



6-2021

## Scholarly Communications Report on Activities 2020-21

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### Recommended Citation

Wertzberger, Janelle L. and Elmquist, Mary R., "Scholarly Communications Report on Activities 2020-21" (2021). *All Musselman Library Staff Works*. 148.  
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## Scholarly Communications Report on Activities 2020-21

### Abstract

2020-21 annual report for Scholarly Communications work at Musselman Library, including Gettysburg College's institutional repository, [The Cupola: Scholarship at Gettysburg College](#). Covers June 2020 – May 2021.

### Keywords

annual report, Scholarly Communications, Musselman Library

### Disciplines

Scholarly Communication

# Musselman Library Scholarly Communications Department Report on Activities June 2020-May 2021

## Executive Summary

### Open access and publishing

Our Open Access Week activities were subdued this year due to COVID, though we used social media to educate students about open access and The Cupola. For the second year in a row, the College Author Reception was cancelled. We continued to add work to The Cupola, though – 71 authors (including 21 students) published work in 2020, and 69% of the 109 total works are fully open in The Cupola.

### Textbook affordability and open education

The global pandemic spotlighted the need for affordable, accessible course materials for our students around the globe, and much of our work was focused in this area. We began tracking OER adoption to the best of our ability. In 2020-21, 31 faculty assigned OER in 69 sections of 30 courses, impacting 1,324 students who saved over \$187,000 on required course materials. We coordinated an Open Education Week panel of faculty and a student who talked about their experiences with OER. We partnered with the Johnson Center for Creative Teaching and Learning to award the inaugural OER Grants to eight instructors.

### Focus on students

We added a question about textbook affordability to the HEDS Senior Survey for the first time and found that 32% of seniors did not purchase required books at some point in their college career, and 11% reported struggling academically because they could not access assigned course materials. We met with several students interested in advocating for textbook affordability with faculty and administrators. We received 132 nominations of student work for The Cupola.

### Inclusion Action Plan

We worked with other library departments to consolidate and communicate a range of library services that support textbook affordability, and to reflect them all together on our website. We continuously worked on ways to educate and support faculty who wanted to eliminate or reduce the cost of assigned course materials.

### The Cupola

We added over 250 records this year. Our five undergraduate journals have not all published their spring issues yet, due to challenges of working remotely. We have two new student journals in development.

## Open Access and Publishing

### Open Access Week 2020

During this year's celebration of Open Access Week in October, the department provided several opportunities for students, faculty, and library staff to engage with topics related to OA at their own pace. Knowing early in the academic year that the department would be still adjusting to the decrease in staff and the hybrid virtual environment, we chose to focus on asynchronous and outside education activities. Normally, the Scholarly Communications Assistant and the Holley Intern contribute a great deal to this effort, and both positions were vacant.

Targeted primarily at students was a social media campaign. A post to the library's social media accounts early in the week highlighted the definition of open access purpose of OA Week. Throughout the rest of the week, Instagram Stories were used to highlight diverse student works available in The Cupola.

For faculty and staff college-wide, the department took advantage of the sudden shift to virtual worldwide to highlight a variety of webinars available from other institutions. A curated list of these opportunities was posted to the relevant College digests and additionally promoted to library staff via the musslib alias.

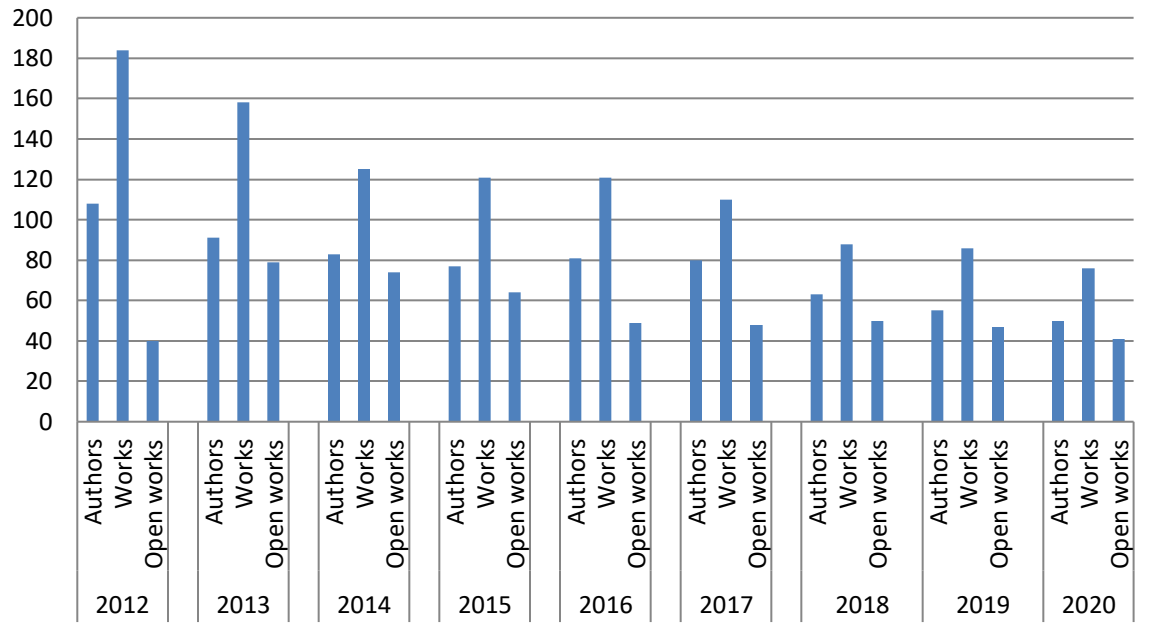


### College Author Reception

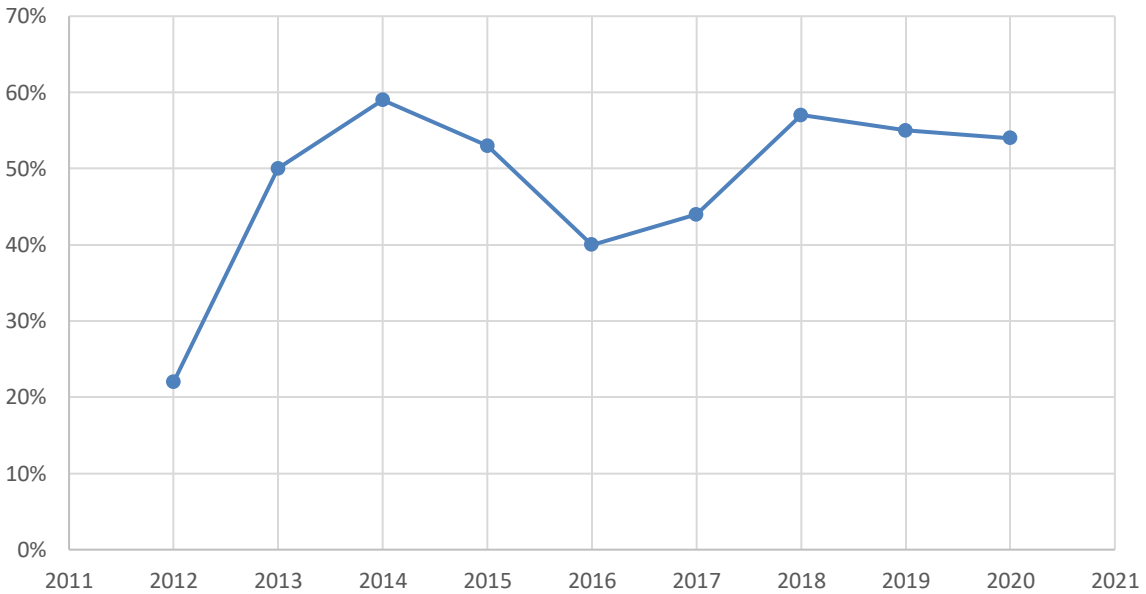
The annual College Author Reception is usually hosted by the library in late March to celebrate the published scholarship of Gettysburg faculty, staff, and students from the previous year. However, due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, no reception was held this year. Despite this, the work that would typically be celebrated for the College Author Reception was still recorded throughout the year in hopes of a future celebration. This record includes the work of work of 71 authors (21 students) who collectively published 109 works, 69% of which are available on The Cupola. (All student works are open.) Seven articles by Gettysburg faculty were published in open access journals (not including hybrid journals).

The following charts illustrate the number of faculty/staff publications honored at each reception, as well as what percentage of those were open in The Cupola. Our data begin in 2012. Numbers from 2020 represent a very slight drop from 2019, but this is consistent with a downward trend over the past nine years that our department has tracked these numbers.

## College Authors Reception - Faculty/Staff Publications



## Percent of Faculty/Staff Publications that are Open Access



# Textbook Affordability and Open Education

## Affordable Course Materials Webpages

We worked with library colleagues in User Services (Reserves) and Collections & Technical Services (Acquisitions) to reconceive certain library services as a spectrum of support for textbook affordability. For the first time, all of the library services that support [affordable course materials](#) are presented together on our website, with information tailored to both an instructor audience and a student audience. Next year, we plan to work with other campus partners toward the tentatively titled Gettysburg Affordable Learning Initiative (GALI), where an even broader range of related services will be gathered and presented together. We have already had positive conversations with the Office of Multicultural Engagement and the Johnson Center for Creative Teaching and Learning.

## OER Adoption Tracking

We are now tracking OER adoptions using a modified spreadsheet originally created by SPARC. No other campus office seems motivated or equipped to track OER adoption, zero-cost courses, or low-cost courses at this time, so we are beginning with OER. Our data are necessarily incomplete, as we rely on faculty to self-report, but we are proceeding with the philosophy that “some data is better than no data.” Observations from this assessment effort include:

- In the 2020-21 academic year, 31 faculty used OER in 69 sections of 30 courses and impacted 1324 students who saved over \$187,000 on required course materials.
- The bulk of these 48 course sections are in the Spanish department, which used OER in 11 sections of SPAN 201, 5 sections of SPAN 202, and 1 section of SPAN 301. Combined, these courses saved students \$36,340.
- OER adoption resulted in the largest savings in the MGT/OMS 235 course (Statistical Methods). Across the four sections taught this year, the estimated student savings is \$39,392.60. The previously-assigned commercial course materials cost \$361.40 per student.
- OER adoption (of which we’re aware) has saved Gettysburg students over \$640,000 since 2013.

### In 2020-21:

- 31 faculty assigned OER
- 69 sections, 30 courses
- 1,324 students saved over \$187,000 on required course materials.

## Instructors Surveyed about OER

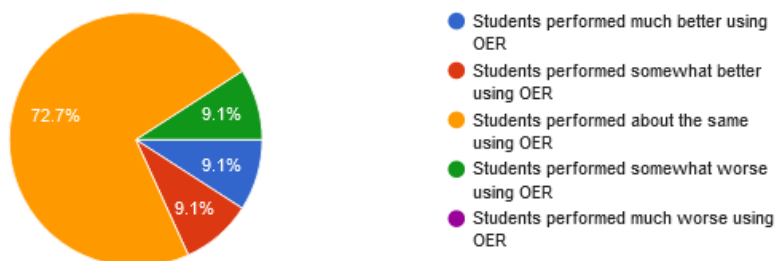
We invited instructors who adopted OER in their courses to complete a survey about their experience teaching with OER. We asked about their motivation in choosing OER, whether using OER changed the class structure or content, how much time they devoted to course preparation compared to teaching with commercial materials, how their students performed compared to previous iterations of the course, and more. We received eleven responses (six in the fall, five in the spring) which provide limited, anecdotal insight into the faculty experience of using OER. Some findings include:

- All but one instructor was motivated to adopt OER by student cost savings, though many also had additional reasons including: student ease of access, more control over the course structure/materials, or a pedagogical approach taken by a particular open textbook.
- Three instructors reported that using the OER significantly changed the structure or content of their course, while most said that it did not.
- All respondents said that they spent about the same amount of time or somewhat more time preparing the course in order to teach with OER, as compared to before.

- Most importantly, **student performance in courses using OER was about the same or better** in all but one case, which the instructor attributed to the virtual teaching environment rather than the course materials. Several respondents mentioned that it is difficult to untangle the effects of OER from a course taught online during a highly atypical (pandemic) year.

In comparison to previous iterations of this course or other courses you have taught, how would you say the use of OER impacted student performance?

11 responses



## Open Education Week

Our main offering for Open Education Week 2021 was a Friday Forum panel titled “[Faculty and Student Perspectives on Open Education at Gettysburg College.](#)” We recruited panelists Dr. Alice Brawley Newlin (Management), Dr. Tasha Gownaris (Environmental Studies), Dr. Chris Oechler (Spanish), and Ryan Nedrow '22 to hear about their experiences with OER in the classroom. Elmquist introduced and facilitated the panel, which was attended by 31 people.

As part of their outreach work, Peer Research Mentors Emma Poff '22 and Deirdre Sullivan '23 created social media quizzes about textbook costs and OER.

Our Open Education Week activities were scaled back due to COVID and understaffing. Normally, the Scholarly Communications Assistant and the Holley Intern contribute a great deal to this effort, and both positions were vacant this year.



## JCCTL OER Grant

After years of foundational work (including two rounds of small stipends for writing open textbook reviews), we were thrilled to partner with the Johnson Center for Creative Teaching & Learning on an [OER grant](#). The grant offers \$500 to adopt an OER and \$1000 to remix an OER. The application process required a consultation with a member of the department, which strengthened the applications. In fact, the applications were so strong that all seven applications received the award. The total cost was \$6,500, with \$2,000 coming from the Library budget. All OER will be used in 2021-22 courses.

The awardees:

1. Meg Blume-Kahout for ECON 103, Principles of Economics
2. Bill Bowman for HIST 110, The Twentieth-Century World

3. Alice Brawley Newlin and Marta Maras for MGT 235, Statistical Methods
4. Natasha (Tasha) Gownaris for ES 211, Principles of Ecology
5. Chris Oechler for SPAN 301, Topics in Spanish Composition, Conversation, and Culture
6. Kim Spayd for MATH 225, Differential Equations
7. Alecea Standlee for SOC 296, Introduction to Sociological Theory

## Sharing Our Knowledge

Department members did a lot of presenting during 2020-21 – all virtual, of course. We hope this visibility helps raise awareness of affordability issues and OER as one solution – on our campus, across our state, and in our broader profession:

- In June 2020, Elmquist and Wertzberger presented a session for Gettysburg College instructors about copyright considerations for remixing and how to edit open textbooks on the LibreTexts platform: [Revising and Remixing OER](#)
- Also in June 2020, Wertzberger, Elmquist, and Appedu offered a session in the Gettysburg College June Pedagogy Institute (a crash course in how to teach online during a pandemic): [Accessible, Adaptable, Affordable: How OER and Low-Cost Materials can Future-Proof Your Courses](#)
- In September, Wertzberger, Elmquist, and Appedu presented during the ALPA (Affordable Learning Pennsylvania) Affordable Learning Summit. This session focused on the practical aspects of the project in hopes empowering fellow librarians to conduct local surveys that support programmatic goals: [Using a Student Textbook Survey to Advance an OER Initiative](#)
- In April, Wertzberger and Elmquist co-presented with Andrea Hartranft from Harrisburg Area Community College and Amanda Langdon from Adams State University at the Association of College & Research Librarians biennial national conference: [Student Textbook Surveys: An Important Component of a Library OER Initiative](#)
- Also in April, Elmquist (with Professor Brawley Newlin) presented a session about using LibreTexts to edit OER as part of ALPA’s ongoing education series: [Textbook Remix: An Introduction to LibreTexts for OER Editing](#)

In addition, we published a peer-reviewed article in the open access journal *Open Praxis* titled “[Inequitable Impacts of Textbook Costs at a Small, Private College: Results from a Textbook Survey at Gettysburg College.](#)” The article was co-authored by Appedu, Elmquist, Wertzberger, and statistician Sharon Birch.



## Focus on students

### First-year student orientation

Due to COVID-19, the *Charting Your Course* extended orientation program for first-year students was virtual. We created a [short video](#) (2:11) that introduced our department staff and described how we support students as knowledge creators within the scholarly communications system. The video described that system and students' place in it. It also introduced our open access institutional repository, The Cupola, and our student-run, undergraduate research journals.

### Seniors surveyed about textbook affordability

For the first time, we were able to add a question about textbook affordability to the HEDS (Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium) Senior Survey. The response rate was about 80%. The question we contributed is below, with the percentage of responses indicated in red:

In your entire academic career at Gettysburg College, has the cost of required **books and other course materials** (art supplies, lab notebooks, lab manuals, clickers, access codes, etc.) caused you to...? [Check all that apply]

- a. Not register for a specific course – **9%**
- b. Drop a course before/at the beginning of the semester – **6%**
- c. Withdraw from a course later in the semester – **no data (unsure if this means 0% or no data)**
- d. Not purchase the required books – **32%**
- e. Struggle academically because I could not access the book(s) – **11%**
- f. Change Major – **1%**
- g. None of these – **54%**
- h. Other – **4%**

### Student advocacy for OER

Peer Research Mentors Emma Poff '22 and Deirdre Sullivan '23 worked on student outreach with Elmquist as part of their PRM work. In addition to raising awareness of textbook affordability and OERs during Open Education Week, they drafted a letter to the [Student Senate](#) executive team asking for Senate support addressing textbook affordability and OER and providing several options for ways that support could manifest. Because the letter was completed near the end of the spring semester, they decided to hold it over the summer and submit it to the newly-elected 2021-22 executive board in August.

In addition, *Gettysburgian* reporter Anna Cincotta '21 interviewed Wertzberger and many others for her in-depth piece, "[Gettysburgian Investigation Finds Discrepancies in Textbook Prices Across Departments](#)," published in the spring edition of the *Gettysburgian Magazine*.

### Faculty nominate student works for The Cupola

We received **111 nominations of student work from faculty** this year (86 fall + 25 spring). Departments with the most nominations include Africana Studies (45), History (19), Anthropology (10), Public Policy (10), and Political Science (8).

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*"Wow! What an honor! I am so glad that Professor Page nominated my research paper for the Cupola. I turn to the Cupola for research information all the time, so getting my own work nominated it really something."*

*--Jenna Vadinsky '23*

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### Students self-nominate work for The Cupola

We received **21 student self-nominations** this year (7 fall + 14 spring). All but two were approved by the faculty and published to The Cupola.

### Student-faculty co-authorship

During this fiscal year, **students co-authored with faculty 7 times**. These faculty were in the departments of environmental studies, mathematics, physics, and psychology.

## Inclusion Action Plan

Musselman Library's latest Inclusion Action Plan was completed in December, 2020. One objective (with two associated strategies) is assigned to our department for attention. It is part of Action Area 3 - Diversity in Curriculum/Co-curriculum:

*Objective: Explore interest in and develop a campus wide Textbook Affordability Initiative.*

### Strategies

- Reconceive library services as a spectrum of support for textbook affordability.
- Educate and support faculty who eliminate or reduce course costs through using Open Educational Resources (OER), library-licensed materials, and Course Reserves.

Our re-conception of library services as a spectrum of support for textbook affordability took the form of the library's re-organized webpages on [Affordable Course Materials](#), described more fully in the prior section on Textbook Affordability and Open Education.

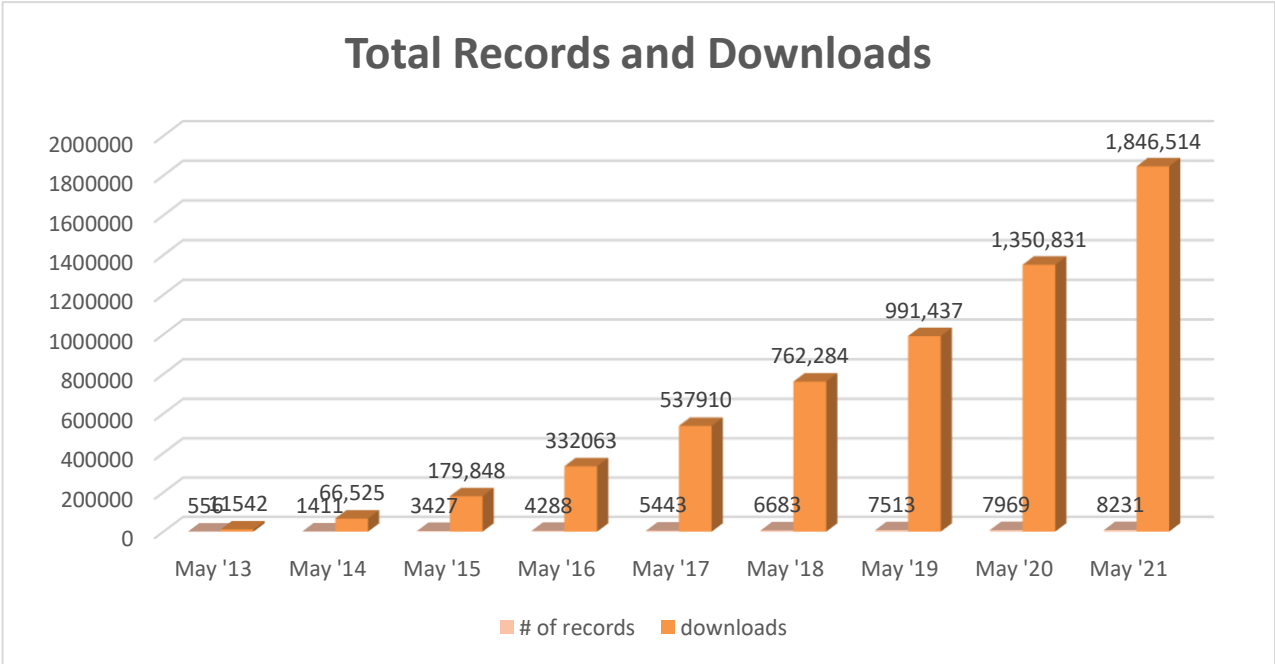
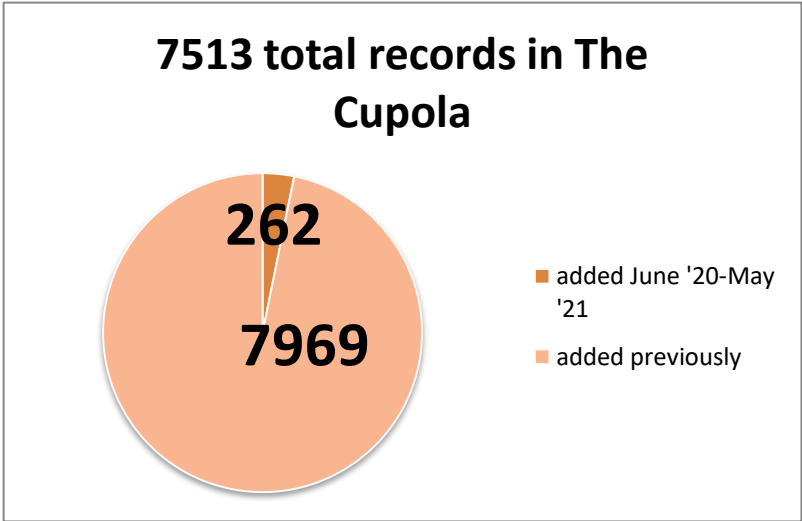
Our education and support of faculty who wish to eliminate or reduce course costs is ongoing. Here are some examples of illustrative activities:

- We released a [Statement on Commercial Textbooks and Libraries](#) on the library's guide to library services during the pandemic. The statement was adapted from one created at the University of Guelph Library.
- We promoted the use of library-licensed ebooks and zero-cost textbook options to faculty, using digest messages and direct emails from liaison librarians to get the word out.
- We conceived and coordinated a Friday Forum panel held on March 5 titled "[Faculty and Student Perspectives on Open Education at Gettysburg College.](#)"
- We took our relationship with the Johnson Center for Creative Teaching and Learning to the next level by offering an [OER Grant](#) for the first time. Elmquist and Wertzberger had individual consultations with seven applicants who ultimately applied. The consultations contributed to a very strong application pool, and all applications were funded.
- As the fiscal year ended, we also consulted with two instructors who are applying for the PA GOAL grant, which is designed to support student success by offering mini-grants to create open and affordable learning projects at a diverse range of institutions across Pennsylvania. The funding comes from the CARES Act via GEER (Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund) and is administered by PALCI (Partnership for Academic Library Collaboration & Innovation), a statewide consortium of academic libraries.
- We regularly scan the OER landscape at the request of faculty who wish to learn what is available for their courses. This year, we did a deep dive into OER for 100 and 200-level Spanish language courses, as well as titles for courses across the English department curriculum.

# The Cupola – Gettysburg’s open access institutional repository

We added over 250 records<sup>1</sup> this year.

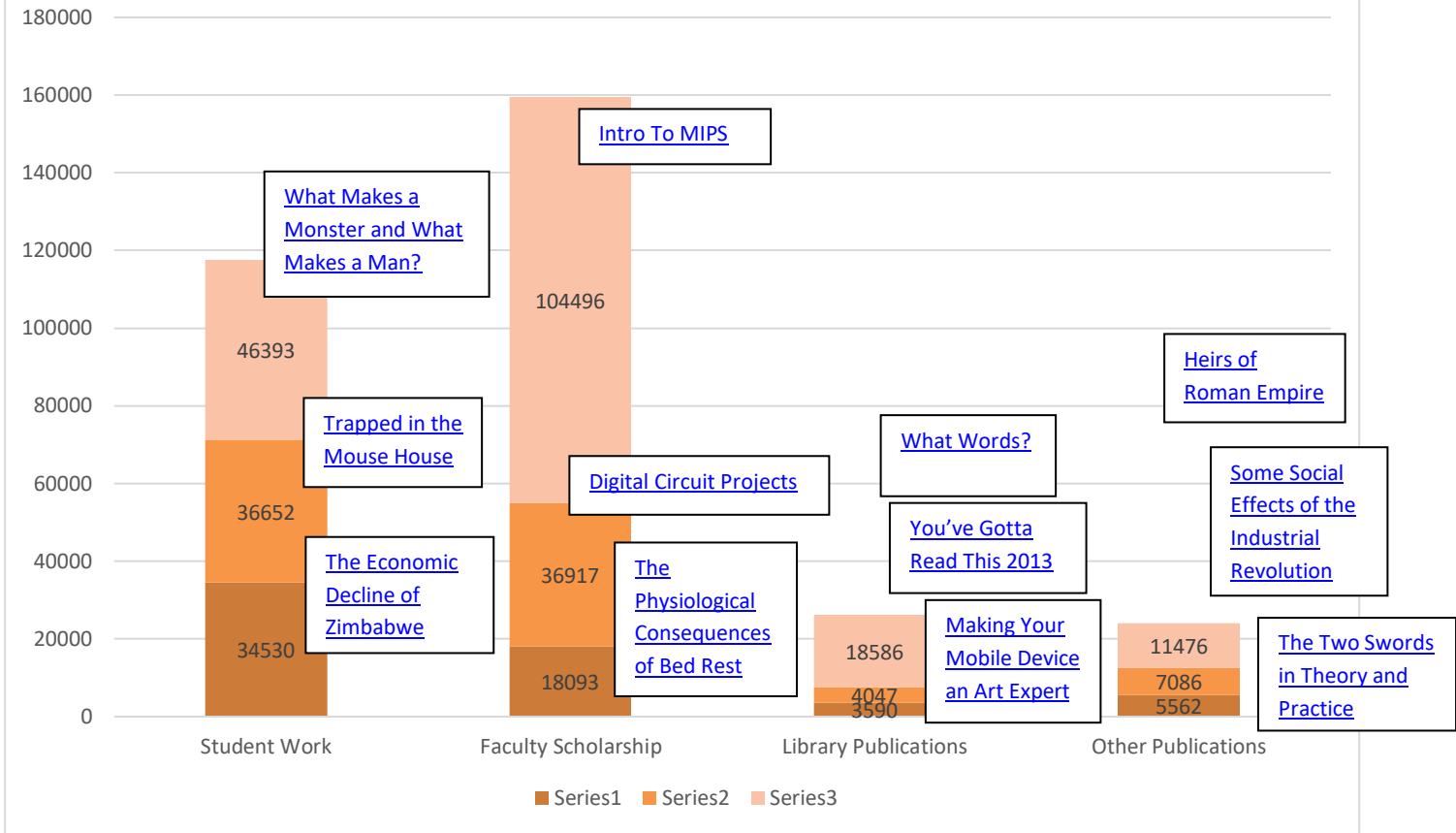
- Our items have been downloaded 1,846,514 times total<sup>2</sup> (495,000 + times this year), and our average download/item has risen to 224 (up from 170 last year).
- Most of our traffic (55%) was from within the U.S. We also had visitors from 217 other countries.



<sup>1</sup> We use “record” or “item” to refer to a work that is described with metadata in The Cupola. We use “file” to indicate that there is full content associated with the record/item. Records may have 0, 1, or more files associated with them.

<sup>2</sup> Dashboard statistics are a bit lower than live readership map statistics because they exclude downloads from withdrawn items. We typically use dashboard statistics in this report.

## Most Downloaded Items by Category



Work that is exclusively available in The Cupola receives the most downloads:

- Student works consistently get more downloads than faculty work. This scholarly work is not available anywhere else. However, our Open Educational Resources have overtaken student downloads and may be reported separately starting with next year's report.
- The two most-downloaded faculty works are Open Educational Resources, both authored by Dr. Charles Kann in the Computer Science department. References in Wikipedia articles likely help drive traffic to the work.
- The #1 and #2 items in "Library Publications" are not available anywhere else online.
- The "Other Publications" section includes three sections of the *Contemporary Civilizations* textbook published by Gettysburg College in 1958 – the book includes primary sources as well as introductory text written by Gettysburg College professors. These may be being used as OER by students at other institutions, but it is hard to know for sure.

## Journals in The Cupola

Currently we host seven student journals in The Cupola. All journals are peer-reviewed and edited by undergraduates at Gettysburg College. In late Spring 2020, the department was contacted by RJ Lehal '23 with a proposal to establish a new, multi-disciplinary undergraduate research journal. Throughout the year, we worked with RJ and his team to construct the *Gettysburg College Headquarters*. The *Headquarters* began accepting submissions in May 2021. The new *Gettysburg Journal for Public Policy* began accepting submissions in Fall 2020 and expects its first issue to be published to The Cupola in Summer 2021.

We also host *Adams County History*, a publication of the Adams County Historical Society.

The most downloaded article from the June 2020-May 2021 year is listed for each title (not all-time downloads).



THE GETTYSBURG COLLEGE  
JOURNAL OF THE CIVIL WAR ERA

**The Gettysburg College Journal of the Civil War Era.** “[Rewriting History: A Study of How the History of the Civil War Has Changed in Textbooks from 1876 to 2014](#)” by Skyler A. Campbell was the most popular article (1,256 downloads this year).



**The Gettysburg Historical Journal.** “[The Ottoman Gunpowder Empire and the Composite Bow](#)” by Nathan Lanon '12 was the most popular article (4,750 downloads this year).



THE MERCURY  
THE STUDENT ART & LITERARY MAGAZINE OF GETTYSBURG COLLEGE

**The Mercury.** The [complete 2020 issue of The Mercury](#) was the most popular item (416 downloads this year).

Gettysburg Social Sciences Review



**Gettysburg Social Sciences Review.** “[Political Gridlock: The Ongoing Threat to American Democracy](#)” by Jalen Campbell was the most popular article (1987 downloads this year).



**The Gettysburg Economic Review.** “[The Economic Decline of Zimbabwe](#)” by Chidochashe Munangagwa '11 was the most popular item (8,004 downloads this year).



**Adams County History.** “[Catherine Mary White Foster's Eyewitness Account of the Battle of Gettysburg, with Background on the Foster Family Union Soldiers](#)” by David Murdoch was the most popular article (1,469 downloads this year).

## Executive Conclusion / Future Direction

- We intend to expand our textbook affordability project beyond the library, perhaps calling it the Gettysburg Affordable Learning Initiative (GALI). We plan to meet with various campus partners and offices about the various ways we support student success through textbook affordability. We envision a single website that compiles all these modes of support.
- We will support the JCCTL OER Grant recipients as they engage in their adoption or remixing projects in summer 2021 and teach the courses in the coming year. We hope to be able to offer another round of grants next spring.
- Some of our student colleagues are eager to engage with Student Senate and advocate for textbook affordability. We will consult with and support them in this work.
- We will continue to track OER adoptions as best we can. Our data are incomplete, but they show using OER has saved students over \$640,000 since 2013.
- We will continue to fine tune the Cupola publishing process, working with more limited resources than when we had a Scholarly Communications Assistant in the department.

## Appendix 1 – The Cupola Statistical Summary

| Quarter      | records | files | MDOR<br>(metadata-<br>only records) | percent<br>MDOR | percent<br>uploaded<br>content | total<br>downloads |
|--------------|---------|-------|-------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| June-13      | 556     | 384   | 182                                 | 33%             | 67%                            | 11,542             |
| June-14      | 1411    | 1122  | 320                                 | 23%             | 77%                            | 66,525             |
| September-14 | 2003    | 1358  | 662                                 | 33%             | 67%                            |                    |
| December-14  | 2642    | 1710  | 983                                 | 37%             | 63%                            | 119,061            |
| March-15     | 2845    | 1931  | 945                                 | 33%             | 67%                            |                    |
| June-15      | 3427    | 2497  | 996                                 | 29%             | 71%                            | 179,848            |
| September-15 | 3130    | 2690  | 476                                 | 15%             | 85%                            | 202,231            |
| December-15  | 3267    | 2796  | 507                                 | 16%             | 84%                            | 240,271            |
| March-16     | 3560    | 3039  | 558                                 | 16%             | 84%                            | 280,766            |
| June-16      | 4288    | 3567  | 720                                 | 17%             | 83%                            | 332,063            |
| September-16 | 4822    | 4052  | 627                                 | 13%             | 87%                            | 370,893            |
| Se           | 5304    | 4652  | 650                                 | 12%             | 88%                            | 424,802            |
| March-17     | 5252    | 4785  | 465                                 | 9%              | 91%                            | 478,411            |
| June-17      | 5443    | 4971  | 472                                 | 9%              | 91%                            | 537,910            |
| September-17 | 5997    | 5516  | 481                                 | 8%              | 92%                            | 580,095            |
| December-17  | 6227    | 5718  | 509                                 | 8%              | 92%                            | 641,003            |
| March-18     | 6409    | 5889  | 520                                 | 8%              | 92%                            | 694,442            |
| June-18      | 6683    | 6144  | 539                                 | 8%              | 92%                            | 762,284            |
| September-18 | 6791    | 6244  | 547                                 | 8%              | 92%                            | 789,995            |
| December-18  | 7170    | 6596  | 574                                 | 8%              | 92%                            | 850,551            |
| March-19     | 7311    | 6726  | 585                                 | 8%              | 92%                            | 933,057            |
| June-19      | 7513    | 6924  | 589                                 | 8%              | 92%                            | 991,437            |
| September-19 | 7565    | 6990  | 575                                 | 7%              | 93%                            | 1,034,312          |
| December-19  | 7657    | 7066  | 591                                 | 8%              | 92%                            | 1,128,802          |
| March-20     | 7764    | 7157  | 607                                 | 8%              | 92%                            | 1,234,243          |
| June-20      | 7969    | 7346  | 623                                 | 8%              | 92%                            | 1,350,831          |
| September-20 | 8051    | 7427  | 624                                 | 8%              | 92%                            | 1,439,512          |
| December-20  | 8123    | 7493  | 630                                 | 8%              | 92%                            | 1,551,356          |
| March-21     | 8179    | 7540  | 639                                 | 8%              | 92%                            | 1,702,146          |
| June-21      | 8231    | 7591  | 640                                 | 8%              | 92%                            | 1,846,514          |

Note: Dashboard statistics are a bit lower than live readership map statistics because they exclude downloads from withdrawn items. We typically use dashboard statistics in this report.