

Minutes of the 17th Annual Meeting of the Council
of the Friends of the Oberlin College Library, December 1, 2007

Promptly at 1:30 p.m., President Dan Goulding convened the 17th Annual Meeting of the Council of the Friends of the Oberlin College Library in the Goodrich Room at Mudd Center. The meeting was delayed by a month to avoid conflicting with an historic occasion, the inauguration of Oberlin College's 14th president, Marvin Krislov.

In one of his first official actions, President Krislov spoke on September 28th at the Friends-sponsored celebration of the new Academic Commons. This state of the art research facility at Mudd Center, built at a cost of \$1.5 million, was completed in time for the beginning of the fall semester. It provides integrated and coordinated learning and research support for Oberlin students at the same time that it fosters a sense of community on campus, thanks in part to the presence of a new coffee shop named "Azariah's" in honor of Oberlin College's first professional librarian (1887-1927), Azariah S. Root.

Against the backdrop of these exciting changes, whose influence on the campus and in the Library was already pervasive, the following Friends Council members assembled for their annual meeting: Vice President Scott Bennett (via phone), Secretary Nathan (Mike) Haverstock, Ardie Bausenbach, David Boe, William Bradford, Ray English (ex officio), Jessica Grim (ex officio) Gary Kornblith, Lucy Marks, David Matchim (student representative), Ann Sherif, Scott Smith (chair of the Acquisitions Committee), Ed Vermue (ex officio), Wendy Wasman, and Janice Zinser.

Highlights of the meeting.

At its 17th annual meeting, the Council:

- authorized the expenditure of \$40,706 to purchase materials for the Library, as recommended by the Acquisitions Committee. These materials, based on faculty and staff suggestions, will support teaching in virtually all fields and further enhance the Library's special collections.
- allocated an expenditure of up to \$10,000 per year over a three-year period, beginning with the current year, for the digitization of materials unique to the Oberlin Library or vitally needed to support College curricula.
- praised and endorsed ongoing efforts by the Membership Committee, both to understand what motivates Friends membership and to target groups likely to provide additional members, such as alumni who majored in history or English or who have pursued careers in library work. The Committee has enjoyed the wholehearted collaboration of the College's development office.
- awarded Life or Honorary memberships to five individuals for their generosity in making monetary gifts to the Library, donating valuable collections of materials, or in endowing special funds to support future acquisitions. The Council also voted a special expression of gratitude to Robert Jackson, a longtime Friend in Cleveland, for his \$1,000 contribution toward the

purchase of materials recommended by the Acquisitions Committee.

- awarded two scholarships, worth \$2,500 each, to Oberlin graduates to help defray the cost of attending library school, as they embark on library careers.
- heard a report by the Program Committee on Friends-sponsored lectures and events. Of special novelty was an all-day September 2007 event entitled "Reading the Book: How Preservation Impacts Interpretation: A Symposium on the History of the Book" and a fascinating first-of-a-kind Student-Friends-sponsored event held in the newly-wired classroom just off the Academic Commons.
- heard a report on the status of six Friends-sponsored faculty development grants. These are designed to encourage use of the Library's special collections by faculty in College curricula.

Financial report.

Following approval of the minutes of the November 4, 2006 meeting without change, English delivered the financial report. The Friends, he said, received donations of approximately \$64,500 during the current year and had expenditures of about \$61,000. The balance available for next year is nearly \$63,000 – well more than enough to meet foreseeable obligations.

Acquisitions Committee.

Committee chair Scott Smith delivered the report on proposed acquisitions using Friends funds. The list included several novel kinds of materials:

- an annual subscription to Brodart's McNaughton Plan, through which 200 titles or so of "recreational reading" are provided to Mudd in the new Academic Commons. Books are added continuously to the McNaughton collection, which is located near the new coffee shop, and library borrowers can check them out for three weeks. Titles no longer in demand are returned to McNaughton, which then provides fresh alternatives. The program, which began operation with the start of the fall term, has already proven popular with both library patrons and staff. The Friends will provide half of the \$3,000 annual cost for the collection, the Library the other half from its regular funds.
- a working replica of a French hand mould, which the Library's Special Collections will use to demonstrate to classes how movable type was cast in the days of early printing.
- the Criterion Film Collection, a collection of important classic and contemporary films from around the world in high quality DVD editions, for which the Friends will contribute \$5,000. The Library presently owns 175 Criterion films, and will acquire all 420 titles in the collection. A generous personal donation of \$1,000 from a longtime Friend, Bob Jackson of Cleveland, helped defray the total cost of \$6,000.
- an extraordinarily important collection of U.S. government materials, the *Congressional Research Digital Collection*, which will be made available through the online service LexisNexis at a cost of \$10,000 (\$5,000 Friends contribution). The collection includes all Congressional committee prints from 1830-2003 and more than 30,000 reports produced by the Congressional Research Service (CRS) from 1916-2003. Many of the CRS reports have never

been distributed by the Government Printing Office, and are therefore difficult to find. The Friends are also supporting the purchase of *Congressional Hearings Digital Collection*, a comprehensive collection of Congressional hearings that provides an unparalleled documentary record of events and public policy issues faced by our national leaders from 1824-2003.

- volumes 1-6 and 8-11 (the Library already owns 7) of the *Handbook of the Birds of the World* at a cost of \$2,160 (\$1,000 Friends contribution). The *Handbook* is the definitive source of global ornithological knowledge and the first to provide illustrations and detailed descriptions of all extant bird species.
- the first three volumes of *Italian and French Violin Makers*, a polyglot encyclopedia at a cost to the Friends of \$1,800. This work, which will eventually have ten volumes, complements the Library's Goodkind Collection that focuses on violin design and construction.

The Council unanimously approved these and other acquisitions totaling \$40,706 in expenditures. They were selected from an original Acquisitions Committee list of items totaling more than \$60,000.

Digitization of materials in the special collections.

There followed discussion of the future allocation of Friends funds to permit the digitization of some of the Library's resources. In this way the Library could make available to scholars some of its unique holdings – a periodical titled *The Oberlin Evangelist*, for example, an early newspaper with a substantial amount of antislavery content, or the *Oberlin Review*, a valuable source of College history.

English reported on recent conversations with the Gale Publishing Group about digitizing the Library's antislavery collection, beginning with materials on microfiche. As part of a possible agreement, Oberlin faculty and students would enjoy full online access to Oberlin's collection and the Library would have the right to make the collection openly accessible on the Internet after a three-year period. Limited access to Gale's larger commercial collection of slavery and antislavery materials would also be available. English also noted possible tie-ins with ongoing efforts to collaborate with Cornell University, which also has a substantial collection of antislavery materials, as reported in last year's Friends Council minutes.

In view of the increasing importance of digitization, the Council unanimously agreed to set aside up to \$10,000 annually over a three-year period for the digitization of Oberlin Library materials. The Council asked English to develop guidelines and a process for determining which materials should be digitized. Emphasis for digitization projects should be on Oberlin-related materials that have the potential to support student learning and research.

As an aside, Council members were pleased to find an attractive card in their packets, titled "Bibliographies from the Oberlin Conservatory Library Special Collections 2007-2008." The front and back of this artfully illustrated card feature seven works--three of which bear a notation saying that they were purchased by Friends funds.

Program Committee.

Committee chair Goulding supplied Council members with a chronological listing of past and planned Friends-sponsored events. The fall 2007 program kicked off, he noted, "with a kind of programming I would like to see more of" -- a day-long event, titled "Reading the Book: How Preservation Impacts Interpretation: A Symposium on the History of the Book." Planned and executed in collaboration with the Intermuseum Conservation Association, the symposium was extremely well attended and attracted participants from near and far. It also gave rise to an exhibition in the Library.

The celebration and dedication of the Academic Commons was held in late September. The event included comments by Oberlin faculty and staff involved in planning the Commons project and also by Oberlin's new president, Marvin Krislov. The dedication ceremony was followed by a reception, jointly sponsored by the Friends of the Library and the Oberlin College Alumni Council, in Azariah's coffee shop at Mudd Center.

The commons were the venue for two exhibitions in the early fall. One was titled "Odyssey of the Book: The Transmission of Ideas Through 5,000 Years: An Exhibition of Materials from the Library's Special Collections;" the other "Nazi Persecution of Homosexuals, 1933-1945: An Exhibition of the Holocaust Memorial Museum."

The Friends also sponsored two faculty talks in the William A. Moffett Auditorium. Catherine Oertel, Assistant Professor of Chemistry, spoke on "Modern Alchemy: How Current Science Informs Pipe Organ Building and Conservation;" and Baron Pineda, Assistant Professor of Anthropology, discussed his book titled "Shipwrecked Identities: Navigating Race on Nicaragua's Mosquito Coast."

Membership Committee.

In turning over the floor to Committee chair Scott Bennett, Goulding praised him for his innovative work in analyzing what motivates membership in the Friends and in reversing the slight decline in membership that has occurred in recent years. As of our meeting, Bennett said, "both the *number* of regular members and the total *amount* given by regular members are up." His report ascribed this to several factors, including Bill Roe's challenge grant (described in last year's minutes), the sending of follow-up letters to those who don't respond to an initial mailing, and a special mailing to recruit new members among Oberlin graduates who majored in history, which netted 37 new members.

Similar mailings targeting alumni who majored in English or have become librarians, are in the works, Bennett said. He called the new spirit of cooperation by the College's development office in making these mailings possible "a landmark event" and noted that "concern that the Friends and the Oberlin Fund compete for finite dollars has largely disappeared." Moreover, he said, the mailings stress the role of the Library in support of the college." English noted that the Oberlin Fund staff have also offered other suggestions for building the Friends membership.

Bennett also summarized a report on the survey of Friends members that was conducted last year. Copies of the full report were made available to Council members at the meeting. Among other things, the survey demonstrated that "giving to the Library does not preclude or limit giving to the College for the overwhelming majority of members." The survey also showed that "Friends' priorities and library mission are strongly aligned as regards the collections and their preservation."

To facilitate the recruitment of new members, it was suggested that prospective members should be accorded the opportunity of making their payment on line, using their credit cards. This increasingly popular way of paying bills also saves the cost of postage.

Nominating Committee.

On behalf of the committee, chair Jan Zinser recommended no changes at all in the composition of the Friends Council thanks to the willingness of its present members to continue to serve. Her remark elicited a question left hanging in the air: "Maybe it's time for some new blood?" and a flurry of laughter. Whereupon, the Council approved by acclamation the nominations of David Boe, William Bradford '76, Scott Fehlan '88, and Jan Zinser to second terms ending in 2010, and Mike Haverstock to a sixth term, ending in the same year.

The Council also approved by acclamation the nominations of all three incumbent officers for the 2008-2009 year: Dan Goulding, president; Scott Bennett, vice president; and Mike Haverstock, secretary.

Lifer memberships.

The Council honored three individuals with Life memberships for their extraordinary gifts of materials to the Library:

- Dr. Thomas Roush of New York City, who has donated to the Library a collection of more than 6,000 films, primarily in DVD format. The collection, while emphasizing art and international films, includes both well-known major and independent films, as well as many titles that had only limited distribution. The collection includes many films not only from the U.S. and Western Europe, but also from Asia, Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and Eastern Europe – in all, providing rich new resources for Oberlin's expanding cinema studies program.
- Joseph Sanders of Mentor, Ohio, who began donating his remarkable collection of science fiction works to Oberlin in the fall of 2006. A professor of English at Lakeland Community College for many years and a past president of the Science Fiction Research Association, Sanders began collecting materials in the science fiction field in the 1950s. The collection he is donating to Oberlin includes more than 2,000 books and approximately 1,500 serial issues – which will provide support for a new Oberlin course in science fiction and respond to strong extracurricular student demand for materials in this field.
- Gene Woodling of Akron, Ohio, who began donating materials on the male homosexual experience to the Library in 1990. A person of wide-ranging intellectual interests, Woodling has collected materials related to gay fiction and poetry for more than half a century. His donation comprises more than 1,200 works from 1900 to the present – many of them held nowhere else in Ohio and in relatively few libraries nationwide. Woodling has announced his intention to donate a collection of more than 600 films on gay themes – all of which will support Oberlin's expanding curricular offerings related to gay, lesbian, and transgender studies.

Honorary memberships.

The Council also approved Honorary memberships for two individuals:

- An anonymous donor, who provided funding for more than one third of the \$1.5 million cost of the new Academic Commons in Mudd Center.
- Michael Shinagel, Oberlin College class of 1957 and the Dean of Continuing Education at Harvard University, who has endowed five separate acquisitions funds for the Library. Shinagel was awarded a Life membership in the Friends in 1996 in recognition of two of those funds – one in memory of his friend Owen Paul Thomas (Class of 1956) for purchases in American literature, the other in honor of his first wife's parents for purchases in the field of history. More recently Shinagel has established endowed funds for English literature, cinema and environmental studies, and education. A specialist in eighteenth century English literature, he had also previously donated five rare titles to the Library, including works by Jonathan Swift, James Boswell, and Alexander Pope.

Student Friends.

David Matchim (Class of 2007) reported that a Student Friends blog is being created. He also described an upcoming presentation sponsored by the Student Friends, an illustrated talk in the new electronic classroom just off the Academic Commons, on the “Mayme A. Clayton Library & Museum” in Culver City, California, by Avery Clayton. During her lifetime (1923-2006), Avery Clayton's mother, Mayme Clayton, a career librarian who held important posts at the University of Southern California and the University of California in Los Angeles, assembled a huge and carefully developed collection of African Americana. In a first for a Friends-sponsored event, the talk was to be web-cast to other liberal arts college libraries that are participating in the Mellon Librarian Recruitment Program. Various solicitations of membership in the Student Friends, including mailings to library student assistants and honors students, are being planned in conjunction with the event.

Special Collections grants.

English reported on the progress to date under a three-year program authorized by the Friends Council to provide up to \$3,000 annually for incentives for faculty to incorporate special collections materials into new or revised courses. He also provided a copy of the guidelines for the program and the application process. The awards committee comprised three emeritus faculty members, as follows: Kathie Linehan (Professor of English), Linda Grimm (Professor of Anthropology), and Grover Zinn (Professor of Religion) and, representing the Library, English and Ed Vermue of special collections.

Three applications were received in the spring of 2006, and all three projects were funded. The first, which involved the incorporation of special collections into a course on *The Heritage of Black American Literature* offered by Meredith Gadsby, Assistant Professor of African American Studies, has been completed. Friends' funds defrayed the cost of a part-time student assistant in the summer of 2006. A second project, aimed at incorporating a two-week module on papyrology and ancient writing, by drawing on materials at Oberlin and the University of Michigan, in the upper-level Greek prose class offered by Andrews Wilburn, Visiting Professor of Classics, is still in progress. A third, involving the incorporation of special collections into a first-year seminar, *How Jews and Early Christians Rewrote the Bible*, offered by Abe Socher, Associate Professor of Religion and Jewish Studies, has not progressed and may be reconfigured.

The Committee received four proposals in the spring of 2007 and awarded three grants as follows:

- John Harwood, Assistant Professor of Modern and Contemporary Architectural History, is integrating materials from the Robert M. Campbell collection into his courses. He is also receiving Library support in hiring a student assistant to inventory and digitize selected pieces from the collection.
- Sebastiaan Faber, Associate Professor of Hispanic Studies, is working to incorporate the Library's nineteenth-century Spanish romantic novel collection into his course *Historical Fiction and the Development of Nationalism in Spain, 1800-present*. Friends' funds are helping to hire a student research assistant.
- Paula Richman, Professor of Religion, is drawing upon a unique collection of paintings that originated in Mathila, a region in northern India, in her seminar on *The Ramayan Tradition in India*. Students will prepare an exhibition of some of these paintings as part of this grant award.

Bennett asked that the Council receive reports on the manner in which special collection materials were used in each of the courses. It was agreed that the reports are needed in order to judge the effectiveness of the special collections grants program.

Friends of the Library Scholarships.

English reported that two Friends of the Library scholarships, each in the amount of \$2,500, were awarded to Oberlin graduates, who are embarking on library careers:

- Katie Dover-Taylor '06 majored in psychology at Oberlin and worked all four years in the Main Library's Circulation Department. This experience persuaded her to pursue a career in library work. Her Friends scholarship is helping defray the cost of attending the University of Michigan's School of Information this fall, where she is specializing in library information services.
- Kate Pearson '07, a double-degree graduate with majors in East Asian Studies and Organ Performance, also worked during the summer while at Oberlin as a student assistant in the Serials and Government Documents Department. It was there that she realized that library work combined her interest in scholarship, public service, and music. This fall she is attending the University of Pittsburgh's School of Information Sciences and specializing in preservation and archival work.

Student Library Research Awards.

Council members were disappointed to learn from Zinser that faculty had not nominated in 2006-07 any students for Friends-sponsored student research awards, which encourage and honor students for excellence in the use of the Library's collections.

Tour of the Academic Commons.

The meeting was adjourned promptly at 3:30 p.m. Several Council member from out of town

availed themselves of English's gracious invitation, and immediately thereafter toured the new Academic Commons with him.

Respectfully submitted by Nathan Haverstock, Secretary, December 10, 2007