


Date: March 3, 2022

To: The Urbana Free Library Board of Trustees

From: Celeste Choate, Executive Director

Re: Director's Report for Board Meeting of March 8, 2022

	VISION Nurturing growth by sparking curiosity and fostering a sense of belonging.	MISSION We encourage learning and enrich lives by providing access to diverse resources and programs.
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	We cultivate equity, mutual respect, and belonging by learning about and responding to our community. <i>WE WELCOME ALL.</i>
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Goal 1: We provide a welcoming and inviting space for dialogue and personal connections.

- February is Library Lovers Month. During the week of February 13-19, the Library invited young library lovers to celebrate by searching for golden books hidden in the children's and young adult areas of the Library. Each day the books were hidden in different locations, and those who found the books won a small prize. Families had fun searching for them. The first day of that week, a family came to the Library as soon as it opened to search. On another day, two boys spent an hour looking everywhere in the children's area before finding the book.

Goal 2: We engage the community to understand and respond to unique needs of our community.

- Last fall, local filmmakers received permission to film part of the web series "Writer's Block" at the Library. While not all of the episodes have been released, the creator shared a [link to the series' trailer](#) and [the first episode](#) where you can recognize part of the Library's front reading room.
- Over the past several months, Library staff researched community engagement tools that would automate some of our routine emails to patrons and make the emails more eye-catching and dynamic in order to increase patron engagement with the Library. Out of multiple options, staff have chosen the company Patron Point as the best fit for the Library's needs due to a number of factors. Patron Point will allow us to tailor emails about Library services based on patrons' reading and collection use habits so they see content that is most relevant to them. It will also allow us to send automatic emails to new patrons detailing Library services and how to access them, and send check-in emails to patrons that haven't used the Library recently with reminders of Library services. In addition, Patron Point was the only vendor to offer online patron address verification which will make the process of signing up or renewing a library card easier and more convenient for patrons. All of these services will help increase patron engagement with the Library, and the automation process will allow staff to use the time they would have spent sending emails on other projects. In addition, using Patron Point will allow us to cancel subscriptions to other communication tools. For these reasons, staff recommend the Board approve Resolution 2022-08 to Approve Subscription Agreement with Patron Point.

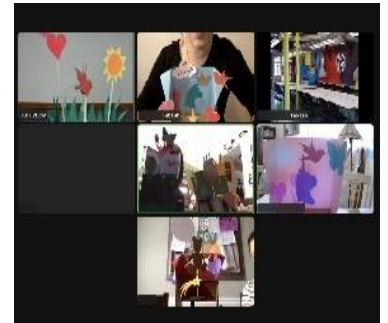


We connect people with tools and resources for learning and leading fruitful lives.

WE SPARK CURIOSITY.

Goal 1: We connect people to resources and technology for personal growth leading to greater fulfillment.

- The Acquisitions Department has completed the first phase of updating the Library's holdings with OCLC. At this time, all public-facing data is updated, which means that libraries and individuals throughout the world can see TUFL's current collection and place interlibrary loan requests. The second phase of the project will involve behind-the-scenes data updating and maintenance. Brian R., Acquisitions Manager, will be leading this process.
- On February 12, the C-U Community Fab Lab led an online Makerspace Jr. program where children used cardboard to create a movable diorama. Using some basic engineering mechanics and knowledge, kids created the inventive and colorful displays pictured on the right. The program was a wonderful blend of art and science.
- For the past several years, the Library's public use computers have operated with the same computer reservation and print management software, which is 1990s technology. This software works in concert with the Library's coin and bill acceptors. To date, the hardware and software have mostly functioned; however, increasing advances in technology warrant upgrades to the coin and bill acceptors (CBAs) and the software used to manage public use computers. Also, the software changes the file to be printed into a file format it can read for printing. More and more often, the files are getting stuck in this file conversion process, which negatively impacts the patrons experience. It can take minutes to print a page when things go wrong. Given these factors, the Library requested and received quotes from its current service provider, Envisionware, and Today's Business Solutions, Inc., the company that provides the Library's touchscreen scanning station. Based on the information received, the technology offered by each company, and patron and staff experience using machines from each company, Library staff recommend the Board approve Resolution 2022-07 to contract with Today's Business Solutions. If approved, updates will begin this spring. The updates to software and hardware will vastly improve patron experience for computer use and printing, as well as staff experience for managing computer reservations and providing troubleshooting.



Goal 2: We expand horizons and facilitate knowledge exchange by offering diverse programs.

- Contemporary romance writer and New York Times bestselling author Jasmine Guillory thoroughly entertained the audience at this month's Illinois Libraries Present program on February 16. She was interviewed by author Morgan Rose, and they discussed a variety of topics, including why Jasmine writes by hand when she starts a book, her favorite romance trope (fake dating), and how she's been dealing with the pandemic.
- Food and books combined at the first meeting of More Than a Bookclub! on February 22. Community members met to discuss the novel *The School of Essential Ingredients* by Erica Bauermeister and explore recipes mentioned in the book. The program was held in collaboration with the Urbana Park District at their programming kitchen and will meet two more times in March. At this first meeting, everyone made hot chocolate, while at the next two, the featured recipes will be risotto and fondue.
- The circus came to the Library on February 26! At the Winter Drop-In Circus, over 140 community members enjoyed playing in an animal (puppet) petting zoo, trying to juggle, testing their strength with an inflatable barbell, making their own paper big top craft, and more.



Several families mentioned that they had come to the Library that day just for the program, including at least one who was visiting the Library for the first time.



We help our community thrive by creating connections and working with partners.

WE CONTRIBUTE TO A STRONG SOCIAL FABRIC.

Goal 1: We make the community better for all by promoting diversity, equity and inclusion through our collections and programs.

- On February 26, the Library and Center for East Asian and Pacific Studies at the University of Illinois partnered to hold the Library's first East Asian Story Time. This new partnership will be held once per month during the University's school year with bilingual stories in an East Asian language and English. February's story time featured the Japanese tale "How the Years Were Named" (来年は何どし) describing how the years of the Lunar New Year were decided. The story was told as a Kamishibai (紙芝居) or "paper play" which is a form of street theater popularized in the 1930's and post-war Japan that uses a set of illustrated boards or cards to tell a story (pictured right). The online program was attended by 23 community members who spent time after the story sharing the year of the lunar calendar that they were born.
- In celebration of Black History Month, the Library held an all-ages reading and activity challenge. To complete the challenge and win a prize, participants were asked to read three books by Black authors and were encouraged to explore national and local resources for Black health and wellness. While final participation numbers were not available at the time of this writing, by the last week of February nearly 30 community members had completed the reading challenge.



Goal 2: We stimulate connections and partnerships to create a vibrant, engaged community.

- Staff from a Las Vegas, Nevada, library reached out to TUFL this month to inquire about our vinyl collection. Staff at that library want to start a vinyl collection for their community, and we were happy to provide information regarding how TUFL staff members manage our collection and how our community enjoys it.
- Several of the projects for which the Library wrote letters of support received 2022 Urbana Arts Grants. The Library will partner with each of these projects (listed below) on an aspect of their grant.
 - The Fab Lab and Teen Art Council will create murals in Urbana Middle School and Urbana High School. Mural planning will happen at the Library.
 - Former Urbana Poet Laureate Will Reger is creating a multimedia project that connects the environment with poetry and visual arts.
 - The Rose Bowl Tavern plans to hold a wide range of diverse programs at their location throughout the year.
 - Tanguero Workshop will bring an Argentinian Tango workshop to Urbana that will include several free activities and performances.



We are mindful of the wide array of resources needed to serve evolving community needs and are transparent with our operations.

WE ARE A STRONG ORGANIZATION.

Goal 1: We steward our physical and financial resources to allow for growth and sustainability.

- The Library has begun work on the building program project with Fred Schlipf again. Fred has provided a 214-page version of the program which is getting one last round of feedback before being shared with the Board, staff, and community. Then, the focus group sessions will begin!
- The Library's Seed Exchange received a generous donation of 285 seed packets from Baker Creek Heirloom Seed Company, including seeds for kale, rare peppers, tomatoes, flowers, and other plants. Some varieties were new to the Seed Exchange and will be available at the Exchange for the first time!
- The Urbana Free Library Foundation has awarded a grant to the Library for FY23 for \$39,900. Funds will be used for a portable PA system for outdoor events and outreach, author events, technology projects, WiFi hotspots, Archives staff to process collections, and Community Engagement staff to support the Foundation. In addition, several other dedicated Foundation funds will support the Library, including an ongoing donation for children's books in Chinese and music programs supported by the Nick Rudd Music Fund. The Foundation approved a plan to spend funds from the Margaret Frampton Urbana Library Fund to increase outreach over the next several years. Funds will initially support GIS research to learn more about cardholder penetration in Urbana so that targeted outreach efforts can be planned.
- The Library has been awarded a 2022 Urbana Arts Grant for the project Poetry Across Urbana. During the summer, we will hold a series of workshops where local poets will teach community members how to write short poems. Afterwards, community members can submit poems to the Library to be printed on signs and displayed throughout Urbana. Staff request the Board approve Resolution 2022-06 to accept the grant. The Library will receive \$985.00 for the grant, and half of the amount (\$492.50) will be given to the Library this fiscal year. The majority of that \$492.50 will be used in this fiscal year. Any portion not used this year will be rolled into FY23 to be spent then.
- The Foundation will be the recipient of the Common Ground Co-Op's February "Round Up for Good" campaign. Final figures are not in, but near the end of the month, the total was over \$4,000. The Foundation and Library are grateful for this new opportunity.

Goal 2: We cultivate continuous improvement among Board and staff members to create increased engagement, satisfaction, and retention.

- The Library's annual Staff Day took place on February 21. While staff met over Zoom, we did have a chance to give a two-word check-in about how 2022 is going for folks so far. Responses ranged from "not bad" to "hopeful." Two programs were presented: 1) A readers' advisory training from Ebsco that highlighted the NoveList databases that TUFL staff and patrons can use. NoveList supports readers in discovering new authors and titles. Staff members reported that they learned some new tips from the presentation. 2) A session called "Verbal Judo" on how to handle difficult situations in the Library. Staff found the speaker's tips helpful and said they will use them when engaging with a patron not following the Library's behavior policies. Initial evaluations show that staff appreciated the time to learn together, and the evaluation will be used to plan next year's Staff Day which will hopefully be in-person.
- Celeste Choate has been asked to continue on as a committee member and mentor for the Director's University program, which is a joint project of the Illinois Heartland Library System, Illinois Library Association, Illinois State Library, and Reaching Across Illinois Library System.



Look here for additional information and action item details that are outside of the scope of the strategic plan.

FY22 Budget amendment

Staff request the following budget amendment for the 2022 Urbana Arts Grant: Poetry Across Urbana:

- \$492.50 increase in revenue to Donations/Contributions/Gifts 802 46300
- \$492.50 increase in expense to Library Program Supplies 80280809 51812

Policy Updates:

Staff recommend that the Board approve the following policy update.

- III-F Security Cameras: Add the Safety and Volunteer Coordinator to the list of staff positions authorized to access live surveillance or recorded data to monitor activity at the Library when necessary. Authorized staff members are also the only staff members who may use surveillance or recorded data to fill requests from law enforcement.

Library eNewsletters:	
March News & Events: https://conta.cc/3Hot8tk	March Youth & Teen: https://conta.cc/3hjQXbe
March Archives Newsletter: https://conta.cc/3l8vUEx	

Other Library News:

Don't Let Spring Break Break You: Keep the Family Busy with 50+ Things To Do in Champaign-Urbana: <https://www.chambanamoms.com/2022/02/15/50-things-to-do-spring-break-champaign-urbana/>

Champaign-Urbana Weekend Planning – Indoor Fun Abounds:

<https://www.chambanamoms.com/2022/02/16/champaign-urbana-indoor-fun-abounds/>

Where to Play Indoors for Free: <https://www.chambanamoms.com/2022/02/20/play-indoors-free-champaign-urbana/>

Celebrating Urbana's Poet Laureate: <https://mailchi.mp/urbanaininois.us/celebrating-poet-laureate-ashanti-files?e=14d1151a35>

Champaign-Urbana Weekend Planner – Closing Out February:

<https://www.chambanamoms.com/2022/02/23/champaign-urbana-closing-out-february/>

It's All About "U" has a section on The Urbana Free Library's Black History Month reading & activity challenge: [https://mailchi.mp/urbanaininois.us/its-all-about-u-city-of-urbanas-february-newsletter?e=\[UNIQID\]](https://mailchi.mp/urbanaininois.us/its-all-about-u-city-of-urbanas-february-newsletter?e=[UNIQID])

Book Review: Caleb Wilson – "Strange Beasts of China" perhaps an ever-changing metaphor: https://www.news-gazette.com/arts-entertainment/books/caleb-wilson-strange-beasts-of-china-perhaps-an-ever-changing-metaphor/article_80beaff6-0185-528f-a5bb-bbcf1af6000e.html

Tom's Mailbag Feb 25, 2022 Masking at the Library and a mention of the CCHA: https://www.news-gazette.com/toms-mailbag/toms-mailbag-feb-25-2022/article_db4377ab-efd2-5779-8e9c-379d886f54e7.html

Budget and current financial information is here: <http://urbanafreelibrary.org/your-right-know#fin>, with FY22 financial reports here: <https://urbanafreelibrary.org/financial-reports>.

Bank reconciliations for the last day of the month: July 2021 - June 2022							
	July	August	September	October	November	December	January
Illinois Funds account	\$ 207,424.37	\$ 207,427.85	\$ 207,431.24	\$ 207,435.71	\$ 207,440.46	\$ 207,450.38	\$ 207,463.81
Busey Bank Cash accounts	\$ 2,554,612.35	\$ 2,487,141.44	\$ 3,282,091.64	\$ 3,549,391.89	\$ 3,345,850.39	\$ 3,081,613.07	\$ 2,902,564.19
Busey Bank Web account	\$ 27,405.31	\$ 36,424.06	\$ 41,483.42	\$ 44,531.75	\$ 48,636.90	\$ 3,957.78	\$ 10,471.40
Total	\$ 2,789,442.03	\$ 2,730,993.35	\$ 3,531,006.30	\$ 3,801,359.35	\$ 3,601,927.75	\$ 3,293,021.23	\$ 3,120,499.40