

CIRCUMSPICE



The City College of New York Libraries

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CCNY Science Librarian's Research Goes Global



A Google-powered map displays Professor Loren Mendelsohn's readership activity

After uploading his paper [Tacuinum Sanitatis: A Medieval Health Manual](#) to our institutional repository CUNY Academic Works, Professor and Chief Science Librarian Loren Mendelsohn said he was pleasantly surprised to see a huge increase in the number of times his paper was downloaded. Since CUNY Academic Works makes materials freely available online and highly discoverable through popular search engines like Google, Professor Mendelsohn witnessed his readership grow on a global scale. Professor Mendelsohn's paper has received 882 downloads in the last two years, of which 62% were from outside of the United States.

Congratulations, Lon!

"This is why everybody, especially junior faculty, should submit to Academic Works and build a scholarly profile," Digital Scholarship Librarian Ching-Jung Chen said in reaction to Professor Mendelsohn's recent

achievement. In addition to serving as a repository for publications and research, Academic Works also allows open access to CCNY's online collections of Master's Theses, Open Educational Resources as well as archival collections from the Dominican Studies Institute and the CCNY Archives & Special Collections. To explore available resources or build your profile, visit '[Academic Works](#)'.



From the Desk of the Chief Librarian

Charles C. Stewart

"The times they are a-changin"

Looking back at this past year, I see many accomplishments and highlights. Here follows a highly selective sample. Recently, two of our junior faculty have just received CUNY Mellon Faculty Diversity Initiative Awards—Prof. Trevar Riley-Reid and Prof. Nilda Sanchez-Rodriguez. This is on top of the same award being given to our Prof. Yoko Inagi Ferguson last year. The University has made a point of appreciating the diversity of our campuses, and the Library has launched a committee to look into these issues.

We have been impacted by the budget austerities at the College, but through some recent relief we were spared having to make major cancellations to our significant offering of databases. We review usage statistics carefully in order to support only the most used resources. Thanks to our Substitute, Ms. Anita Meyers, and our new Electronic Resources Librarian, Mr. Sean O'Heir, we have maintained these services and keep working on improving multiple access paths.

Personally I served on a special Presidential Task Force to review a difficult student event last May, and along with Professors Alessandra Benedicty-Kokken and Marit Dewhurst, we have made recommendations for more moderated conversations. I drew wisdom and insight for this from some of the religion librarians I met at the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) meeting I attended last summer. Practices of forgiveness and apology can facilitate good listening and build understanding.

Turning to the present, the same sort of approach of striving toward workable agreements applies to our ongoing support of the Governor's recent OER (Open Educational Resources) Initiative. Prof. Ching-Jung Chen and Ms. Teresa Scala from the Provost's Office have thrown themselves whole-heartedly into this effort to enlist as many Faculty as possible into the program of "zero-textbook-cost" courses. The savings to students for this year into fall 2018 are already estimated at over \$50,000.

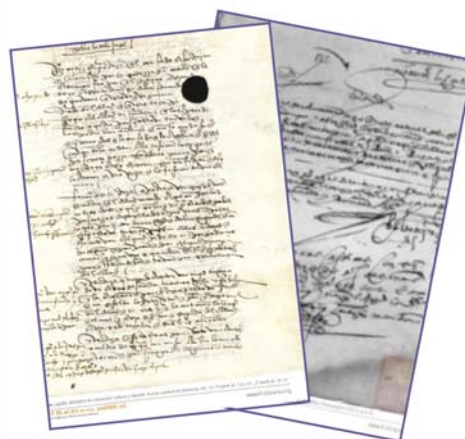
For the future, that marvelous, mysterious, open-ended possibility, we hope to bring more reasonableness and more passion to such projects as a Ravi Shankar tribute concert, Harlem art exhibits, alumni art, digitization plans, appropriate ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) adjustments for our web resources, cooperation with student projects such as an interactive model of the campus buildings and a platform for future OER textbooks, and preparation for our new catalog—which will soon be called a Library Service Platform (LSP) with OneSearch as the user interface. We hope to work collaboratively and creatively on the many opportunities ahead.



CCNY Students in Cohen library

CUNY Dominican Studies Institute Launches “First Blacks in Americas” Website

Sarah Aponte, CUNY Dominican Studies Institute’s Chief Librarian and Associate Professor Anthony Stevens-Acevedo, CUNY Dominican Studies Institute’s Assistant Director



Left: Home page of “First Blacks” site in Spanish; Right: Two sample manuscripts available on the site

The CUNY Dominican Studies Institute launched *First Blacks in the Americas* / *Los Primeros Negros en las Américas*, a new academic and educational digital platform presenting the story of the first black-African inhabitants to arrive in the Americas after Christopher Columbus’ 1492 expedition across the Atlantic. *First Blacks in the Americas* (available in English and Spanish) is formed at its core by a collection of seventy-one archival document packages. The documents contain an equal number of manuscripts from sixteenth-century La Española (today’s Dominican Republic and Republic of Haiti). The selected documents mention in different ways the presence of the black-African population and their descendants that lived in the island-colony (the first European outpost in the Americas of modern times) during the first one hundred years of

colonization. The site is the first platform to make this kind of collection of sources available on the internet to the larger public.

Each of the documents in *First Blacks in the Americas* is accompanied by: 1) a paleographic transcription (an exact version of the manuscript typed in modern characters); 2) a translation into English; 3) a comment extracted from current historiography to provide some historical context, and; 4) a double image of the manuscript side-by-side with the transcription for those interested in a more in-depth study of these historical sources. Besides these, the website also features a series of descriptive overviews about different aspects of the lives of blacks in La Española, like how this population arrived, their demographics, their contribution to the economy, their experiences of enslavement and resistance, and the contributions of black women, all based on prior scholarship.

The platform includes several unique features, including an extensive collection of maps of La Española drawn and used in the 1500s, a glossary to facilitate the reading of the Spanish language used during the time when the documents were written, and a large collection of photographs of historical sites from colonial times of the Dominican Republic, many of them reflecting deep rural areas (rarely visited, and rather forgotten). In addition, the website includes a collection of videos on contemporary Afro-Dominican culture and a bibliography for further reading. Finally, the site provides the user with an ample set of links to other websites that focus on the black-African diaspora and the black historical experience in subsequent centuries.

For more information, please visit the [‘First Blacks’](#) website at in English and at [‘Primeros Negros’](#) in Spanish.



Associate Professor Jacqueline Gill Retires

Librarian

In the 38 years serving as a librarian at CCNY, Associate Professor Jacqueline Gill helped transform the library into the modernized, full-fledged research facility it is today. When she started as a serials cataloger in 1979, things like the online catalog, the integrated library system, and the Internet -- tools we now utilize all day, every day -- did not even exist! Jackie was part of one of the early efforts to transition from print to computerized cataloging technology and saw the implementation of our first ILS. She later worked in the Acquisitions department, where she would eventually become Head in 1997. In 2010, she navigated more changes when she moved to the realm of Public Services as a reference librarian.

She was appointed as the subject specialist for Education and English as a Second Language as well as helping develop our library instruction services as our Information Literacy Coordinator.

At her retirement party last June, Jackie expressed her thanks to colleagues who praised Jackie for all of her hard work and commitment to high-quality service. During retirement, she said she's looking forward to continuing to work with her church as well running her small business ecrochetpassion.com. On behalf of the library, we wish you the best, Jackie!



Meet Our New Electronic-Resources Librarian

Sean O'Heir

Sean O'Heir joined the Library's Technical Services Department this fall as the new Electronic Resources Librarian. The City College Library provides access to more than 100,000 online journals, and over 850,000 eBooks and it is Sean's job to manage much of this electronic collection. Sean comes to us from Lehman College where he was Substitute Electronic Resources-Systems Librarian. Prior to joining CUNY, Sean worked as a news librarian at the Daily News and the New York Post. He spent 20 years at Entertainment Weekly Magazine where his responsibilities covered all areas of library service including e-resource management.

Sean earned his MLIS from Pratt Institute and a BA in English from Fordham University. In addition to overseeing electronic resources, Sean enjoys teaching Information Literacy sessions and working the Reference Desk. "City College students are so lucky to have access to such a rich research toolkit. I take great joy in sharing search strategies both in class and at the Reference Desk. As a former news librarian, I have a first-hand understanding of the inherent value and importance of accurate information."

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