to the aid of SC&A with a project that in a single day raised the money for a complete system to bring those analog audio tapes into the digital world where they can reside safely in a format that can be preserved for the future and be made available to researchers worldwide instantaneously.

It is estimated the project will take three or more years to complete due to the large number of tapes and other ongoing work at SC&A, but already there have been many intriguing finds among the recordings. Most recently, a May 1967 interview of current Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey was digitized in which she talked about becoming the first woman Student Government Association vice president at Auburn. Other finds in the first year of the project include interviews with Auburn’s most famous coach, Ralph “Shug” Jordan, and leaders in their fields at the time, like boxer Mohammad Ali, senators Barry Goldwater and Edward Kennedy, Adm. Elmo Zumwalt, journalist Harry Reasoner, attorney William Kunstler and others. You may listen to these recordings at: archive.org/details/@aulibraries.

“Special collections and archives is very grateful to Tiger Giving Day donors who have made our work preserving these important pieces of history possible,” said Aaron Trehub, assistant dean of technology at Auburn Libraries and head of special collections and archives. “When you consider the Vietnam War was being fought, desegregation was gaining steam and Watergate was in the news during this period, these recordings could not help but be of intense interest to anyone either professionally or casually studying the period.”

Special collections librarian Greg Schmidt has been heading the effort to digitize the recordings. “It is amazing how many prominent figures of the time came to Auburn University,” said Schmidt. “To hear their view of the world then in their own voice is inspiring. By the time the project is complete, we will have hundreds of recordings digitized.”

The challenge of preserving what has become known in the archiving field as “legacy media” is one that is only likely to increase. Auburn Libraries appreciates the part Tiger Giving Day participants have played in making legacy media preservation possible and keeping historical media alive in the digital age.
FEATURED DONOR

Lenore Ealy -- Class of ’83

Lenore Ealy is founder and president of The Philanthropic Enterprise, Inc., the founder of Thinkitecture Inc., serves as secretary and executive director of The Philadelphia Society, and has held program management positions at The Heritage Foundation, the Intercollegiate Studies Institute and the Milton and Rose D. Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice. She is the author of numerous articles and book chapters, and is co-editor with Robert Garnett and Paul Lewis of Commerce and Community: Ecologies of Social Cooperation (Routledge, 2015); co-editor with Steven Klugewicz, of History, on Proper Principles: Essays in Honor of Forrest McDonald (ISI Books, 2010); and co-editor with Robert C. Enlow of Liberty and Learning: Milton Friedman’s Voucher Idea at Fifty (Cato Press, 2006). Ealy graduated from Auburn University in 1983 with a bachelor’s in education, then went on to earn a master’s from the University of Alabama and a Ph.D. in the history of moral and political thought from Johns Hopkins University.

How did the Ralph Brown Draughon Library (RBD) impact your student experience?

Coming to Auburn University from my small town library in Albertville, Alabama, opened up a whole new world to me. As a science education major, I was always browsing books and periodicals to see what new scientific discoveries were being made and to discover more about the history of science.

What role do you see academic libraries playing in their communities?

Academic libraries are tremendously valuable resources providing information stocks and flows. The physical buildings of libraries are like the heart is in the human body – a powerful pumping station that keeps the lifeblood circulating to communities and states. I think this means that as digital resources are ever more available at our fingertips through our own keyboards, libraries will have to become more creative in finding ways to attract people to journey into the crossroads of knowledge. For example, I ventured down into the archives and special collections suite when I toured the library recently, and had the treat of seeing some impressive holdings, both in the form of documents and historical artifacts.

How have you used academic libraries since finishing your studies at Auburn? Have they impacted your professional experiences in any particular ways?

After Auburn, I went on to complete a master’s degree in history at the University of Alabama, and a Ph.D. in the history of moral and political thought at Johns Hopkins University. I have been lucky to be a reader and seminar participant at the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C., I’ve also had the opportunity to use research libraries at Oxford and Cambridge. I think the most special library for me will remain the old British Library Reading Room attached to the British Museum. I conducted much of the research for my dissertation there, reading manuscripts from the 17th century, browsing the card catalogue, taking breaks to visit the Elgin Marbles, illuminated manuscripts and other treasures of the British Museum, and simply enjoying my days in awe beneath the beautiful dome where Hayek, Gandhi, Orwell, Shaw and so many other amazing minds had been before me.

What changes have you noticed or learned about RBD since you were here as a student?

The Mell Classroom Building was a shock at first, but once inside I found the old familiar edifice of RBD, and even still some books! It’s good to see the changes that have been possible because the university and independent donors continue to invest in making knowledge of all kinds more widely accessible to Alabamians.

Why do you choose to support Auburn University libraries?

I think a lot of alumni choose to give to their college or to athletics, but for me the library is at the heart of the pursuit of learning, so I’ve always felt as though this was the right place for my donations.
CURRENT EXHIBITS IN SPECIAL COLLECTIONS AND ARCHIVES

Herbals and botanicals were among the most popular works published in the 15th through 17th centuries. Auburn Libraries, in support of the institution’s land-grant mission, has collected a great number of important historical works from across the globe. The exhibit features not only the famous works of Parkinson and Gerard, but also publications featuring beautiful hand-colored etchings and lithographs.

In 2018, special collections acquired over 1,600 20th century “pulp paperback” novels from the collection of author and educator Wade Hall. These novels are a fascinating look into the 20th century publishing works and into the artists, editors and authors who helped define the era. The exhibit, in six cases, spans most of the 20th century and covers genres from science fiction, to mysteries to literature classics.

John Jenkins Wilmore began working at Auburn in 1888 and was dean of engineering from 1907 until his death in 1943. The John Jenkins Wilmore Papers, acquired by special collections in 2017, contain letters, essays, speeches and photographs pertaining to Wilmore’s 55-year career at API (now Auburn University). Selected documents and artifacts tell the story of Wilmore’s life and work in a six-case display reflecting his dedication to engineering education. The Wilmore exhibit runs through December 2019.