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Special Collections —
Science at UW–Madison: Sources for its History

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The beginning of an academic year is always a time of exhilaration and hope, with a touch of uncertainty. The excitement that abounds on campus each fall is palpable. While 2021–22 will look slightly different than years past — yet far more “normal” than last year — I continue to reflect on all we have accomplished during this most challenging and unusual period.

We are glad to be back on campus! Back to busy spaces and even busier services. Back to greeting students and working alongside faculty and staff to offer an unrivaled academic experience. Back to taking in all of the energy that makes the UW–Madison campus so exhilarating. Moving through the challenges of safely reopening our campus was and continues to be a huge undertaking. Through it all, I am deeply grateful to and proud of my colleagues and their ability to rise above challenging circumstances.

As we look forward, it is essential to note that we never lost sight of our mission and strategic directions, even with all we faced. We continue to advance emerging research, pursue educational innovation, broaden and deepen access to important resources, revitalize our spaces, develop our organizational strength, and realize our values.

The work related to these directions continued. In many cases, we thrived as we demonstrated the impact and value of our efforts to the research, teaching, and learning at UW–Madison. We have re-engaged a full program of in-person services, continued to focus on our equity and diversity strategic plan, collaborated on several meaningful partnerships, strengthened our capacity to preserve digital objects and artifacts, and so much more. You’ll see several examples of our work in this issue.

I am energized and excited as the campus regains its vitality. We look forward to enjoying the company and collaboration of our colleagues in person. Our campus community brings joy — and I am so thankful to be back.

Be well and On, Wisconsin!

Lisa R. Carter, Vice Provost for Libraries and University Librarian
Science at UW–Madison: Sources for its History

AN EXHIBIT IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

By Robin Rider, Curator of Special Collections and History of Science Librarian

Exploring the history of any scientific field at UW–Madison would be a daunting prospect, much more so teaching and research across the sciences here over some 170 years. The current exhibit in Special Collections, “Science at UW–Madison: Sources for its History,” focuses instead on exploring the history of any scientific field.

There are many more stories to be told and discoveries made, whether in paper files, online sources, oral histories, photograph collections, and other media as preserved in University Archives, Special Collections, and elsewhere - whether in materials made widely available through UW Digitized Collections, in stories in campus publications and news, and in the published record of scientific research held in campus libraries or made available online. Through this exhibit, we hope to encourage further exploration of the vast array of relevant sources.

THE EXHIBIT HIGHLIGHTS:
• Science departments’ histories, published in paper form or online
• Campus maps and historical markers recording the construction of laboratory facilities and teaching buildings connected with the sciences (and notable campus faculty after whom some buildings are named)
• University budgets and their effects on science departments, including salary “waivers” imposed during the Great Depression
• Research and writings of scientists turned UW System presidents or UW–Madison chancellors
• Campus publications designed to spotlight scientific accomplishments and their relevance to the Wisconsin Idea
• Influential science textbooks produced by campus faculty
• Campus library collections for the sciences and systems for managing scientific literature
• Archival collections documenting interdisciplinary facilities like the Synchrotron and Biotron
• Accounts of research funding and the significance of Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation (WARF)
• Typewritten letters, telegrams, and born-digital documents at the intersection of scientific research and national politics.

Partnering to Advance Research UW–Madison is now a member of Dryad, an open-access data repository where researchers can publish and publicly share research data. Dryad was started by a community of researchers and is used worldwide to meet funder and publisher mandates for data publication. As yet another great example of the effort to advance emerging research, the Libraries are pleased to share that depositing in Dryad is now free to UW–Madison researchers, thanks to a membership pursued in partnership between the Libraries and Division of Information Technology (DoIT).

“Addressing public access to data at scale for the campus is an exciting challenge and opportunity that requires leveraging expertise and resources across campus to build out sustainable and easy-to-use solutions,” says Cameron Cook, Digital Curation Coordinator and chair of Research Data Services.

Dryad, a repository recommended by UW-Madison for several years, is the first part of a two-pronged approach to increase the functionality of data storage on campus. Not only will it make it easier, the second phase will improve the deposit capacity and data transfer capabilities of MINDs@UW, enabling improved access/experience for larger datasets. The goal is to continue supporting, managing, preserving, and making research data and other outputs available.

“This pilot will help us learn how two important resources can help UW–Madison researchers,” explains Jan Cheetham, Director of Research Cyberinfrastructure at DoIT. “Dryad and MINDs@UW help address the growing requirement for data sharing many researchers face.”

Quick facts about Dryad:
Complete journal integration – Dryad leads the way in data publishing through partnerships with major publishers and journals to make manuscript submission easy.
Compliance with funder mandates – Dryad’s combination of services meets funder data sharing mandates.
Track the reach of your data – Dryad provides metrics that measure the number of times an individual data publication has been viewed, cited, and downloaded.
Seamlessly connect software and data – when researchers submit to Dryad, they have the option to upload code, scripts, and software packages which will be automatically sent to Zenodo.
First-rate data quality – a professional curator reviews all data submitted to Dryad for data and metadata integrity.
Maximized data discovery – Dryad’s data publications are citable, shareable, and discoverable through major indexing services like Google Dataset Search and more.
Robust infrastructure and preservation services – all data published in Dryad are safely preserved in a Core Trust Seal-certified repository.
The Right Tools are Everything

The Libraries are excited to share the recent release of the Researcher Toolkit after months of collaboration between the UW–Madison Libraries and Research Data Services, DoIT Research Cyberinfrastructure, the Wisconsin Institute for Discovery, and the Data Science Hub. Designed to advance emerging research, this toolkit assists UW–Madison faculty, staff, and student researchers navigate the local research resources available with each phase of their research project, from planning to publishing and close-out.

“Navigating the resources available at an institution as large as UW–Madison can be difficult. In putting together the Researcher Toolkit, I learned about resources I wish I’d found when I was a grad student,” says Sarah Stevens, Data Science Institute, Data Science Hub, WD. “We hope the Researcher Toolkit can be a great first place to find support for all researchers on campus as well as an important catalog of resources for research support staff like me.”

By aggregating and organizing local campus research support resources, the Researcher Toolkit, formerly known as the Research Project Resource Guide (RPRG), researchers can more easily discover and access the help they need.

“The hope is that the course does some foundational work for individuals who maybe haven’t known where to start, or provide an opportunity to reseass with the goal of continuous development in mind for those who already have some comfort with these topics.”

As more people use the toolkit, the teams who partnered on it continue to add relevant resources to ensure it is as inclusive as possible to all disciplines. They welcome suggestions of new resources and look forward to supporting the researchers’ important work across campus.

The Including and Navigating Race in the Classroom course focuses on foundational concepts helpful for fostering deeper self-awareness and understanding of other social justice topics. This developmentally sequenced course is intended as a place for reflection on one’s own experience at a pace that feels manageable to each person who completes it. Lessons include social identity, socialization, implicit bias, and micro-messaging. If you are already familiar with some of these concepts, challenge yourself to consider them from new angles or identities.

“Social justice, anti-racism, and effective allyship all start with knowledge of the self, comfort with self-reflection, and the ability to take action toward our growth and learning alongside others,” says Becker. “The hope is that the course works for people who already have some comfort with these topics.”

The Reflecting on Social Justice Foundational Concepts course focuses on foundational concepts helpful for fostering deeper self-awareness and understanding of other social justice topics. This developmentally sequenced course is intended as a place for reflection on one’s own experience at a pace that feels manageable to each person who completes it. Lessons include social identity, socialization, implicit bias, and micro-messaging. If you are already familiar with some of these concepts, challenge yourself to consider them from new angles or identities.

“The hope is that the course works for people who already have some comfort with these topics.”

The Including and Navigating Race in the Classroom course focuses on the importance of diverse classroom materials, integrating materials into courses, and facilitating conversations around racial topics. This developmentally sequenced course is intended as a starting point for an iterative process of continuous development on best practices for inclusive classrooms. The level of content in this micro-course is appropriate for graduate students and staff.

“These two new online micro-courses aim to strengthen the inclusory values we hold on campus. This collaboration showcases that strong strategic work is possible at the UW when we come together. We look forward to seeing more micro-courses on this topic to create a constellation of offerings,” says Sheila Stoeckel, Director of UW–Madison Libraries Teaching & Learning Programs.

Other micro-course offerings designed with graduate student skills in mind can be viewed on the Libraries Micro-Courses website.
When one of the greatest gymnasts in the world stepped back from competition in the middle of the 2021 (née 2020) Tokyo Olympic Games, it sent shock waves around the globe. Simone Biles decided the delicate balancing act between her mental well-being and the push for gold was no longer equal. Protecting her mental health needed to win. Tennis player and fellow Olympian Naomi Osaka made headlines earlier in 2021 after announcing she wouldn’t speak to the media during the French Open, also citing the need to safeguard her mental health.

Both athletes faced passionate supporters and harsh critics, and their actions pushed a sensitive conversation into the limelight: What are the mental health challenges facing elite athletes?

In recent years, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) has prioritized studying this complex issue, as the growing need to understand and attend to the mental health of elite athletes has become critical. The IOC began looking worldwide for the right people to help them. Enter the University of Wisconsin–Madison’s doctors and librarians.

“’It’s no surprise elite athletes are susceptible to mental health symptoms, and in some cases, are disproportionately suffering,’” says Doctor Claudia Reardon. Reardon is a psychiatrist with UW–Madison and co-chair of the IOC’s workgroup on Mental Health in Elite Athletes. “Even though we’re increasingly seeing brave individuals speak out, the general public perception is that the mental health and psyche of elite athletes must be superior and immune to challenges. That isn’t true.”

In 2017, the IOC contacted Reardon to assist with developing a consensus statement. Along with approximately 70 researchers from 13 countries, she joined forces to build 24 subtopics concerning the mental health of elite athletes — ranging from substance abuse, emergency psychiatric events, domestic violence, addiction to social media, eating disorders, gambling addiction, and more.

“’We had a huge amount of information and literature to sort through — roughly 50,000 various pieces,’” says Reardon. “’We quickly knew we’d need professional and technical expertise to manage the research parameters and logistics. This was going to be a challenge, especially with six continents involved. It wasn’t long before we turned to the Libraries.’”

Throughout 2018, Reardon and Mary Hitchcock, from Ebling Library, collaborated to hone the definition of the research subprojects, determined and confirmed subject terms and searches, pulled and organized citations into each separate research question to ensure all researchers involved received the appropriate items for their specific question. Research partners, specialists in the mental health subfields, would further exhaust the research together to develop agreements on what evidence could be used to provide knowledge and options to address their portion of the consensus statement.

Claudia L. Reardon, MD
Professor, Department of Psychiatry
University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health; Staff Psychiatrist, University Health Services

Olympian Simone Biles
“You always think you have a good sense of what is out there, but when you get librarians involved, they turn up research that you would never have found. They set the bar at a different level.”

This is the largest project of my career,” says Hitchcock, a Health Sciences Librarian at the UW–Madison’s Ebling Library. “What stuck out to me personally through this was, you see the IOC realized medal counts don’t matter compared to the overall well-being of the athletes. The IOC is trying to create a culture where athletes feel like they can advocate for their needs, including mental health.”

The findings concluded common challenges, like depression or anxiety, were issues athletes were equally as likely to suffer from as non-athletes. Other areas like eating disorders, substance abuse, and certain ranges of anxiety were higher in elite athletes and differed by sport.

“Elite athletes, regardless if they are Olympian, Paralympian or professional, are not robots. They’re still human,” says Hitchcock. “They have the same personal issues and challenges regular people face, but they have been placed upon a pedestal. If they fail or fall, the criticism can be vicious and greatly intensified, as we have seen with Simone Biles.”

By November 2018, the researchers met at IOC headquarters in Lausanne, Switzerland, to review the final consensus statement. Eleven systematic reviews and meta-analyses born of this project were published within the preeminent British Journal of Sports Medicine, a feat Reardon says librarians played a crucial role in accomplishing.

Hitchcock and Reardon note intricacies in creating terms, synonyms, or specific subject headings within library research. Each database may run differently, and unless a researcher is intimately familiar, they may miss relevant information. Working with a subject-specific librarian drastically decreases time and frustration levels, in addition to opening up new areas of research — which can lead to incredibly powerful outcomes.

“It has become clear that there was a lack of systematic screening of athletes,” says Reardon. “You have to screen for these areas of concern. You can’t just tell on the surface whether or not an individual is struggling. Evidence-based screening is a key tool.”

As the IOC implemented the work from the consensus statement in 2019, both Reardon and Hitchcock hope their work and that of their colleagues from around the world will help better recognize the importance of mental health.

“I think having the IOC project completed two years before the summer games provided a strong foundation to assist coaches, athletic trainers, athletes, and mental health professionals,” explains Hitchcock.

Since the development of the 2019 consensus statement, a subgroup has continued to meet to create a program that includes an IOC diploma, which Reardon leads, on mental health and sports, allowing clinicians to take a 9-month intensive course. Additionally, the NCAA Chief Medical Director Brian Hainline, who served with Reardon as co-chair of the IOC project, reached out recently to Hitchcock to assist with literature searches around the medical and psychosocial challenges facing transgender athletes.

Reardon and Hitchcock say this is another positive step in researching and addressing issues that impact many worldwide.

“Everyone seems to shy away from talking about mental health because of the stigma attached,” says Hitchcock. “Hopefully, this work has humanized the subject, brought light to these hidden topics, and can offer guidance.”
GO BIG READ TURNS TO FICTION FOR 2021–2022

A Look at Transcendent Kingdom

By Kari Knutson, University Communications

While recent Go Big Read books have been nonfiction, this year’s selection for the campus common reading program, Transcendent Kingdom, uses a fictional story to explore the very real issues of race, immigration, science, faith, and family.

Yaa Gyasi’s novel tells the story of Gifty, a graduate student in neuroscience and the only member of her Ghanaian family born in the United States, as she examines her family’s experience of immigrating and her place in the world.

“Fiction has a unique ability to connect with us in a very personal way,” says Chancellor Rebecca Blank. “Gifty’s story is all about her struggle to establish her own identity. In this particular story, we can all identify how we work to integrate our past experiences, family history, and future dreams into a coherent sense of who we are. This past year has shown us all the importance of listening to people’s stories and finding ways to reach out to them.”

The book is a follow-up to Gyasi’s acclaimed Homegoing. Gyasi, who lives in Brooklyn, New York, was born in Ghana and raised in Huntsville, Alabama. She holds a BA in English from Stanford University and an MFA from the Iowa Writers’ Workshop.

“Gifty told National Public Radio, “And the kind of one constant was the fact that I could go to the library with my library card and check out books. And in these books, I could start to kind of encounter people, understand people, and have that stability that I was seeking throughout all of these moves. So I was a person who just found herself in literature quite young.”

Transcendent Kingdom was recently longlisted for the 2021 PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction as well as the 2021 Women’s Prize for Fiction.

Publishers Weekly calls it “meticulous, psychologically complex ... At once a vivid evocation of the immigrant experience and a sharp delineation of an individual’s inner struggle, the novel brilliantly succeeds on both counts.”

“Author Gyasi told The Washington Post, “If there are any skeptics left, they can stand down now. Homegoing wasn’t beginner’s luck. Gyasi’s new novel, Transcendent Kingdom, is a book of blazing brilliance,” says The Washington Post.

The Go Big Read program is an initiative of the Office of the Chancellor. It engages members of the campus community and beyond in a shared, academically focused reading experience.

Go Big Read events connected to the book are expected to include a visit from the author. Planning is underway for how students, faculty, and staff will use the book in classrooms and special events. Copies of the book were given to first-year students at the Chancellor’s Convocation for New Students and students using the book in their classes. UW–Madison instructors or event planners interested in using the book can request a physical or e-review copy.

Opposite: Students are pictured with copies of Transcendent Kingdom, a book by author Yaa Gyasi, following the Chancellor’s Convocation for New Students at the Kohl Center. Photo by Althea Dotzour / UW–Madison

An Evening with Yaa Gyasi

November 3rd, 2021 | 7:00pm – 8:30pm
Shannon Hall, Memorial Union

Gyasi will discuss her novel at this year’s Go Big Read keynote event Nov. 3 from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at Memorial Union’s Shannon Hall. No tickets are required for this free in-person, live event, which will also be livestreamed at gobigread.wisc.edu.
Every year, the Friends provide funding for an iSchool (Library) student to take a specialized course from the Rare Book School at the University of Virginia. Dr. Heather Wacha, a postdoctoral fellow, an instructor, and an administrative coordinator for the Center for the History of Print and Digital Culture at UW, was awarded this grant last year. Her ambition is to become a Special Collections Librarian. Recently, she took a one-week course on the History of the Book in China, taught by Professor Sören Edgren. Because of Covid-19, she took the course virtually. Here is an edited version of Heather’s report:

This course marks my first at the Rare Book School, and it exceeded my expectations in all respects—even in virtual format! Though I do not read or speak any East Asian languages, I was pleased to learn so much about East Asian book history. I also have a much better idea of the book trade across the centuries and the possibility of finding many forgeries today. Since my research focuses on the materiality of books, especially bindings, it was fascinating to see the different ways East Asian books were bound. Indeed, I learned about a variety of binding techniques that were not practiced in the West. Books from East Asia, for example, use an accordion fold, which is an inverted folio in a western quire. This becomes even more interesting when considering that books from East Asia are written and read left to right.

I was also surprised that while multiple books in the West may be gathered into one binding due to the cost of durable materials used (wood, leather, etc.), this was not the case elsewhere. For East Asian books, because the binding materials were not overly expensive, one book may appear in multiple volumes. This practice in multiple volumes. This practice works in tandem with planning the wood blocks designed to capture chapters—themselves structured to be one volume. The aesthetic is simple and harmonious, aspiring to perfection in how knowledge is organized and calculated into perfecty measured units.

I am so pleased to go into UW Special Collections now and better understand an East Asian manuscript or printed work. I know how to talk about the folio layout and the binding even though I cannot read the text.

I am also encouraged to know that Chinese bibliography is an area that is being re-energized. The class consisted of scholars, students, librarians, and conservators. Professor Edgren’s varied background in all these areas brought a broad perspective and reinforced the value of interdisciplinary scholarship. I thank the Friends for this wonderful opportunity!

— H. Wacha
What is gift planning? This term refers to gifts that are made in the present but will be received in the future. Some planned gifts are straightforward, like charitable bequests, a gift made through an individual’s will or deferred, gift. Additionally, individuals whose plans benefit the Libraries can choose to be recognized on the Libraries’ donor wall located at the entrance of Memorial Library. The University of Wisconsin Foundation encourages individuals to consult with their tax advisor when making a deferred gift.

Planned gifts ensure that the Libraries will serve future generations of Badgers and that UW–Madison will remain a leader in higher education. We are grateful for your support and the impact that you create on campus.

Making a gift can be straightforward or part of a more complex plan. Individuals who share their planned giving intentions with the University of Wisconsin Foundation join the Wisconsin Legacy Society, a recognition society that honors and celebrates alumni and friends who have committed support to the University through a planned, or deferred, gift. Additionally, individuals whose plans benefit the Libraries can choose to be recognized on the Libraries’ donor wall located at the entrance of Memorial Library. The University of Wisconsin Foundation encourages individuals to consult with their tax advisor when making a deferred gift.

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