Catch up on Snell happenings!

This year’s Neighborhood Matters Screening Series covered topics like Redlining in Dorchester, LGBTQ history, and uncovering the archaeology of Boston. (Image 1)

This October, the Library again put on a series of events and workshops for Open Access Month, highlighting library resources and tools and even Northeastern’s only illuminated Manuscript. (Image 2)

The Library collaborated with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, Foundation Year and NPR’s The Moth to help NU students share their stories.

Library Data Analytics and Visualization Specialist Steven Braun helped Spearhead Northeastern's NUVis consortium and brought luminaries in the emerging field of data visualization from across the country to campus. (Image 3)

The Library hosted a celebration for international GIS Day including a featured speaker, student presentations and a meet and great with companies in the field. (Image 4)

@ClubSnell Impressive to see that level of activity plus the commitment & investment in support of student education. #quality #innovation
- Greg Tutunjian @gregtutunjian

Filming in @ClubSnell! Come hear our stories through film at #ChallengeTheStats on April 17! @NU_CAMD #PaaNEU #film
- Angelica Hairstin @angelharpist

16 of the last 24 hours in #ClubSnell ...2016 road is off to a very academic start.
- Ford Murphy @SneakersMcFord

At the point in the semester where carrying my backpack could be considered lifting #turtleshell #ClubSnell #allnightlonger
- Michelle Hoblit @MagicalMichelle

Thank you @Northeastern @ClubSnell for the research pass today. This also proves I’m working on the weekend.
- @HaroldTribune
  -Bill Church @BillChurchMedia

@ClubSnell 24 hour turnaround on ILL requests. Thank you!
- David Perez @davidperez207st

First time at @ClubSnell last night. Very engaging design, resources & personnel: beehive of activity (a library!) even late PM.
- Greg Tutunjian @gregtutunjian

So some of the views from @ClubSnell are gorgeous
- Isabelle Beecy @izzybeecy

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A Note from
Retired Dean, Will Wakeling

I stepped down from the Deanship into retirement last month, after nearly ten years of happy engagement with the challenges of bringing the very best library services to the University’s students and faculty. When I look at the accomplishments of the last year, as reflected in the contents of this review, it’s a special pleasure to see how accurately they reflect the major themes of the Library’s evolution over that time. Indeed, I can see in each of the articles called out here further evidence that the University and its students are being as well served as ever when it comes to enjoying the use of one of the nation’s most innovative and service-oriented libraries.

Few things have changed more over the last decade than how the Library’s space itself has been reconstructed to meet the needs of students. They continue to pour into Snell Library to take advantage of the renovated study spaces and group study rooms on the lower floors, and the wonderful array of opportunities offered by the Digital Media Commons. These are areas where we are fortunate to have the ongoing advice of our Student Advisory Council to keep us informed of changing needs and possible improvements. It’s all very different – for those of you who remember them (with affection, or otherwise) – from the dark recesses of the old Dodge Library.

You see reflected in this review some of the other major shifts in library services that mark a truly modern library. One-on-one research consultations have replaced the old reference desk. The shift from print to digital resources, eBooks and eJournals continues apace, though few major academic libraries have been as progressive and steadfast in adopting the concept as Snell, with its focused concentration on the needs of the new generation of students and faculty. Some things are a matter of adaptation: with fewer printed books, the very welcome donations we receive that support book buying are now acknowledged with digital bookplates, and those eBooks serve students who are on campus and those who are online and remote with equal facility.

It’s been wonderful to see the expansion of the University Archives, and the way that students and faculty are now embracing the wealth of local material there that can enrich their understanding both historically and sociologically. Again, we thank the many inspired donors who have helped us grow those collections and strengthen our links with the local schools and communities.

Each new arriving freshman cohort acts as a reminder how important it is to embrace new technologies and services: witness the tremendous success of our recent GIS and Data Visualization initiatives, called out in this review. Much of the innovation in these areas is launched via investments from the Dean’s Innovation Fund, and I need to give special thanks again to those whose generosity to that fund has enabled so much.

To sum up: Snell Library continues to rise to the challenge of serving students while acting as the lynchpin for cultural life of the campus and a crucial connector to the local Boston community. As a new Dean gets selected and comes on board, I’m confident that the accomplishments of the past will be reflected in the achievements of the future. Come and visit, and thank you for your continuing support!
Artistic Intervention and Northeastern Archives: Reinvention Of Place

When we think of public space becoming more vibrant and activated through artistic performance, archives at a university generally don’t first come to mind as a key factor in such an artistic endeavor. But Northeastern University Librarians and the Archives and Special Collections have become integral in such assignments.

A graduate level Master in Fine Arts (MFA) course, “Art, Context, Action” seeks to further explore numerous public spaces within Downtown Boston. Besides the collection of geographic and sensory observations, the class sought help from Northeastern University’s Librarians and Archivist. Regina Pagani, a librarian in Research and Instruction collaborated with the Archives and Special Collections “to create a hands-on learning experience for the students as an introduction to archival research.” To further understand the Haymarket area of downtown Boston, the students explored the Anne Fanton collection in Northeastern’s Special Collections.

Anne Fanton was executive director of the Central Artery Environmental Oversight Committee which monitored mitigation arrangements between the Central Artery’s business community and the “Big Dig.” Students in the MFA class studied the modern history of Boston’s downtown through the Fanton collection, by looking at the business

Data Visualization and GIS at Snell 2016

Over the year, Steven Braun, the Data Analytics and Visualization Specialist, and Bahare Sanai-Movahed, the Geographic Information Services Specialist, have been busy supporting students, faculty, and staff on campus with data visualization and mapping through consultations, project work, workshops and lectures, and other collaborations. As campus interest of mapping and visualization have increased across colleges and departments in the natural sciences, social sciences, and arts and humanities, so has the demand for services available to support them. Steven and Bahare have been providing these services. In addition to workshops consultations, and classes across the university, the two have built strong partnerships with faculty and industry professionals.

Steven has been the library’s voice on the new Northeastern University Visualization Consortium (NUVis), an initiative to connect practitioners of data visualization at all levels of the campus community through events and shared resources. NUVis kicked off this semester with an inaugural invited speaker series, bringing in data visualization experts from academia and industry, including notable speakers like Martin Wattenberg and Fernanda Viegas, both visualization researchers from Google, and Ben Fry, co-founder and creator of the popular visualization platform Processing.

Bahare has also been deeply involved in bringing together GIS users on campus. This semester, the library hosted its first GIS day. Over 1000 different institutes, schools and organizations celebrated GIS day and geography awareness week all around the world. Snell Library’s event included a keynote by Patrick Florence, Associate Director of Geospatial Technology Services at Tufts University and a reception which allowed members of the campus community to connect with GIS industry leaders.

As we look into future academic years, Steven and Bahare are excited to continue this interdisciplinary collaboration at Northeastern and the wider Boston Community.

Learn more about Data Visualization and GIS at: bit.ly/datavisgis

Steven’s work led his nomination for Knatara’s Information is Beautiful Award. This data visualization voice analysis is a sample of his work and explores the music of pop artists Sia and Adele.

Bahare worked with NU Marine Science Center and Harvard Museum of Natural History to migrate Boston Harbor Habitat Atlas to a new prototype platform, which can be seen to the left.

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Community Engagement at Snell Library

Situated in the heart of Boston, Northeastern is committed to active community engagement. With the city at large and the surrounding neighborhoods of Roxbury, Mission Hill, Fenway, and the South End, the University continues providing programs for the community. Aligned with this mission, Snell Library is actively working to engage the Boston community.

The Library’s Archives and Special Collections department continues to collaborate with the Center for the Arts on the Neighborhood Matters series that celebrates how community groups have shaped the neighborhoods surrounding campus. In the last year new opportunities emerged for supporting the Boston community as the library welcomed a number of student groups from junior high schools.

A visit from students in Roxbury was initiated by Northeastern students in a service-learning program at Timilty Middle School. During two tours students and librarian Regina Pagani discussed the role libraries play supporting student success and the creation of knowledge. “I think they were most impressed that they could pursue things they were really interested in – making videos, recording their music, making art with the 3D printers,” said Pagani, “and that more than just reading and writing happens in our library spaces. The library activated their interest and excitement about the types of creation that can occur in a library.”

In the spring of 2016 the library hosted junior high school students from Chelsea Public Schools, initiated by Citizen Schools, which provides educational opportunities for students in low-income communities. Organized by volunteer Sandra Lipson and Boston College Faculty member Angela Lowell, the trip was part of a program on exploring careers and understanding the educational requirements/opportunities involved in each career choice. As Lipson said, “We wanted to expose them to what could be possible in their futures, so that they could see the kind of higher education environment that might be available to them.” And while the students do have a library in Chelsea, “it’s nothing like what a world-class facility such as the Snell Library offers for learning, studying, creating, collaborating, and accessing support.”

Through these collaborations and more to come, Snell Library is playing a vital role responding to educational needs in the Boston community. Library staff are excited at the opportunities ahead for working with community partners, where the library is not only providing information but learning experiences that help support, uplift, and expose young minds to what is possible. It is Northeastern’s innovative, entrepreneurial and community-minded spirit that makes these collaborations possible. Said Lowell, “when our students begin to look at campuses in a few years, they’ll look to campuses where the leadership is capable of thinking outside of the box.”

For more about events open to the community: bit.ly/snellcommunityevents

ARCHIVES ARE EXCITING PLACES. There is, of course, the thrill of discovery of a story or idea that you didn’t know about before. But for artists, the sensory quality is so important. Handling the artifacts seeing coffee stains and scribbles in the margins of documents – that’s what makes a story and a place come alive.”
Decoding the Dragon

Although the Library continues to focus on the cutting-edge, with access to “just in time” resources and immediately accessible and searchable electronic databases, research in our Archival and Rare book collections gives students an opportunity to slow down, dig deep, and allow for serendipity.

The Dragon Prayer Book, Northeastern’s only illuminated manuscript, was the subject of “Decoding the Dragon,” an event in which taught the basics of reading Gothic font and medieval abbreviations within the Dragon Prayer Book. This decoding will lead to further transcription of this manuscript, which is a crowd sourced, Open Access initiative. The Dragon Prayer Book was on display at the “Beyond Words” exhibition at The McMullen Museum of Art at Boston College.

“I’m surprised at how genuinely excited everyone was to ‘decode,’ and our series of activities aimed to gradually acclimate the group to both the script and the practice of reading abbreviations eased the group into transcribing some of the more challenging lines,” said Erika Boecker, Professor of English at Northeastern and one of the organizers of the event. Students interacting with the “Dragon Book,” a 15th century Dominican prayer book, were encouraged to think about how each letter was hand-drawn, what kind of inks were used, and ask why are some letters highlighted in blue or red? They examined why they thought certain sections appeared more worn, and asked was the book so tiny?

Laura Packard, (SSH ’21) had this to say about the experience; “As an undergraduate English major, having access to Archives and Special Collections has given me the opportunity to work with materials which I might not have otherwise known were available had I not visited them in class. Our partnership with Archives and Special Collections was essential in making the Dragon Prayer Book more accessible to the Northeastern community and the general public.”

To see the Dragon Prayer Book in its entirety visit: bit.ly/dragonprayerbook
Powering access to resources from around the globe

Interlibrary Loan services come to the rescue when students and faculty need access to information the library doesn’t have. Whether it’s a book, journal/magazine article, or an article from a small newspaper published in the 1930s, the library works to ensure access to a diverse network of library collections and the ability to borrow from them. [Here you can see libraries from around the world that have loaned to Northeastern. In addition to these, Northeastern borrows from hundreds of libraries in the United States and Canada ranging from large universities to small community colleges and public libraries.

To view the full interactive map go to: bit.ly/snellinterlibraryloan

Did you know that databases and resources are available even after graduation?

Adam Matthews: Colonial America
Foreign Office Files for China
SAGE Political Reference Suite
Women Writers Online

For a full list of resources available to alumni visit: bit.ly/snellalumniresources

Thank you for your support!

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