

Minutes of the Twenty-Seventh Annual Meeting of the Council of the Friends of the
Oberlin College Library, November 11, 2017

President Robert Taylor convened the Twenty-Seventh Annual Meeting of the Council of the Friends of the Oberlin College Library at 1:35 p.m. in the Goodrich Room at Mudd Center.

The following Friends Council members were present: Robert Taylor (President), Wendy Wasman (Vice President), Eric Carpenter (Secretary), Alexia Hudson-Ward (Director of Libraries), Bill Bradford, Stephanie Davis-Kahl (conference call connection) Bob Follette, Jack Glazier, Jennifer Graham, Jessica Grim (ex officio), Eboni Johnson, Gary Kornblith, Thelma Morris, Ann McFarland, Ed Vermue (ex officio)

Guests present were: Rosalinda Linares, Information Literacy & Special Initiatives Librarian.

Highlights of the Meeting:

- Heard a report by President Robert Taylor on the Executive Committee's work with Alexia Hudson-Ward during a year of challenge and change and passed 4 motions approving actions recommended by the Executive Committee
- Accepted the Financial Report containing news of a \$125,266 bequest and balance of \$185,874
- Approved acquisitions for the Library worth \$40,355
- Considered a Membership Committee report analyzing a recent decline in memberships, due in part to aging. Efforts to recruit members will emphasize appeal to a younger demographic - more current students, younger alumni, etc.
- Approved Life Memberships for David Berger and Holly Maxson for their major contributions to the development of Conservatory Library collections
- Awarded \$3,500 Library School scholarships to Sarah Blenko, OC '15 and Amelea Kim, OC '12 and a Student Research Award to Brook Oertel OC '17
- Heard a report by Alexia Hudson-Ward on recognition the Libraries are receiving for
 1. Presenting interesting programs
 2. Receiving, organizing, and providing access to records of former College President Marvin Krislov, Oberlin's first "electronic" president.
 3. Undertaking a comprehensive analysis of print collections using a digital OCLC collection management tool
- Concluded with Alexia's report of approval by the Board of Trustees for the naming of the Main Library in Mudd Center as the Mary Church Terrell Library. A major celebration of this event will be organized in the coming year.

Welcome – President Robert Taylor began a round of introductions, and each member introduced him/herself.

Agenda – The agenda for this meeting was distributed in advance.

Minutes – The minutes of the November 5th, 2016 meeting were approved as distributed.

Reports from the President and Vice President – Robert Taylor said 2016-17 was a great year despite challenges. In particular he commended Alexia Hudson-Ward for working closely and productively with him and the Friends Executive Committee despite pressures on the Libraries from budget reductions and staff turnover, including a vacancy in the Director’s Office that made planning this meeting a challenge. Wendy Wasman’s report focused on increased visibility of The Friends on Facebook (74 followers in Nov. 2016 and 192 this morning. Wendy will work with Eboni to stay informed on Friends sponsored events and post information on them on our Facebook page promptly.

Financial Report – Alexia presented the 2016-17 financial report. It contains exceptionally good news. Robert Johnson ’70 made a bequest of \$125,266 to the Friends, an unrestricted gift. Strategic planning is needed to spend this money wisely. Our fund has a current balance of \$185,874 (c.f. \$49,152 last year) and we are in a strong financial position. The report was accepted by consensus.

ACTION ITEMS – (Robert Taylor) The Executive Committee met twice this year to consider issues rather than delay consideration between annual Council meetings.

Several of these issues require action by Council:

#1 Name Change to Libraries – Oberlin College has 4 (not 1) libraries. Changing the name of our organization to Friends of the Oberlin College Libraries will recognize this fact. A similar name change is needed in our Bylaws, and Robert will propose this change at the Dinner gathering this evening. A motion to this effect was made seconded and passed unanimously. A change in the name of our organization also necessitates a review of our Bylaws. They have not been reviewed since 2003. Robert asked for a motion to charge the Executive Committee to conduct a Bylaws Review and recommend necessary. Necessary revisions include a provision for electronic voting by Council members (between annual meetings) and the use of inclusive, gender-neutral language. A motion was made to this effect, seconded, and adopted by unanimous consent.

#2 Ceremony to welcome the return of Oberlin’s 15th-century Qur’an to Special Collections (Robert Taylor) - Ed Vermue displayed the 15th century Mameluke Qur’an donated to Oberlin by William Barton, acquired (in Jerusalem) at the end of the 19th or beginning of the 20th century, and donated about that time. The Qur’an, in urgent need of cleaning and conservation, was sent to the Northeast Document Conservation Center (Andover, MA). The pages were cleaned, treated as needed and left disbound. Each signature was enclosed in an acid-free container. Deterioration of the Qur’an has been halted and we will not attempt to re-assemble the work since portions of it may be missing. Alexia wants the Friends to consider how to fund the cost of this project and organize an event to celebrate the return of this sacred text to Oberlin. Robert then requested a motion to authorize the Executive Committee to consider this matter, formulate a plan and forward it (by email) to Council members for consideration. A motion to this effect was passed unanimously.

#3 Financial Designation of “Staff Enrichment Fund” in support of OCL staff professional development (Wendy Wasman) – The Friends supports acquisition of

materials by the libraries and Student Research Awards but not library staff development. This new Friends fund will fund professional development activities (conference and workshop attendance, etc.) by library staff. Staff members will submit requests for funds to the Library Director who would evaluate them and distribute the funds. The Friends will set the budget for this fund annually. Robert asked for a motion to authorize the Executive Committee to formulate a plan to establish this fund and forward it to Council members (email) for a vote on approval. A motion to authorize this action was passed unanimously.

#4 Adoption of the Recommendations from the Nominating Committee and designation of 2017 award nominees (Bill Bradford & Robert Taylor) – Bill Bradford proposed that the current slate of Friends Officers: Robert Taylor (President), Wendy Wasman (Vice President) and Eric Carpenter (Secretary) be approved for a 3rd term of office for 2018. A motion to this effect passed unanimously. Bill then proposed that 4 new Council Members: Pablo Mitchell, Ann Sherif, Jennifer Graham, and the Chair of the General Faculty Library Committee (to be named) be approved for a first term of office (2018-2020). A motion to this effect passed unanimously. Bill then proposed that current Council Members: Gary Kornblith and Stephanie Davis-Kahl be approved for a second term of office (2018-2020). A motion to this effect passed unanimously. Finally Bill proposed that Ex-Officio Council members: Eboni Johnson and Jessica Grim be approved for a first Term of office (2018). A motion to this effect also passed unanimously. Two members of Council: Jack Glazier and Anne McFarland were applauded for their service on Council as their terms end.

Robert then proposed the nomination of two Friends members for Life Memberships: David Berger and Holly Maxson have contributed a substantial amount for the development of the Conservatory Library collection. An Honorary Membership (with voting privileges) was proposed for Thelma Morris who has given extraordinary service to the Friends of the Library by offering Library Tours for Kendal at Oberlin residents, promoting our organization, and serving enthusiastically as a member of Friends Council. These Life and Honorary memberships were approved unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Acquisitions Committee – (Jessica Grim) Jessica described how the Committee gathers on a Conference Call to review the annual List of Recommendations for Purchase by Friends of the Library. Approximately \$40,000 has been allocated by the Friends to support these purchases for a number of years.

This year the total cost of all titles on List #27 was about \$61,500. During the call the committee chose those items marked as recommended for purchase this year. Jessica commented on items of particular interest including #7 African Newspapers, Series 1, 1800-1922 from Readex. There has long been a gap in Library holdings of titles from and about Africa, and this purchase will help fill that gap. Faculty members are eager to use this material to support their teaching. Item #10 Literary Print Culture: The Stationer's Company Archive, London (1554-20th Century) from Adam Matthew Digital is a rich, primary resource supporting Oberlin's emerging program in Book Studies and

History. There is potential for heavy use of this material as the Book Studies Program matures.

Both resources cited in the Art section: Filippo de' Rossi. Ritratto di Roma Moderna...(1652) and Thomas Chippendale. The Gentleman and Cabinet-Maker's Director (1755) are additions to the Thomas Jefferson architectural book collection (Art Library). With these two titles Oberlin will lack only 4 of the 62 in Thomas Jefferson's library at Monticello. Robert Taylor sat in on the Conference call and was impressed by the analysis and selection of each of these recommendations for purchase. Robert committed the Friends to provide the extra \$375 needed to purchase all titles the Committee recommended from this list (total cost of recommendations = \$40,355)

Gary Kornblith asked about #12 Routledge Historical Resources: History of Feminism (\$3,500) was not recommended for purchase. Jessica explained that although item has been on two successive lists of nominations, because of its subject, it was again rejected as it consists of material reprinted from other resources. This publisher issues excellent original scholarship but also reprints items such as this which are readily available elsewhere. After this discussion the motion to approve the recommendations of the Acquisitions Committee was approved unanimously.

Program Committee – (Robert Taylor) Robert presented the report from Bob Longworth, Chair of the Program Committee. Bob is no longer a Council member but fortunately has agreed to continue as Chair of this important Committee. The report describes both the book talks that the Friends organized and those we co-sponsored. Co-sponsorship of such lectures will help other organizations publicize their events and also provide more campus visibility for the Friends. Alexia highlighted a talk by her friend, Erica Dunbar, Chair of Africana Studies in the History Department at Rutgers University. Erica's book, Never Caught, on Ona Judge, an escaped slave of George Washington's was a finalist for a National Book Award in Nonfiction. Robert said one of the best talks was the final one on November 2nd by Oberlin's Eboni Johnson, Outreach and Programming Librarian. Eboni's and other local talks were filmed and can be viewed online. Robert and Alexia added thanks on behalf of the Friends for all the effort devoted to making these talks successful. Planning of 2018 programs will soon begin.

Membership Committee – (Gary Kornblith, Chairman) Gary reported that the meetings on April 24 and Aug. 17 were both devoted to considering how to attract new members. As Chart 1 indicates Membership declined in 2007-09, recovered a bit in 2012-13, but declined steadily since then. What caused this? Our membership is aging (modal age is 70-79). Having more Kendal residents is undoubtedly one factor here. Recruitment of recent OC graduates, faculty and staff has been less successful. The report lists a number of proposals to recruit more younger members. Jennifer Graham will join the Membership Committee and help the group with this issue.

Eric Carpenter asked Jennifer how "library oriented" current students are – in particular how aware are students that the Libraries provide not only printed books but many digital resources that support their coursework? Jennifer said she and other students she knows

are aware of the role of libraries in their education and also interested in libraries and information resources as career opportunities. Jennifer however did not become aware of FOCL until the second semester of her senior year. Robert emphasized our group's commitment to more visibility on social media and emphasis on finding ways to make students more aware of the Library's crucial role in their Oberlin education. Gary noted the suggestion for more signage indicating that a particular resource was made available by the Friends. For ex. "This resource is provided by the Friends of the Library. Join us and make more resources like this available for the OC Community? We need to "brand" our resources with a Friends label. Alexia said Friends membership has declined but income has risen. Friend's members are donating more per capita, and she expressed appreciation for increasing support for Oberlin's libraries in the face of discouraging trends in our society. Finally Alexia added that our last Student Friends Coordinator did not recruit her successor and she hopes to do this next spring semester.

PROGRAMMATIC ACTIVITIES

Library Graduate School Scholarships – (Jessica Grim) Jessica, Alexia, and Robert chose this year's recipient(s). Of the 5 applicants two were outstanding for very different reasons, and again it was difficult to choose one. So both are nominated for separate scholarships of \$3,500 each, as is explained in the Aug. 28th letter forwarded to Council members for a vote on this proposal.

The first nominee is Sarah Blenko, OC'15, currently enrolled at the University of Toronto Information Science graduate program, pursuing a Master's degree and a career in academic librarianship. She worked at the National Library of Ireland with rare books and manuscripts. The second nominee is Amelea Kim, OC '12, currently enrolled at UNC Chapel Hill School of Information and Library Science working on her Master's degree and a career in public librarianship. At Oberlin she was one of seven students chosen for an Oberlin Mellon Librarian Recruitment Program. Amalea was also Coordinator of the Student Friends and amazed us by her accomplishments in that role.

Though this is the third successive year the Friends has awarded two \$3,500 scholarships it must be noted that our guideline for this award is one \$3500 annual scholarship.

Student Research Awards – Rosalinda (Rosie) Linares presented the report. There were two submissions for the award this year and Brook Oertel '17 was selected as the winner. T. Scott McMillin, Professor of English, nominated Brook for her paper, submitted for English 255 (The Concept of Nature in Early American Literature). Her paper, "Cats, Dogs, and Idle Fools: Education in Early America" focused on two texts in the digital collection, Evans Early American Imprints: The New England Primer (1727) and an "Indian Primer" developed for indigenous children. She drew heavily from these texts in her analysis of the process of learning the alphabet as a crucial step in literacy education during the colonial era. Rosie stressed the importance of encouraging more faculty members to nominate outstanding student researchers for this Friends Research Award. General Faculty Library Committee members and Ken Grossi (Archivist) should be enlisted in this effort to solicit more faculty nominations. Our guideline for this award is two \$500 cash awards annually.

UPDATES FROM ALEXIA HUDSON –WARD

- Alexia provided additional updates and highlights. Today's tally of expected attendees at tonight's Friends dinner is up to 118.
- Yesterday Alexia had lunch today with Clifford Thompson (dinner speaking tonight), and members of the press kept approaching him. Library staff members also enjoyed a stimulating luncheon with him yesterday. The libraries have an increased programmatic profile on campus. We are now considered as a campus unit that presents interesting programs effectively. Last night Alexia attended a dinner in partnership with Alumni Affairs to celebrate Scott Bennett's (OC'60, Yale Univ. Librarian Emeritus, and the first President of the OCL Friends) receipt of the 2017 OC Distinguished Alumni Award.
- Alexia described the records management challenge presented in receiving, organizing, and managing the papers/records of former OC President Marvin Krislov who left office this year. 92% of the records created during his term of office are in electronic format – making him Oberlin's first "electronic" President. Alexia and Ken Grossi (Archivist) will write an article on this project for the Alumni Magazine.
- The libraries is undertaking the first comprehensive print collection analysis using the software package, OCLCSCS Greenglass. Jessica Grim and Allison Gallaher are leading this project. Alexia will provide Friends Council with updates on this project as it progresses.
- In October Marla Thompson, Administrative Assistant in the Director's Office, moved to a position in Admissions. Brenda Hanley has just arrived as a temporary replacement for Marla and will be at the dinner tonight. Alexia referred to a letter she shared with Council members regarding significant staff changes in the past year due to 7 departures, all driven by the College's VSIP program. She then reviewed these changes that are detailed in her report.
- A highlight on the past year has been receipt of a Mellon Foundation Library-Museum Planning Grant that will increase Library-Museum collaborative efforts. In 2018 there will be a summit meeting of academic library and museum professionals at Oberlin on this topic.
- Perhaps the most important item is approval by the Board of Trustees of the naming of the Main Library in Mudd Learning Center as the Mary Church Terrell Library (OC'1884; HON 1940). This is a thrilling development. The Mudd Learning Center (the building housing the Main Library and the IT Department) is named after Seeley G. Mudd, a physician and philanthropist, who donated funds for its construction. Dr. Mudd also donated funds for over 30 other libraries across the US. The IT Department is named the Houck Computing Center after another donor. The Main Library in Mudd Center has never been designated by a separate name. Mary Church Terrell was a powerful, dynamic woman of color and early leader in the American Civil Rights movement. A major public event is being planned to celebrate this occasion.
- Alexia concluded by recognizing Alan Boyd's outstanding contributions to the Libraries during his service as Interim Director. Alan assistance was enormously beneficial to Alexia during her orientation to Oberlin and her new responsibilities

as Director of Libraries. Alan's assistance continues during the search for a new Associate Director, a process that should be completed by April 2018. A round of applause was offered for Alan.

OTHER ITEMS

Alexia then mentioned 3 other items:

- Celebration of the Naming of the Terrell Library – Carol Lasser (Emeritus Prof. of History) will assist Alexia and the Deans in organizing this event. Our organization will also be involved and Alexia will communicate with the Executive Committee on this matter.
- Cost of Friends Dinner – the cost has been \$30 per Friends member and \$5 per student member for many years despite increasing food costs. The proposed increase is \$35 per Friends member and \$10 per student member. To date the dinner has been for Friends members only, with the public invited to hear the after-dinner speaker. Popular speakers (e.g. Robert Krulwich) have attracted large numbers of non-friends, so we should consider permitting non-members to attend the dinner, perhaps at higher cost than members.
- Future of Postage Paid Envelopes for Membership Renewals – Recently an outside group took a supply of Library Friends postage paid envelopes and used them for a hostile, political mailing to local addresses. The OC Development Office had a similar experience and no longer uses postage paid envelopes for this reason. Our Friends Group may need to do likewise.

Robert concluded the meeting by noting that the Executive Committee clearly has work to do and will be in contact with Council members by email to carry our work forward. He again expressed appreciation for Jack Glazier and Anne McFarland's service on this body.

Adjournment was at 3:10 p.m.